

SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

A WORD OF SYMPATHY TO THE INFIRM.

A S E R M O N

PREACHED ON SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 9TH, 1865, BY

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AT THE SURREY TABERNACLE, BOROUGH ROAD.

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities."—Romans viii. 26.

THOSE who are made to feel what they are as sinners before God soon realize two things; the one is their own utter helplessness in things that are eternal, and the other is that the word of the Lord doth, from time to time, so enlighten and so encourage, so strengthen and so help them, as to enable them to go on in the ways of the Lord from strength to strength. Now how this is done we should not know if the Lord did not inform us; we therefore find, in looking into the Holy Scriptures, that not only the eternal salvation, but the very comforts and helps of the people of God by the way are the joint work of the Eternal Three. The Father attracts us by his dear Son; Jesus Christ attracts us by being every way adapted to our necessities; and the Holy Spirit helpeth our infirmities by making the word—that is to say, the gospel word, that reveals the love and mercy and salvation of God—by making that word unto us powerful, lively, encouraging, and precious. And the Holy Spirit, though he does sometimes, perhaps, act without the word, yet he never acts contrary to the word; so that all he does must be tested, or all we profess, rather, must be tested by the unerring word of the truth of God. We have, then, this morning a subject before us of vital importance, at the same time very simple as to its form. And you will observe that the language of our text can only, from necessity, apply to those who are born of God; for those who are not born of God are dead; they are spiritually dead, and we cannot speak of a dead man having infirmities; the man is dead, and so we by nature are dead in trespasses and in sins, and consequently strangers to that experience I have this morning to lay before you. May the Lord help you that do know the Lord to see how gracious he has been to you; and those of you that do not know the Lord, may the Lord give you to see that you do not know him, and at the same time give you an earnest desire to know him. For the hour must come,—and time, you know, friends, we all feel, flies away very fast, and death comes in and cuts one and another down that we did not think would be cut down so soon—and the time must come when Jesus Christ shall descend in flaming fire, taking vengeance on all them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. If a man doth not experimentally and truly know God, in the believing, the gospel, the vital, and the gracious sense of the word, then he doth not know him in the way there referred to,—that know not God, and consequently cannot obey the gospel, because he doth not know the gospel. To obey the gospel is to believe it; but how are persons to believe what they neither understand nor know? Here, then, in our text we have, I say, set before us the experience of the real Christian.

Our subject comes this morning into a very simple form; it is this,—
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the infirmities felt by the people of God, and the help which they realize. These are the two things that will go together through our discourse this morning.

Now it is here said that "the Spirit helpeth our infirmities," so that here is not only the truth that the people of God are the subjects of infirmities, but also that they really are helped. Let us, then, look at the Lord's own account of these infirmities. In the first place they are represented as weak-handed: "Strengthen ye the weak hands." Now the apostle saith, "Lay hold on eternal life;" and this is one of the things which the man who is taught of God feels himself unable to do. He sees there is eternal life in Christ, and he sees that that eternal life is by believing in Christ; he sees and feels, too, that sin hath brought death, and that sin and life cannot long go together, and that Jesus Christ is "the end of sin, and that Jesus Christ hath swallowed up death in victory. Now, here is a sinner who looks to Jesus Christ, and he longs to lay hold of Jesus Christ as the end of sin; that is what you will long to lay hold of, and to receive into your own soul the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven, and to receive in your own soul a sweet assurance of interest in this eternal life. You feel you cannot do it; you see the suitability of it; you feel your own weakness; you listen from time to time to God's word, but your hand of faith is not so strengthened that you can lay hold of eternal life, and say, "This God is mine; my beloved is mine, and I am his." Here, then, is an infirmity; that is, your unbelief is very strong. But we shall see presently, strong as it is, there is something stronger. And such persons are not only seeking earnestly to lay hold of eternal life, but unable to do so, but also they wish to stand firm in the hope of the gospel; but again here they stagger. They feel sometimes that they have no right to hope; that their hope and strength are perished from the Lord. Such a one will say, I know that deluded men and women may in ignorance have a kind of vague hope in God; but if I have a hope in God I must have a reason for that hope; and if I have any hope, it is a very weak hope, a trembling hope. I have a hope in his mercy; but I do not seem able to stand so firm, and to feel sure that I have that hope that is as an anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast; that entereth into that within the veil, for nothing else can bring me into heaven. Here, again, there is infirmity, pertaining not only to faith, but also to hope. Then, again, such persons are afraid that God is against them. They see so much of their own sinfulness, and so much of their own weakness, and feel so much of what the apostle means when he says, "O wretched man that I am!" that their hearts are afraid, their hearts are smitten with fear. They reflect and say, I am afraid the great God is against me; I am afraid, when the terrible hour shall come, that I shall not stand in the judgment; I am afraid my soul will be gathered with sinners; I am not at home with sinners; I love the saints, and I love the habitation of God's house, and the place where his honour dwelleth, and I admire and adore the great Redeemer. There was a time when I thought nothing of him, and it is now my grief that I do not think more of him. Now the Lord says, "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not." But it is only as he brings this mission into the soul; as our text hath it, it is only as the Holy Spirit brings his word into the soul. If he should say to a fearful heart this morning, "Be strong, fear not; behold your God." Your God! Why, saith such a one, is he, then, my God after all? Is he, then, on my side? Will this glorious God after all condescend to be my Father and my friend? "Your God will come," that is, by his Spirit, as our text expresses it; as he came on the day of Pentecost by his Spirit, and hath done ever since, so he will now; "your God will come with vengeance." Ah, saith such an one, that is just what I thought. Yes, but you must not stop there. As he came and took vengeance on the

