

SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

THE DESIRE AND THE GLORY OF ALL NATIONS.

A Sermon

PREACHED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JANUARY 11TH, 1863, BY

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AT THE SURREY TABERNACLE, BOROUGH ROAD.

"And the desire of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts."—Hagai ii. 7.

WE have two things this morning to notice. First, *the distinction of character, the desire*; secondly, *the promise*; for we shall show, and that by evidence pretty clear, that the house here spoken of means the church of the living God. "I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts."

Now here is first, then, *that desire which distinguishes the real Christian from all others*, and to whom this promise belongs, that the "desire of all nations" shall come. For I do not think the coming here refers to his coming in his humiliation; our text refers to posterior times to that—after he had come, and after he had achieved salvation, and ascended upon high; and therefore his coming here means, in the first place, his coming by the gospel, in that manifestation of his power to save, which manifestation has been continued from the beginning of the Christian dispensation. And then I do not by any means exclude from our text his ultimate coming. There is his last coming, but never again to come on earth. When he comes again, it will be in the clouds of heaven, and his people are to meet him in the air; and so shall they ever be with the Lord.

First, then, it is the desire of necessity. They are brought to feel their need of a new-covenant salvation. A salvation that only professes to save, is of no use to such; a salvation that is merely offered is of no use to such. It stands thus, that "The Lord hath," saith one, "made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure. This is all my salvation, and all my desire, though he make it not to grow;" that is to say, that the Lord hath entered into an immutable oath by Christ Jesus for our eternal salvation. "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek." Now, if you have a right desire, you will look upon this delightful truth of Christ's priesthood after the power of an endless life; that priesthood that, if your sins were ten million times worse and greater and more than they are, that this priesthood of an incarnate God is able, infinitely able to swallow up the whole, and present you before the eyes of infinite holiness holy as God is

holy, righteous as God is righteous, and free from fault, or spot, or wrinkle, as Christ himself. Now, if your desire be right, you will look upon this priesthood; if you are taught of God, you will see it; if you are taught of God, you will be led to see it, and you will look upon this priesthood, and you will say, I must die if that priesthood be not what the Scriptures represent; if the salvation by the death of Christ be not what the Scriptures represent it—a free-grace salvation—the precious atonement of Jesus Christ swallowing up all sins, past, present, and to come; if there be the barest, the most remote, if there be the shadow of a shade of the possibility of any fault being laid to my charge, I am damned to eternity. I am so driven of necessity. I receive Christ's atonement in the infinity, eternity, and glory of it, from absolute necessity. If I am not saved in this way, I am lost; I am lost for ever; nothing else is any use to me. You might as well give me heathenism as give me Arminianism; you might as well give me popery as give me duty-faithism. I must have this wondrous incarnate God in the eternity of his one offering. And not only so, I will say something else,—that such is my necessity, and such is my state as a sinner, that if I have not the immutable oath of God, and if that oath does not rest entirely upon the priesthood of Christ, I have no hope; for if that oath hath in it any conditions pertaining to myself, and rests upon anything pertaining to me, then I am lost. But if this oath rests upon Christ's priesthood, and is to stand good as long as the Saviour's name stands good, as long as the Saviour's righteousness stands good, as long as Christ's atonement stands good, as long as his sacrifice stands good, as long as his victory that he hath wrought stands good,—then, if this be the power of Christ, if this be the oath of God, then there is hope for me. Now, my hearer, are you brought to this necessity that I am now describing,—that you are so sunken in your own eyes, so poor, so depraved, so vile, so wretched, so miserable, so sinful, so guilty, so destitute, that nothing else can be a hiding-place, a refuge for you, that can give you the least hope whatever? And this made the apostle say, referring to these necessitous ones, that God is abundantly willing to show unto such this immutability of his counsel, and that they might have strong consolation in this order of things who have fled for refuge to lay hold of this hope set before them; which hope, by this eternity of the priesthood of Christ, and the immutable oath of God thereby, is as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, entering within the veil, whither our forerunner is for us entered, being made a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. It is, then, a desire of deep necessity. You cannot help desiring it. If you are taught of God, this will become the object of your desire. The poor, the needy, the wretched, the miserable, the lost, the destitute,—nothing, no, nothing else can meet their necessity, but this eternal, infinite atonement—I mean, infinite in its power—of Jesus Christ, and the immutability of the blessed God. Here, then, you will say with David, here is an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure. Nothing else is of any use to me; and you will say, A heart-searching God is my witness that nothing else, I see and feel, nothing else can save me. I am a sinner above all sinners; and if my hope be wrong, if there be no such an atonement spoken of in the Bible as that which hath perfected its objects for ever; and if there be no such a thing spoken of in the Bible as an immutable covenant; if there be no such thing in the Bible spoken of as an everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David,—then I am such an unusual, such an enormous sinner, and my state is so awful, that I may as well make up my mind at once to be damned, damned to eternity; for there is no more hope for me than there is for the devil, if these great and immutable truths be not Bible truths. Hast thou ever been driven to this? How few in the professing world you meet with that have been driven into this necessity, into this poverty! that almost wherever you

