

SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

THE VISION OF LIFE.

A Sermon

PREACHED ON SUNDAY MORNING, AUGUST 7TH, 1864, BY

MR. JAMES WELLS,

AT THE SURREY TABERNACLE, BOROUGH ROAD.

“Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.”—
Proverbs xxix. 18.

How vitally and eternally important, then, is this vision of life. I say “vision of life,” because it here refers to that which stands in contrast to our perishing. And not only where Christ is not, where the Holy Spirit is not, where the gospel is not, where the covenant of God is not, not only must such perish, but they must perish quickly; for what is life? A vapour appearing for a little while, and it vanisheth away, and then we perish from all help, from all hope, and go into that place where neither hope nor mercy ever did come. What a fearful gloomy scene of things is this! But if favoured with that vision of life referred to in our text, then we may look forward with good courage to whatever we have to encounter; and when called to cross the Jordan we shall go as willingly over as did the Israelites literally of old, only with this infinite difference, that they had to take possession of a land by war, we shall have to take possession of a land by a victory wrought on the earth; they had to take possession of a land where there were gigantic foes; we enter into a land where there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent. Theirs was an earthly land, temporary, full of uncertainties; but ours is that inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. I will, therefore, in the first place, notice *the vision of life*; and secondly, *the conduct of those to whom this revelation is made*; they are to keep the law, the law of this vision; “he that keepeth the law, happy is he.”

Notice, then, first, *the vision of life*. The vision, of course, means here a divine revelation; indeed, the word *vision* conveys a twofold meaning; first, something revealed by the Lord himself; and secondly, something seen by the person in whose behalf this revelation is made. Now, the Scriptures are so full of the subject contained in our text that the difficulty is in knowing what to leave out. I shall therefore, this morning, dwell chiefly upon one vision; so that the first part of my discourse will consist of giving merely a sample of that glorious and blessed gospel of God by which we are saved. First, then, I take, and chiefly so, the vision with which the Lord favoured Abraham, in the 15th of Genesis. The Lord appeared in vision to Abraham, and said unto him, “Fear not;” and then he assigns the reasons: “I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.” The shield here, as you are aware, no doubt, has special reference unto the Lord Jesus Christ. As it is the business of the shield to be between the person who holds it and all the danger to which that person is exposed, so the Lord Jesus Christ is revealed unto us as the way by which we are severed from our sins, from the sting of death, from the curse of the law, from all that would harm us. “I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.” So that (though this

VOL. VI.—No. 294.