Egyptians that would have destroyed Israel, so he will come and take vengeance on your sins that would destroy you; and he will take vengeance on the adversities, and tribulations, and temptations that make your heart fearful. And even if you have any personal adversaries, you may pray that God would have mercy upon them; but perhaps he will not; your prayer may return into your own bosom, and he may come with vengeance, for aught I know, even against them. But if thou feelest that thou art longing to lay hold of eternal life by Christ Jesus, and cannot; thou art longing to realize the truthfulness of thy hope, that it is as an anchor to the soul, and longing to realize God's salvation; thine heart is fearful lest thou shouldst be lost, at the same time you know salvation is of grace, then I believe the promise belongs to you; "your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you?" But why should you wait for his coming to save you, if the divinity or theology of the present day be scriptural—namely, that we can lay hold of this salvation when we please, and therefore need not wait for him? Now mark the prophet, "He will come and save you." Oh, if you know your need of God's saying to your soul, "I am thy salvation;" if you know your need of the Lord assuring you by his Spirit that you are one of the saved, then you are in great part in the secret of the gospel. So, if you are thus made honest with yourself, and say with Mr. Hart,—

" May we never, never dare,
What we're not to say we are,"—

if so, you will do as Jacob did—you will wait for God's salvation; and the vision is for an appointed time; wait for it, and by-and-bye you will stand amazed, and say, Behold, God is my salvation; now my fears are gone; now I will trust, and not be afraid; now with joy shall I draw water out of the wells of salvation. Here, then, are some of the infirmities, a weakness in faith, and a weakness in hope, and a weakness in the heart; "Say to them that are of a fearful heart." And then comes dimness of sight; they complain of a want of sight. I can see Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life; but I cannot see my signs; I cannot clearly see that I am born of God; cannot see my evidences, cannot see the beginning of the work, and I cannot see the progress of it; I hardly know what to make of myself, or to make of my experience. Very well, we shall see presently what the Lord will make of it. And also they are compared to deaf persons, or partially deaf. They hear gospel sermons, and yet do not hear; they hear in the letter, but not in the spirit; they hear in the sound, but not in the substance; they hear with the natural ear, but not in the spirit. They know the difference between hearing with the natural ear, and hearing spiritually; they know the difference between being in the spirit in this respect also, and in the flesh. Also they are represented as lame; and so it appears to them that all their services of God are, as it were, lame. They say, If I try to pray, it is in a lame sort of way; and if I read the Bible, it is in a lame sort of way; and if I say anything about my experience, or God and godliness, it seems in a lame sort of way. I am so compassed with infirmity, I am such a poor creature, that I hardly know what to make of myself. It is an infinite mercy if your own soul be thus made a concern to you; it is an infinite mercy if your solemn attention be called home to your own vineyard; it is an infinite mercy if thou art thus taught to keep thine heart with all diligence; it is an infinite mercy if thou art brought solemnly to try thyself by the word of God, of what kind of spirit thou art. You know that it is the work of Satan to set us minding and caring for ten thousand things, if he can but keep our attention away from that which is essential to our welfare. Our curiosity prompts us,—Lord, what am I to think of that man? Lord, what am I to think of that woman? Lord, what am I to think of that person? "Lord, what shall this man do?" "What is