look, the inquiry is all about creature doings. They would smother you with questions about your own doings; but let a sinner be brought by the Holy Ghost down into the miry clay, down into the low dungeon, to be shut up as in a prison, imprisoned as within gates of brass, and bars of iron, and let that sinner thus tremble and pray, in the language of one, "Let not the pit shut her mouth upon me," and nothing can hinder the pit shutting her mouth upon thee, but that infinite ransom that God hath found.

It is by that ransom, and by that alone, that God saith, "Deliver him from going down into the pit; for I have found a ransom." Thus, Christ then, in his eternal priesthood, Christ is the way in which God's immutable counsel is revealed; Christ becomes the object of desire,—the desire of necessity. I make no hesitation in saying, if this were the last day I should preach, and if I should live a thousand years, and there was no place I could go to, to hear the word, where these truths were made prominent and the chief theme, I would never go and hear another minister as long as I lived, even if I should live a thousand years. I so loathe, and abhor, and detest, and despise sham gospels, that I am sick to my very soul of them; and I am sick of thousands of professors that are content with such gospels. Oh, my hearer, where is the spirit of Abraham? Where is the spirit of Isaac? Where is the spirit of Jacob? Where are these vital, living, devil-defying, sin-swallowing-up, death-defying, trouble-defying promises and truths of the everlasting gospel? Are we getting into a mawkish state, as though the gospel was something hardly worth looking at? Our God is a great God, the almighty God, the eternal God, the immutable God; and his salvation is worthy of a God; his achievement is worthy of an incarnate God. If angels could have wrought the work, an incarnate God would not have undertaken it. If man could have done anything, God would not have done everything. But, we bless God, he hath done everything; and Job saith, "I know that thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from thee." It is the desire of necessity. Now, I appeal to you, as in the sight of God, have you ever felt what this necessity is? Can you say that Jesus Christ, in this his real dignity as the High Priest, as the incarnate God, is with you a desire of necessity, an object of necessity,—that you are lost without him? Can you say that you do see and feel, not only your need of the immutability of God's oath and counsel, but that these are the foundations upon which your soul rests, and that if these foundations are taken away, what shall the righteous do? Ah, saith one, don't ask me if this be the object of my desire; why, it is the very delight of my soul. There is nothing to me difficult in this; it is just what I like; it is just what I enjoy; it is just what I expect acceptance by; it is just what I prevail by; it is what I live for; it is what I shall die to enjoy in perfection.

But it is the desire not only of necessity, but also of understanding. They know what they want; they understand the priesthood of Christ; they understand the oath of God, and the immutability of that oath, as confirmed in the death of Christ; as the apostle argues, that the testament—the will—is confirmed by the death of the testator: done, and never to be undone. Then, as it is the desire of necessity, it is the desire of understanding. I have often admired that feeling expressed in the 1st chapter of Nehemiah, where Nehemiah prays the Lord to hear the prayer of his people that desired to fear him and prosper. And so such persons well know that there is no prosperity apart from the fear of God. And I like that prayer too, because it is expressive of that necessity that the Christian feels for the fear of God. David, in his 36th Psalm, gives us to understand that he had an old man about him before whose eyes there was no fear of God. He felt he had a nature that did not fear God, that did not regard God; he felt that he had a wicked, hard, impenitent, pre-