will come out more prominently in the latter part of our discourse this morning) the Lord Jesus Christ is the way in which the Lord defends his people. Now, if what I am saying be true, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the way in which the Lord sanctifies us, and gives us life, and righteousness, and abides on our side, and takes care of us, and will bring us to glory; if what I am saying be true, why then, whatever we cast away, may we never cast our shield away; never cast Christ away; never part with him. And if what I am saying be true, how right it is that we should hold fast the truth; how right it is that we should cleave to Jesus Christ! God will defend us in no other way. "Above all things," saith the apostle, "taking the shield of faith." I have often said, and I repeat it, that in ancient warfare no man was ever reckoned beaten until he gave up his shield. Hence the old saying you are all acquainted with, of the Spartan mother to her son; "Bring back that shield, or be brought back upon it." And so I say, hold fast the truth; rather die than for one moment to give up anything pertaining to the perfection of the Lord Jesus Christ. And then the Lord said, "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." But I may just here linger for a moment; now, is it not clear to some of you, as clear as A B C, and because it is so clear Satan may perhaps tempt you to think the less of it; why, it is as clear to some of you as A B C that God, in every one of the perfections of his nature, stands direct against you as a sinner considered. On the other hand, is it not as clear to you as anything well can be that by Christ Jesus the scene is entirely changed; that here, by Christ Jesus, the same God who stands against you in all his perfections by the law, that by Christ Jesus the same God justifies you, and puts the challenge, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" Bless the Lord for this revelation. Take away this knowledge of Christ, we are lost; take away faith in this Jesus Christ, we perish; take away decision for this Jesus Christ, and we sink to hell. This life is a great curse, then, apart from Christ, and the next world a curse infinitely greater. But if we know him, believe in him, and are decided for him, then we shall not perish, but enter into life. "And thy exceeding great reward." That reward, of course, is measured by the worth of the Saviour, that whatever the Saviour is entitled to, his people must be entitled to the same; for he got to heaven for himself, by his personal worth, and he brings every one of his people to heaven by his personal worth, by his personal righteousness, and by his personal sacrifice. The right is identical. This is the reward, and this reward is a fulness of joy, pleasure in God's presence,—pleasures for evermore at his right hand. Here then is the vision; this is one part of the vision revealed to Abraham, and revealed to us, and made dear to us. Now, mark the next part; the next part is the certainty of the promise. The Lord took Abraham abroad, and of course in that clear atmosphere a very much larger number of stars appear to the naked eye than the number that appear in our atmosphere. We can never see above three thousand, I believe, at a time, though they may seem more. But in that atmosphere there is a very much larger number; so large a number that, at any rate, in that day, as the science of arithmetic was rather low, they would reckon it a number that no man could number. And, indeed, by our instruments we penetrate a little into the heavens, and we soon ascertain that the stars are indeed literally innumerable. Now the Lord said to Abraham, "So shall thy seed be." Mind, he did not say this with any *if*, any *but*, or any *may be*: "So shall thy seed be;" that is, by Christ Jesus. Jesus Christ is the promised seed, and by Jesus Christ the ingathering of millions of sinners was promised. So that Abraham's spiritual descendants (I pass by the literal, because the spiritual is infinitely more important to us); his spiritual descendants are to be as the stars. "So shall thy seed be." And Abraham believed this dangerous promise, as men call it; Abraham believed in this eternal certainty of the promise, and therefore it

is that it was counted to him for righteousness, and he was called "the friend of God." So that, if I rightly understand that scripture, no man can be reckoned really a friend to God until he is brought to receive the certainty of the promise of God; until he is brought to give God the honour of performing a promise that is yea and amen; until he is brought to give Christ the honour of having confirmed the promise; until he is brought to give the Holy Spirit the honour of putting that promise upon record which is divine, and must be fulfilled; until he is brought to give God the honour of immutability. What says the tried Christian to this? I can hear what you are saying, if you are attending to what I am saying with any interest at all—the tried Christian. Oh, yes, he says, with all my heart and soul do I receive this delightful truth that the promise is yea and amen, never was forfeited yet. So stripped, so tossed about, so hardhearted, so vile, so wretched am I, that had I not a promise of absolute, unconditional, eternal certainty to rest upon, my soul, amidst the surges and floods of life, would sink into despair; but here is the anchorage ground that forbids despair. It was counted to him for righteousness. Canst thou say that this promise is clear unto thee? For where there is not the vision of Christ as the shield, where there is not the revelation of this promise, the people perish. The Lord gave Abraham the world to come not by precept, for if he had given the world to come by precept Abraham would have lost it; but he gave it to Abraham by promise, and the promise cannot be lost. That is, then, the second part of the vision; first, that Jesus Christ is the shield and exceeding great reward, or the reward is by him; and secondly, the certainty of the promise, and that faith was counted to him for righteousness, because he thereby believed in the eternal perfection of the work of the great High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus. The third part of the vision (and each Christian prizes each part—sure to do so), the third part of the vision was the calling of Abraham. "I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it." Here lies the trial of the child of God. Was it the Lord? I know, saith one, I have undergone a change; I know that I cannot be at home in what I once was; I know that my hope is only in Jesus Christ; I know my hope is only in his eternal mercy; and I know that I love the habitation of his house, and the place where his honour dwelleth; but then I have in my nature and feelings so many things contrary to what I would have; I am such a poor creeping creature that I am afraid that the change I have undergone is not real; I am afraid it was merely moral, but not spiritual; I am afraid it was merely mental, but not vital; I am afraid it has been brought about by the workings of conscience, and the letter of the word, and the gifts of the minister, and the persuasion of friends, together with the dictates of my own mind, but that it is not the work of God. Now I say, if you are taught of God you will examine this matter, and you will know what it is to be tried upon this matter. And I will treat this as I have treated it before, that you should judge of the reality of your call by two things, first, by what you feel you are called to; if there be revealed unto you the Lord Jesus Christ as the shield, as I have stated just now, and if you are so terrified from a sense of what you are that nothing but a yea and amen promise in Christ can be your hope, now that is one evidence that it is the Lord who hath brought you out of the prison of this world, that it is the Lord who hath brought you out of that spiritual Egypt and Sodom where our Lord is crucified. Then another evidence in connection with this is, it is not enough for you to see Jesus Christ as the shield, and to see the promise to be yea and amen, and approve of it,—there is something else to evidence the reality of your conversion, and that is your solemn, most solemn and conscientious feeling before God, that you would rather undergo the most torturous death any martyr underwent, God keeping you, than part with this promise. And if you are enabled to walk out the