that to thee? Follow thou me." See to thine own soul; look to thine own heart; look to thine own vineyard; and then, if thou art thus taught to take heed unto thyself, and to the doctrines of free grace, and continue in them, then, in the Lord's own time thou shalt have a good testimony to bear concerning the Lord's dealings with thee.

Now this is a sample, then, from the 35th of Isaiah, of the infirmities of the people of God; infirmity—the infirmity of unbelief to hinder thy faith; the infirmity of partial despair to weaken thy hope; the infirmity of a fearful heart, in contrast to an assurance of interest in God's salvation; short-sightedness, in contrast to clearly seeing that Jesus shed his blood for them; a kind of deafness, so that there are a thousand things in their minds and ears except the gospel; sit in the house of God, and think of all sorts of trumpery, I was going to say, and worse than that sometimes, instead of listening to what they are hearing; and they strive against this and pray against this; God sees that they groan under it, and God sees that they wish Joseph would come in, and command these Egyptians to go out, while Joseph makes himself known to his brethren; then should they find that by the Spirit of Christ their unbelief, their despair, their fears, their dimness of sight, their deafness, and lameness, should all be overcome; for so it is said, that "then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart." But how is this brought about? Let us hear. "For in the wilderness;" now such persons are in a wilderness state. Here am I, saith such an one, like an owl of the desert, like a pelican in the wilderness, or like a sparrow alone upon the housetop; here am I, a poor forlorn creature; everything looks desolate; I am desolate; the Bible seems desolate to me, the ministry of the word desolate; the company of the Christian yields nothing; hymns yield nothing; all seems dull and dreary where'er I roam. By-and-bye waters shall break out in the wilderness; the still waters of everlasting love shall come rolling down by the eternal Spirit, satiate the soul; the waters of electing grace, the waters of the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness; the waters of that river that is clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb. "For in the wilderness shall waters break out"—in this wilderness state—"and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water." That Bible that appeared to be a parched ground shall now become a springing fountain; that Bible that seemed to be as a thirsty land, destitute of anything, shall now become as springs of water; and your soul, which was as a parched ground, shall now become a well of living water, springing up into everlasting life; your soul, that was as a thirsty land, shall now become springs of water, and shall flow forth towards God; and you shall rejoice that the Holy Spirit doth, by the revelation of these waters, these waters expressive of the mercy of God, that mercy which is from everlasting to everlasting; then shall you realize the truth that the Holy Spirit helpeth your infirmities. And for the part we are dealing with now,—forgive me for saying so, because it looks like assumption on my part to say I am speaking of deep things, a babe like me,—but still the part we are dealing with now is a deep part, is a path of deep experience. Now notice,—“In the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass, with reeds and rushes.” What are these dragons figuratively? I know what they are, and if you are taught of God you will know what they are; they are your sins, that is what they are; and your sins have possession of your conscience, possession of your soul; they all appear like dragons. The dragon means a tyrant, and it appears to you that every one of your sins is prepared to tyrannize to eternity over your soul. They are like dragons, roar like dragons against you. Ah, say you, all my sins, these dragons, will meet me at the bar of the great Judge of all; he will be a witness against me, and he will call these awful sins of mine in; they will bear witness—dreadful