sumptuous, and abominable nature, that feared not God, that despised God, that hated God, that laboured hard to tear him away from God, and to stifle in his heart and mind the fear of God, and if possible to annihilate the grace of God, and to stop prayer and everything else. Hence, David saith, "The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart,"—ah, I have such a heart!—"that there is no fear of God before his eyes." And when this old man of sin gets somewhat the upper hand, oh, what wretched work that is; what sighing, what groaning, what slavery that is! And yet the people of old seem to have felt something like it when they said, "Who desire to fear thy name." As though he should say, Well, Lord, I hope I fear thy name; but I fear it so little, I regard it so little, I respect it so little; I have so much hardness of heart, so much downward tendency, so much presumption, so much frivolity, so much vanity, that I am at a loss, sometimes, to know whether I fear thy name or not; and surely, if I feared thy name I should be a different man from what I am. Should I not pray more earnestly; should I not love more intensely; should I not be concerned more constantly; should I not read the Bible with more earnest desire to realize its mysteries; and should I not think less of the things of time, and more of the things of eternity? Ah, it is a great mercy, friends, to have this understanding of the blessedness of the fear of God; and if you do not fear God so far as you could wish, to that extent of tenderness of conscience and feeling that you could wish, yet it is a great thing to have an honest and believing desire to do so. "Thy servants who desire to fear thy name." And Jesus Christ in this also is the desire, because we never can fear God filially but by Jesus Christ. We may fear God slavishly without Jesus Christ, but that is not a fear acceptable in his sight; that is the fear of slavery; that is the fear of the man who would run away if he could. Whereas the filial fear is the fear of the man who would not run away if he could; that filial fear by Jesus Christ wherein all our sins are thus put away, and God on our side in the amplitude of his mercy. It is the fear of respect: "Thou shalt have respect unto the Holy One of Israel." And it is that kind of fear that such would not run away if they could. There is a great difference between the feeling of that servant that would run away if he could—he does right, but from a slavish motive, and would run away if he could—and that servant that would not; that is, he does right from love and affection, and proper interest in the service, that he would not run away if he could. And happy the man that has this feeling in spiritual things, so as to know that he cannot better himself, and that he would not wish to better himself, because it is not possible for him to be in a better position than to be with God, and in the fear of God. And so, then, he desires Jesus Christ that he may by him fear God, not as a slave, but as a son; for in the fear of the Lord is strong confidence; and by precious faith in Jesus we can depart from evil, possess every good, and enjoy that good, and walk in that good, and bless the Lord for it. It is therefore the desire of necessity, and it is the desire of understanding. "Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding; whose mouths must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee;" be ye not like that; I have brought you now into an understanding, and in understanding be men. Understand these things; pray with the understanding, and sing praises with understanding. And so it is the desire of necessity, and the desire of understanding.

And then, third, it is the desire of communion with God. Hence, said one of old, "One thing have I desired, and that will I seek after." Here, again, you see Jesus Christ is the way, he is the object, he becomes the desire; and there is no salvation without him, there is no godly fear, and, consequently, no prosperity without him. Godly fear and prosperity—heavenly prosperity—go together. When we have heavenly prosperity, that enables us to bear earthly adversity. When we have prosperity in

God, it enables us to bear the troubles of the way, it enables us to think but light of them; it enables us to say, Well, we must not think it strange concerning these fiery trials; they have ever been in the church, and they ever will be. Let me still prosper in godly fear, and let me have fellowship there, and all shall be well. You see I am carrying on, in a great measure, the two parts of my text at once, namely, the desire, and the object of that desire; for Jesus shall come, the desire; he is the desire, and wherever he is desired in the perfection of his priesthood, there he doth come; wherever he is desired in new-covenant order, after the due order, there he doth come; and wherever this godly fear is desired, there the Lord, sooner or later, more or less, will answer that desire. And then, as I have said, it is the desire of fellowship with God. "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord." Whether we take the house of the Lord to be the church of God, or to be the Christ of God, or to be the service of God in general, the meaning substantially will be the same. "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord, to behold the beauty of the Lord"—and where there is that desire, that desire shall come—"and to inquire in his temple. For in the time of trouble,"—ah! time of trouble is sure to come; there is none free; and those that have none to-day may have much to-morrow; those whose cup is full of honey to-day, it may be full of gall to-morrow; those who are rejoicing to-day may be bitterly weeping to-morrow. Yes, my hearer, trouble must come; more or less, it must attend all the heirs of eternal glory. Troubles abound throughout the world, but especially they mark the people of God. So, then, if I am thus brought to dwell in his house, then "in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion, in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me;" where his mercy-seat is, where his presence is, where I may pour out all my cares, where I shall find access to breathe all my sorrows; there "he shall hide me in the secret of his tabernacle; he shall set me up upon a rock; and I will sing." What! in time of trouble? Yes; in time of trouble: for in this time of trouble he shall thus hide me in his pavilion, and hide me in the secret of his tabernacle, and shall set me upon a rock; I will sing; yes, even then. So said one of old, when he was in a gloomy prison, and heavily ironed, at Rome, he in writing saith, Here we are in prison, in this gloomy prison, and as though he should say, all the rest of the prisoners are very miserable and gloomy, and very cast down; but as for us, we are exceeding joyful in all our tribulations. So, then, "I will sing, yea, I *will* sing praises unto the Lord. For my head shall be lifted up above mine enemies." There it is. They are lifted up above me now, but by-and-bye my head shall be lifted up above them; "and I will sing, yea, I *will* sing praises unto the Lord." It is the desire, then, of fellowship with God.