precept, it must be in the strength of the promise; if you exemplify the precept, it must be in the strength of the promise; if you work out your own preservation to eternal glory, it can be only by the Lord working in you, that is, God, according to his promise, working in you to will and to do of his own good pleasure; and that you can look up conscientiously to the Judge of all, and say that, as far at least as you know your own experience and your own soul's feeling, you are in a state of solemn decision thus for God's truth. If so, then the words belong unto thee,—that the Lord hath called thee out of Ur of the Chaldees. But if thou art a loose, frothy, trifling professor, and can run here and run there, and amusing thyself merely with religion, and contrasting one minister with another, just to see which you like best as to their gifts, and thus you are running about, and one minister and another minister unto you is as one that playeth well upon an instrument, so that the gospel to you is as a tinkling cymbal and as sounding brass; then there is no vitality between your soul and the gospel. Or if you are at home with the ungodly, and among the ungodly, and can make them—beyond what you are obliged to do in your lawful avocations in life—your companions, then you are not severed from the world, you are a frothy professor, and when you come to die neither Satan nor death will care aught for your religion. But if taught of God, you will feel that that which cost the Saviour unfathomable agonies is of all things the most solemn, therefore there will be a depth in your feeling, there will be a sincerity in your soul, and you will feel that all things are as nothing in comparison of this vital reconciliation to the great Judge of all. Here, then, are three parts of Abraham's vision. First, "Thy shield and thy exceeding great reward; second, the certainty of the promise; and, third, the reality of his conversion. "I am the Lord that brought thee out." No doubt Satan had been saying to Abraham, What a fool you were to leave your own land! what a fool you were to come out! why, you came out yourself. You thought God called you out; why, you came out yourself; you had better have remained there, and been happy. Depend upon it, Abraham had been exercised in this manner, from the Lord saying to him, "I am the Lord that brought thee out;" I have been watching over thee; I have taken care of thee; I have brought thee; and therefore, having come by my authority, you go back again, return to where I have brought you from, when I command you to it; and I shall never send you back again, and I will take care you shall not want to go back again. And so he never went back again; the Lord never sent him back again; and Satan could not, sin could not, and the world could not; no, there he was, there he is, and there he died; the Lord told him in that chapter that he should die in peace, and in a good old age.

But I notice the fourth part of the vision. The fourth part of the vision is sacrificial. "Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit the land?" Would that I was able to speak upon this fourth part of the vision as I should like! The Lord brought in sacrifices. I will not now notice these sacrifices in detail, because I have done so before, and they are mentioned in several of our printed sermons; but still there is something very beautiful. The Lord directed him to sacrifice; Abraham was quite satisfied. If I ask the Lord, Whereby shall I know a sinner like me shall ever enter heaven, shall ever reach those blissful shores, shall ever stand upon the vantage-ground of eternal glory? I am pointed to sacrificial perfection, to sacrificial purity, to the blood of the everlasting covenant. There stands the assurance; when that shall fail I shall fail, but not before. That song will never wear out, "Unto him that loved us"—loved us! it is love—"washed us from our sins in his own blood." And so we are all one in this, we are all one. Not a word about the creature, not a word; all are loved by him. They differed very much in practice before called by grace, and in many things differed after called by grace;

yet they all meet at last upon this pure ground, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins." It is not there interrupted by asking, Did he wash me from more sin than he did you, or did he wash you from more sin than he did me? Yea, every one will be taught to esteem others better than themselves, and each will think himself the chiefest of sinners, and, as Erskine well observes, "Their discord," in this sense, each thinking himself the chiefest of sinners,—