will be my condition. But now, when Jesus comes in, the Lord slays these dragons; they lose their life, they lose their power, they are taken away, and have no more power to condemn you; nay, no power even to accuse you, for they are silenced, and silenced for ever. And now, instead of your sins, like dragons, between you and God, ready to tear your soul to pieces, and torment it to all eternity, they are gone—"there shall be grass, with reeds and rushes"—the scene shall be entirely changed. If ever your sins have been made as dragons to you, you will confess, with me, that of all trouble under the sun there is no trouble like real soul-trouble; for if all the world were to set against you, they can but kill your body at last; but if your sins are left to come against you they can damn your soul to all eternity. Such, then, that are taught of God know something of this; and when Jesus comes in, then these waters of mercy are rolled in. Jesus comes in, in the victory he hath wrought; the Holy Spirit brings home with power the testimony of what Christ has done; the consequence is, that thine enemies are banished, destroyed, gone, and gone for ever. So, then, he helpeth us in our weaknesses by bringing in the comforts of the gospel, and revealing the victory which the Saviour hath wrought over our sins. Until taught of God, we think the abominable infidelities of our nature, we think that the sins of men, are not such mighty things but that if a good moral life and a few good works be set over against them, that that will frighten them away. Ah, delusion, delusion. Thou sayest that because thou knowest not that the law of God Almighty is the strength of sin. Would you set yourself against your sin in your goodness, in your doings? I will tell you what your sins would say to you and to such doings; they would say to you, "Paul we know, and Jesus we know; but who are ye?—who are ye?" They would not be silenced by you. But let the Master come down from the mount, and say, "Why question ye with my disciples?" for you are questioning with them. "Why, Lord," the disciples said, "we could not cast them out; the devils would not go for us." "Well, I will see if they will go for me or not." The Saviour pretty soon started them off. And so, when he comes, and sets his righteousness over against our unrighteousness, and sets his atonement over against our sins, and sets his victory over against our captivity, he having led captivity captive, and sets his worthiness over against our unworthiness, his fulness against our emptiness, his mercy against our misery, his grace against our wretchedness; then, by this revelation of what Christ is, the Holy Spirit helpeth our infirmities, and we get above them, enabled to believe triumphantly and to hope joyfully, and our hearts as buoyant and as light, yea, our souls then can rise with wings as eagles, run and not be weary, walk and not faint. We can then take an immense range in our visual powers—we can see from eternity to eternity, I was going to say; we can then listen with intense delight to the truth of the glorious gospel of the blessed God. Thus, then, the Holy Spirit convinceth us of what poor, feeble creatures we are; reveals to us the mercy of God, and the victory the dear Saviour hath wrought, and hereby helps us on.

But I will take another step now, give another sample of the way in which the Spirit helpeth our infirmities.

Not only are we helped by being led to understand and realize the consolation indicated by the waters coming to us in our solitary, destitute condition, the victory Christ has wrought, but also the safety we have there; that is another way in which he helps us. "An highway shall be there,"—that is a help to us,—"and a way." I should think that the highway there referred to the way that was made through the Red Sea; it nicely answers to that; we will so take it. But there is a way as well as an highway; that way I understand to mean the way that leads to the highway—a way of safety. We shall presently see how nicely it answers. Through the sea; but how were the Israelites to get there? They cannot get to this highway if God does not make a way to it. Now by four

things the Lord made a way to the highway. First, by releasing the Israelites from their slavery. And so, when he took you from under the devil's religion, and you could no longer serve Pharaoh, who was a type of the devil; if you were a profligate man, then yours was the devil's religion; that is his religion; and if you were a Saul of Tarsus, and as pious after the flesh as Satan would like you to be, you were nevertheless Pharaoh's servant, a slave of the devil. I could come closer than this, but perhaps it is as well not just now. They must be released, therefore, from this slavery. So a sinner, to find his way to the highway, he must be released from all delusions, from all error, he must come out from the whole, leave off work. Ah, say you, who would not like to leave off work? Well, the Israelites would like to leave off work; and so those that have worked for the devil, when Jesus Christ makes them tired of it they are glad to leave it off; and those that have worked at the duty-faith treadmill, and at free-will perfection, till they find they are like the woman, they get no better, but rather worse, they will be glad to leave off, and come out of Egypt, where the Lord in his sovereignty and perfection is crucified; they will come out from such, and their faces will be set towards Zion. One step, the second step towards the highway was that they were exempted from judgment by the Paschal Lamb. So when you see creature-doings are no use, you have done with them—"only slavery; I shall get nothing for it but death when I have done;" and now the Paschal Lamb—"Behold the Lamb of God." Ah, that's it; something to eat there, and nothing to do but praise God for his mercy, receive Christ Jesus the Lord—"Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." That is another step towards the highway. Third, the Lord went before them in the cloud and directed them. So by the truth of God he will direct you into that way of sure salvation. Fourth, when the enemy was near, the Lord was the rereward of the Israelites—placed himself between the Egyptians and the Israelites, so that the Egyptians could not touch the Israelites.