Fourth, and lastly, upon this point, all centring in Christ, he answers to it all; he is the High Priest, he is the way in which immutability stands confirmed, he is the way in which we fear God and prosper; he is the pavilion, he is the tabernacle, he is the rock, he is the way in which we have fellowship with God: fourth, it is the desire of exclusiveness. The Christian desires none other but Christ Jesus. "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." The Holy Ghost dwells in him; the Father dwells in him; and in possessing Christ we possess the Holy Ghost; in possessing Christ we possess God the Father; in possessing him we possess everything. Seventy-third Psalm: one looked round, and he saw the prosperity of the wicked; he was very grieved, and almost wished he had been a wicked man too; he envied them. But when he came to his senses, he says, Why, "I was as a beast before thee." What a fool I was! I could not understand it till I went into the sanctuary of God, and then I saw that their places were slippery;

and so they walk along, and run along, and slip along, and slide along; but then they are slippery places, and by-and-bye comes their destruction. What a silly thing I was! "Nevertheless," when I awake, "I am continually with thee, and thou shalt guide me with thy counsel," though it seems to be a way that flesh and blood does not like; "and afterward receive me into glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee?" No; we will leave the superstitious to go to Peter, and Virgin Mary, and I don't know who; we have none in heaven but our God; none else to look after us, or to take care of us. "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" No, Lord; there is Jesus there, in all the claims of his mediatorial perfection; there is God the Father there, in all the love of his heart; there is the Holy Ghost there; all three bearing one unanimous record of the eternal welfare of the church. "There are three that bear record in heaven;" God the Father bears record that he is well pleased; Christ beareth record that he is satisfied with the travail of his soul; and the Holy Ghost glorifies Christ. "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" And I can say, and I hope you can say so too, that "there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." Oh no, no, no; I have no desire to make anything a part of my religion but God himself. Give me the Spirit of God, give me the Christ of God; let me have the Lord. I have none in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth I desire beside thee. Now then, my hearer, before I leave this part of my subject, have we this fourfold desire? Have we this desire of necessity? Have we been driven to receive the same eternal truths of which I have spoken? Second, Have we a desire for more and more of that fear of God by which alone we shall prosper? Third, Have we a desire to live a life of fellowship with him, wherein, amidst all the calamities and adversities of life, we shall be taken care of? And, fourth, Can we say we renounce all others? "Other gods have had dominion over us, but by thee alone will we make mention of thy name." If this be our desire, that desire shall come, that desire shall be fulfilled; and truly it will be a tree of life; or, as the same good man saith, for he was a good man, no doubt about it, in the 73rd Psalm, "My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." And so the desire of all the nations who possess this desire shall come, satisfy that desire, answer every desire, and thus fulfil the promises of his word, and bring us into everlasting rest.

We now come to the last part of our text: "I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts." We do not read that ever that literal temple was filled with glory. Some writers tell us, Yes, it was, when Christ was there. I don't think so; I don't think that Jesus Christ filled that temple with glory. He certainly took a whip of small cords, and drove the enemies out. And he appeared in the temple several times; but his testimonies were generally of a very solemn kind, of a deprecating kind, of a denouncing kind against his adversaries. So that I do not think that he ever filled that house with glory. Well, but your text says, "This house." The meaning of that is, This house is the sign of that house; the figure, the type of that house I will fill with glory. How do you know that? say you. Why, because it is customary very frequently in the Scriptures to speak of the sign or type as though the type itself was the thing; whereas it is only the thing that signifies the object. Hence the Saviour, when they said, "What sign showest thou?" "Destroy this temple,"—there, you see,—"and I will raise it again in three days." And they all took it for granted it meant the literal temple; and no doubt, but for the parenthetical remark thrown in, men would have contended for that to this day. But "he spake of the temple of his body." He spoke of an infinitely greater miracle and wonder than that of destroying the literal temple and raising it again in three days; for I do not know that destroying that temple and raising it again would have done any good; but that death that he there