"Their discord makes them all unite,
In songs that are divinely sweet,"—

"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests to God." Here, then, is the shield; here is the reward; here is the certainty of the promise; here is the certainty of the call, and here is the assurance of possessing the land—sacrificial assurance. Take nothing else as the assurance. You cannot be sure that you will get to heaven by your state of mind. Is not your mind sometimes anything but heavenward, anything but Bibleward, anything but the house of God-ward, anything but the church of God-ward, anything but to spiritual things-ward? Shut up, and everything sacred, spiritual, divine, neutralized, and you seem as though your religion was dead and buried, and you yourself a kind of walking corpse, a kind of walking coffin, I was going to say, and your religion dead and buried inside of it, and it is gone and over. What, say you, does the real Christian get into that state? Yes, he does; and then what can be his hope of ever going to heaven when he gets into that state? Why, the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is wonderful how the sacrifice of Christ explains a thousand things. All your crooked experiences preserve you from putting anything of your own into the Saviour's place; they make you very gladly receive him as your all and in all. Here, then, is a vision of eternal mercy. But I have not done yet with this vision. "And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram: and lo! an horror of great darkness fell upon him." "Horror of great darkness!" this, as the Lord explains in its first meaning, refers to the Israelites, in what they should suffer in Egypt; that is the first meaning of the horror of great darkness. Second, it refers to that soul-trouble that the soul must be brought into in order to recognize God's salvation. "When the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace!" What are we to understand there by the sun going down? Whose sun was gone down—because ours never goes down. "When the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace," and we know who were in that furnace; "and there was great darkness," and we know who was in that darkness. Whose sun was gone down? Pharaoh's sun was gone down, the sun of Egypt was gone down; Moses was come; Pharaoh's sun was set. "Behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp, that passed between those pieces." There is the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt. So that when Pharaoh's sun went down, and it was dark with him, the sun of Israel began to shine, their deliverance drew near, they were on the light side of the cloud, Pharaoh on the dark side, and they soon realized salvation, triumphed in their God, saw their enemies dead in the Red Sea. Here, then, is a vision of the sufferings of the people of God; the destruction of their adversaries; the deliverance of the people of God from all their troubles. Now that smoking furnace I take to mean—of course historically—the Israelites in Egypt, called the iron furnace; secondly, that it points to the tribulations of the Lord's people. Just dwell upon it a moment, that this furnace historically refers to the sufferings of the Israelites; secondly, that it points to the tribulations of the people of God. "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." And as the lamp came out from between the sacrificial pieces, so the Israelites came out of Egypt by the paschal lamb. There it is, there began their freedom, by the Paschal Lamb. And