These four things, then,—release from slavery, exemption from judgment by the Lamb, directed by the cloud of truth, and then defended by it,—these four things made up the way that led them to the highway. Now this highway, let us just quote it, and see how beautifully it answers; "shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those; the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there." Now, then, let us come to the test. First, it is a way of holiness; this denotes the end of sin, and as the way of infallible holiness; the ground upon which the people walked was holy; the crystal walls on the right hand and on the left were holy. How, say you, do you prove that? I prove that, sir, by one fact,—the presence of the blessed God. "Take thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." Just as no Egyptian could reach an Israelite there, just so Jesus Christ has made a way by his power, his death, through the wrath of God, and by faith in Christ Jesus you are brought to the end of sin, the end of the curse, the end of death. And as no Egyptian could touch an Israelite there, so no sin, nor death, nor harm, can touch you as you stand in Christ Jesus the Lord. It is the way of holiness,—a holy way; and it is a way of strength. Why, if you could have been there and you had seen that poor weak old woman, and that poor weak old man, and that poor weak young man, and weak young woman, for there are weak of all ages, you would have said, Why, they will never get through. No sooner did they set their foot upon holy ground than all their infirmities left them; the old became young, in a manner, and the weak became strong; and the Holy Ghost,—the same dear and blessed Divine Person spoken of in our text,—saith in the 105th Psalm, "There was not one feeble person among them." Just so by faith

in Christ Jesus, Christ stands between us and all our sins, and the moment we are enabled to take possession of that standing in Christ Jesus, the way to heaven that he has made, where there is no sin, our feebleness departs from us, our weakness departs from us, and if our locks were shorn yesterday, and we have lost our strength, they will grow again in a minute, and we shall be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, giving glory to his name. That is the highway, then; a type of the way which Christ is; Christ is the holy way, the strong way; "not one feeble person among them." "The unclean shall not pass over it." "The unclean" is a demoniacal reference—the character belonging to the devil; and all that were enemies to the Israelites were devilish; their spirits were unclean; defiled with the malice of hell against the people of God; but not one Egyptian was there. So, in Christ Jesus, there is not one man there that is not born of God, and therefore he cannot be an enemy; there is not one man in Christ Jesus that is not there by faith, therefore he is not an unbeliever; there is not one man in Christ Jesus that is not a lover of a covenant God, and therefore cannot be an enemy. Now, this way is for "the wayfaring men," *bonâ fide* travellers. They really did wish to leave Egypt, and did leave it, and loved the tidings of the promised land: it is true that that finally belonged only to a few of them. So the Egyptians would say, You are wayfaring men; you are off, are you? What fools you are to leave all these leeks, and onions, and flesh-pots, and such a nice land of pleasure as Egypt is; what fools you are! And so the people of God are reckoned fools in the eyes of the world; people think them fools. As a man said some time ago to me,—prefaced his remark with a little piece of flattery, "Well," he says, "I am surprised that a sensible man like you should believe such things as you believe." So I said, "What do I believe?" He said, "I don't know." But still it was honest in the man, for I do not believe he did know. No; the people of God know themselves what they believe, and it is a mercy that they do; but others do not; "the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." See, then, how Jesus Christ answers to this way of holiness; an end to slavery, and an end to adversaries; when we have got there, we find nothing but peace in that path. The Israelites walked through the sea; no sickness, no weakness, no loss, not one person lost. Just so it is the ransomed of the Lord shall walk in Christ, where they stand upon holy ground, where there is no unclean, where there are no adversaries; and though they are called fools for following such things, and the world thinks them to be fools, they know the world are fools in these matters; because we have been where they are, and we know their state; but they have never been where we are, and therefore are incapable of judging of our position.