refers to, and that resurrection, who shall undertake to describe the good that he has done thereby? Again, when the Saviour took bread, and brake it, and blessed it, and gave it to his disciples, he said, "This is my body." Now, how would you take that? Surely you are not got on so far towards Rome as to take that in their unreasonable, superstitious, absurd, and stupid sense. No; "This is my body;" that is, that which this signifies is my body. "And he took the cup, and said, Drink ye all of it, for this is my blood;" that is, that which this signifies is my blood, "in the new testament, which is shed for many." And so this house is the sign, the type, the figure of that house that I will fill with glory. Now it goes on to say, "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts; and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts." Now I do not know that the glory of that literal latter house was greater than that of the former. Why, say you, it was because Christ appeared in it. Well, I will let you have that advantage, and let that be it, if you please; but I cannot stop there. Now the Lord doth not say, I will give peace in this house; mind that. "The glory of this latter house." The church is the latter house; that is the ultimate house. The Jewish church was the first house; but that first house hath no glory, by reason of the glory of the latter house that excelleth. That first house was built upon moveable foundations; and the rains descended, the winds blew, the floods arose, and that house fell. But this latter house I will build upon a rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Now it says, "I will give peace in this *place*." It does not say, in this *house*. Now the word *place* is a term of wider range than the word *house*; a remarkable thing, that is. Here is a transition from *house* to *place*. Now "I will give peace in this *place*." All the learned, of course, tell us the meaning is that Jesus Christ appeared there and preached peace. I never read of any peace being given. There was plenty of war there, if you like, for it was in that very house, or connected with it, that the priests took a leading part in crucifying the Son of God. But if I take the word *place*, then the word *place* being a term of wider range, I conclude that Jesus Christ would die at that place, he would die somewhere there. And all heaven knew this before he died; and two good men came down from heaven, and spake of the decease he should accomplish at this place, viz., Jerusalem. On Calvary's cross, there he made peace, there he finished transgression, made an end of sin, there he brought in everlasting righteousness. Thus we come into sweet harmony with the blessed God; and thus in this latter house, viz., the church, he giveth peace; and the glory of this latter house, that is to say, the glory of the Christian, is infinitely greater than the glory of the Jew. The latter covenant is infinitely more glorious than the former; the latter sacrifice is infinitely more glorious than all the former sacrifices put together; the latter king is infinitely more glorious than all the forty-one kings that reigned over Israel, all taken together; the latter promised land, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, is infinitely more glorious than the former. I will fill this mystic house, this ultimate house, with my glory. If the Old Testament saints had not been taught by the Lord, see how they would have stopped short. For instance, suppose Abel had rested in the literal sacrifice which he offered, instead of in the sacrifice it signified, how he would have been deluded! Suppose, when the Lord gave Canaan to Abraham for an everlasting possession, that Abraham had taken it to be the literal Canaan, instead of taking the literal Canaan as the sign of the thing signified, how he would have been deluded! He would not then have looked for a city that hath everlasting foundations, and for an everlasting keeping of the sabbath. And when the Lord gave that priesthood for an everlasting priesthood, how they would have been deluded if they had rested in this shadow, in this sign, instead of looking by the sign to the thing signified! And when the Lord

gave the kingdom by an everlasting covenant, by a covenant of salt, to David, how they would have been deluded if they had taken the sign itself for the thing signified, instead of looking for the ultimate king, the ultimate priesthood, the ultimate kingdom! Time and space will not allow me to enlarge upon the promise, "I will fill this house with glory." I had much to say upon this; but I must close with very few words. And I do not know that I can do it better than in the words of the apostle in 1 Cor. xv. He says of Christ that he must reign until he has put down all rule; that is, all rule over his people; the rule of sin, and of enemies, and of death, and of trouble; put down all these; all these enemies must become his footstool; "and all authority," all that would usurp authority over his people, he will put the whole down, and send out to the four winds the glorious challenge, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" "And all power;" all power must come to nought. We may have powerful foes without and within, but they must all come to nought. "And then cometh the end," when Christ has done that, "when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father." Here, my Father, is the kingdom still impregnable, still invulnerable; here are the people, every one, not one is lost. And now comes the fulness of glory. "Then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him;" to carry out in eternal glory the will of the Father. As Christ carried out the will of the Father in his humiliation, and doth now in his exaltation, he will then in glorification; "that God may be all in all." We meet with men sometimes now that we think are good men, but we know there is something in them besides God, and so much of something else sometimes, that it makes us rather distant. But then, in all the range of heaven, you will not meet with one that has anything in him but God. All shall be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, filled with all the fulness of God. God shall be all in all; in all—not one exception; all conformed to the image of Christ; God dwelling in Christ, and they in Christ, and God in them, and they in God. And so this latter house, ultimate house, mystic house, the church, shall be filled with his glory. And shall enjoy that glory in peace. "In this place will I give peace, saith the Lord."