then, as that furnace points, as I have said, to the tribulations of the people of God, and as the lamp came out between those pieces, so you are to get out of your tribulation by the blood of the Lamb. These are they that came out of the furnace of affliction; "these are they that came out of great tribulation." How did they get out? "Washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the lamb; therefore are they before the throne of God, and they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." See this glorious vision, then. But we have not done yet. Not only do the furnace and the lamp point to the sufferings of the Israelites and their deliverance, and then to the tribulations of the people of God and their deliverance; but does it not point to something else? Last, but certainly not least, does not the furnace point to that furnace of wrath into which Christ went? Doth not the furnace point to that scene into which Emmanuel went? that he alone could quench that fire of hell that sin had lighted up, he alone could so stand between our souls and damnation as to quench that fire, and give rise from the deeps of eternity in the place of that fire, to a river of water of life, clear as crystal, flowing on through the everlasting hills, to the unutterable delight of unnumbered millions that shall adorn the heavenly plains, to the glory of that God that hath done such wonders for them. And a lamp coming out from between those pieces, what is that but Christ's resurrection? How did Christ rise from the dead? What was his right to rise from the dead? Are we not told, and are we ever weary of looking at such a beautiful scripture, that he was brought again from the dead through the blood of the everlasting covenant? Now then, let me sum up here before I come to the next part of my subject. First, we needed an interposer—"I am thy shield." We needed some place to go to where we may be happy when time has done with us—"I am thy exceeding great reward." We needed a promise of certainty, seeing everything under the sun is so uncertain: here you have that promise in Christ Jesus. We needed the Lord to change us, to bring us out of Ur of the Chaldees, out of the world, and out of our state of nature, vitally: here we have the Lord calling us by his grace. We needed the sacrifice of Christ: here we have it. We needed tribulations, we need them; the minister prays better and preaches better, and the people hear better, and get on better, and we shall get our new chapel the sooner. Why, if all of you were as easy, and as happy, and as comfortable after the flesh, caring hardly anything about your souls, pretty well in health, pretty well in pocket, and pretty well in business, and pretty well in the world, go to and fro as a matter of mere form,—What does he want to bother us about new chapels for? We are very comfortable, we are very well, we don't want to be disturbed. We have seen the fire, and we are warm enough; we wish he would be quiet. Ah, this would be death in the pot,—I say this would be death in the pot. But the Lord stirs his people up by tribulations. And you may depend upon it, if David had not had such troubles as he had, the temple could not have been half so well provided for. "It is in my trouble," he says, "I have prepared for the temple of my God:" because when he was in trouble he felt his need of the Lord to appear for him. And therefore the Lord would rather have thee crying to him out of the low dungeon, or out of the furnace, than to see thee fast asleep and careless about him that cares so much about thee; so cold towards him whose soul burns with love intense and eternal to thee. So we need the tribulations; there is a needs be; the Lord sees it, faith believes it, and by-and-bye we get the advantages thereof. But we needed the sufferings of Jesus Christ too, and there are the sufferings of Christ pointed out in the furnace, and a lamp passing out denoting the deliverance of the people of God and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. "For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace:" that is it; I like that; and ministers need to be sometimes well up in this. The

deacons may say sometimes—of course I do not mean our deacons—to a minister, Do not say too much; do not go too far; do not be extravagant; we shall get into some trouble; do not go too far. But the Lord says, "The watchmen upon thy walls shall not hold their peace day nor night." "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness;" and we go forth with it. And where do you think that righteousness will go to? Well, say you, it is sure to go to heaven. Well, then, if you go with it, you will go there too; but if you go away from it, you will not go to heaven. Christ's righteousness came from heaven, it is heavenly, and it goes to heaven; and if you go with it you will go there too. "And the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." Where do you think that salvation will go to? Well, say you, I am sure it will go to heaven; yea, it is gone there; Jesus Christ is gone there, and he is salvation. Very well, if you go with it you will go there too. Thus, then, by this vision, this gospel revelation of the great God, we are delivered from so great a hell, in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.

I will now, after noticing the vision, go to the next part; "but he that keepeth the law, happy is he." Now what law is this? The law of ten commandments? I am going to show you how we keep that. I am going to show you the impossibility of breaking it, after just stating that the law here means of course the law of faith; "he that keepeth that law, happy is he." What more would you wish to say when you come to die than this: "I have kept the faith"? "Happy is he." Or you may call it the law of love, that is, love to the truth; or, as James calls it, the law of liberty. I have stood fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made me free. Now then, let us look at this law of liberty, first pertaining to the ten commandments. The Christian cannot sin as he stands in Christ; and the law of God commands nothing, and the law of God prohibits nothing, that the Christian in Christ does not answer to. Let us try it. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." As you stand in Christ Jesus, there you are a child of God, God is your Father, he is your covenant God, you reject all others. Christ never had any other God, and you stand in him in that respect, that he is your representative. "And thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image to worship." Whatever acts of idolatry we have committed in ourselves, Jesus Christ never committed any act of idolatry, and we stand in him just as he is; and there, as we stand in him, we are as free from idolatry as he is. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." Christ never took God's name in vain; you and I have, when we have taken it erroneously, I will not say taken it profanely; that the Christian is not likely to do. But Jesus Christ never did take it in vain, and as we stand in him we are reckoned just what he is. I can never be charged with having any other God, because Christ never had. I can never be charged with any idolatry, because Christ never committed idolatry, and we stand in him. You can never be charged, I mean, as you stand in Christ, when you get to heaven, with taking the Lord's name in vain, because you stand in Christ, and your faith exempts you from all you have done, and makes you before God what he is. "Thou shalt keep holy the sabbath day;" and Jesus Christ kept holy every day, and you can never be charged with violating the sabbath, because Christ never violated it, and you stand in him, and what he is, you are to be. "Thou shalt honour thy father and thy mother." You can never be charged with dishonouring your parents as you stand in Christ, because Christ never dishonoured his parents; and whatever sin you and I have committed in this way, as we stand in Christ we can never be charged with it, because he never did. And "thou shalt not kill." Why, there is nothing to kill, nothing you can kill, not in Christ; he dieth no more, the gospel dieth no more, and the Saviour says of the people of God, "Neither