Now, then, when the Holy Spirit reveals these consolations, this victory, and this way of sure escape, here "the ransomed of the Lord;"—here is the assurance;—"shall come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." The Holy Spirit thus helps our unbelief; in other words, helps our faith against our unbelief, our hope against our despair, our strength against our feebleness, our visual power against our blindness, our hearing against our deafness, overcomes our lameness, and enables us to run with delight in the way of his commandments.

I am aware I am not handling this scripture this morning in the way it is generally handled. It is generally made to refer to prayer meetings, and to ministers being enabled to preach and pray in public; and ministers have made very excellent remarks in that light, and it will undoubtedly admit of that idea. You read of the apostles that "they spake as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance." It is a great thing when a Christian can express himself by the Holy Spirit's dictation; when a minister can speak, and his very words are chosen for him by the Eternal Spirit; and

when the people can hear, and their very thoughts are chosen for them by the Holy Spirit; I say their very thoughts. What made Simeon think of going into the temple? The Holy Spirit gave him that thought. I think I'll go to the temple; I did not think of going, but now I think I will. Well, but it is a long way. I think I'll go. But it is rather cold. I think I'll go. Well, but the place is very cold. I think I'll go. Well, you hardly ever get anything. I think I'll go. Well, you will take cold, be ill for a fortnight. Perhaps I may, but I think I'll go. So the Spirit helped his infirmities, and so he got over his infirmities just so far as to go; the same as some of you have this morning. You said, "The place is so cold." I suppose the next thing will be, Satan will say, The place is so hot, I would not go if I were you. Now, the Holy Spirit gave him the thought, and he came by the Spirit into the temple; the Holy Spirit knew what would be there, and who would be there, and how he would deal with him. How astounded was that man of God when he took heaven and earth into his arms; when he took time and eternity into his arms; when he took Emmanuel into his arms; when he recognized in that babe infinity and eternity; when he recognized in that babe the redemption, salvation, of a number of immortal souls no man could number! "Now Lord"—well he might—"lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." The Spirit helped him over his bodily and other infirmities, so that he reached the holy child Jesus, and must of necessity return to his house blessing God that the Holy Spirit constrained him to overcome whatever obstacles there were, and to appear in the temple of the Lord.

Your time is gone, and my subject hardly begun; a thousand things more to say; must say only one or two. Now the Holy Spirit helpeth the people sovereignly. My friend Jonah has, in a sermon published very lately indeed, got a few stripes laid upon him, and he is dealt rather unkindly with, and Jonah is told that, as he was not in the path of duty, he could not ask the Lord to be with him when he had run away from the Lord. Well, I thought, now I don't like my friend Jonah to be dealt with like that:—because it looked to me like his,—that because Jonah ran away from the Lord, that the Lord ran away from him as well. Now I don't like that. I admit that Jonah ran away from the presence of the Lord, but I will not admit that the Lord ran away from Jonah. If he had, I don't think Jonah would have been very safe in the sea. I think the Lord was in the sea before Jonah was there, and ready to receive him when he came; and I think the Lord had got the ship ready. Why, say you, it was a whale—call it a ship! It was a ship, and a very good one; it suited Jonah very well; it was a ship in which he could not fall overboard, at any rate. And I believe the Lord was in the whale, to take Jonah down the whale's throat, so that the whale shouldn't hurt poor Jonah, and I believe the Lord sailed in the same ship. "Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight." "Yet I will look again toward thy holy temple," and so he did. What do you say, Jonah? Why, he says, "Salvation is of the Lord." "And the Lord spake" to Jonah, and told him to come out. No, say you, it does not say that. No, friends, I am fully aware of that. "The Lord spake to the fish," not to Jonah, and "it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land." Jonah thus ran away from the Lord; the Lord did not run away from Jonah. I am fully aware these things are not recorded for our example; but we are not to say that because a man runs away from the Lord, that therefore the Lord runs away from that man. I think the best way is to bless the Lord for putting such things upon record. If I had known that our friend to whom I have alluded was going to preach a sermon upon that, I certainly should have sent him a clause out of the Al-Koran, out of the book of Mahomet, where he says, "Whosoever saith, 'I am better than Jonah,' is a liar." That's not very polite, but it is very plain.