can they die any more." So you cannot kill as you stand there; you cannot murder as you stand in Christ; there is nothing to kill, nothing. Why, say you, I shall be free then. Free—of course you will, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." But there is no sexuality in Christ; "they that are counted worthy to obtain that world neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are equal with the angels." Sexual crime there is impossible, because sexuality is ended, immortality swallows the whole up, and they are equal unto the angels, and stand before God in all the purity and perfection of saintship. So that adultery is literally impossible as they stand in Christ. There is, therefore, no breakable law in Christ; to all eternity you will in this, as well as in all other respects, be safe in Christ. "And thou shalt not bear false witness;" and it is impossible for you to do it there, for you will feel that it was grace that did everything for you originally, mediatorially, manifestively, and eternally, and you will all bear a true witness there; you will all with one voice, a loud voice, an eloquent voice, like the voice of many waters, ascribe salvation to God and the Lamb. And "thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife"—no neighbour's wife to covet there; "nor his ox"—be no property there; "nor his ass"—there will be no asses there; there are plenty of these animals in this world, without being any there; but there shall be none there, therefore you cannot covet; how can you covet when you have got all? It is all yours already. Why, you may look all around heaven, and say, That mansion is mine, and that field is mine; that mountain is mine, that valley is mine, that throne is mine; the Holy Spirit is mine, and Christ is mine, and God is mine, and that brother is my brother, and that brother is my brother, and that brother is my brother; heaven is mine, it is all mine. You cannot covet, you have got everything. Now to keep the law of faith, then, is to lay hold of Christ; he is the honourable end of the law; he is the end of the law, not to the spoliation of the law, not having taken away the majesty of the law; he is the end of the law for righteousness; the law is magnified, and the people stand free to all eternity. Thus, then, if you would stand square with God's law, it must be by faith in Christ Jesus the Lord. What saith the apostle upon this? "Do we make void the law? Yea, we establish the law." And if you can find a better way of establishing the law than by Jesus Christ being made under the law for you, and establishing the law for you, then find it if you can, and point it out, and I will listen to you. For myself, I am quite content to stand upon the ground where I am now standing,—namely, that described by the apostle, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have access into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." I think I have said enough to show that the law spoken of in our text is this law of liberty. Happy is he that keepeth the law of faith, that alone can serve you through life, serve you in a dying hour, and in the judgment day. Now would you believe it that this very thing I am now stating is what the world in all ages has cried out against? Men, if you tell them they are to be damned to eternity if they do not do certain things to secure their own eternal welfare, they are delighted with that. What a mysterious thing it is that Satan should have got us into such a state by the Fall that if a man preach lies, he is sure to be listened to; if a man preach delusion he is sure to be praised up as a very paragon of perfection. But let a man come and show that there never was and never will be but one person that ever met God's law honourably since the fall of man, and that we cannot be free from that law by any good works, morality, consistency, or piety, as the people call it, of our own; that we cannot minister one iota towards it; when the law lays hold of a sinner, and says to that sinner, "Pay what thou owest," that law will never suffer that man to go out of its grasp until the Great Surety comes in with his blood and righteousness.