

SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

THE BEAST THAT WAS, IS NOT, YET IS.

A Sermon

PREACHED ON SUNDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 5TH, 1865, BY

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AT THE NEW SURREY TABERNACLE, WANSRY STREET.

“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”—Revelation xiii. 8.

JOHN in the beginning of this book testifies that he was “in the Spirit on the Lord’s day;” and it was this spiritualization of his mind that caused him to be so interested in the things of God. There is no vital, no solemn, no real interest felt in the things of God until life is brought into the soul; and even after that life is brought, it requireth the power of the Holy Spirit to keep up from time to time within us that spirituality of mind that shall keep us deeply interested in our own souls, and make us solemnly seek to live a life of fellowship with God; and secondly, deeply interested in the souls of others; and thirdly, in the welfare of Zion at large. All the prophets entered deeply into this spirit, so did all the apostles: one said he counted not his life dear unto him, that he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry he had received of the Lord, to testify of the gospel of the grace of God. And this spirit of deep interest in eternal things is the Spirit of the Father; for God the Father is deeply interested in the welfare of his people: it is the Spirit of Christ; for these great ends he loved us, and gave himself for us; a spirit of interest in—a felt interest in the things of God is that of the Holy Spirit, and this Spirit of God unites us to God, makes us acquainted with the deep things of God; that while eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor entered into the heart of man the things that he hath prepared for them that love him, yet he hath revealed them to us by his Spirit. And there is in what I am now saying something not only scriptural, not only Christian, not only truthful, but something reasonable; for it is reasonable to conclude—I think so—that eternal things infinitely outweigh time things, and that salvation matters infinitely outweigh the matters merely of this world, and that divine association is an association that infinitely surpasses everything else. Let us, then, friends, let men say what they may, go on to pray to the Lord in the language of one of old, and a good prayer it is, “Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law;” the word *law* there, I apprehend, meaning the law of truth, of life, of faith. And whatever we have seen, however much we have been attracted by the Saviour, however much our hearts are bound up in eternal things, we know as yet only in part, and that a very small part; by-and-bye that which is perfect shall come, and then the soul will, by a perfection of knowledge, be made perfectly happy. No wonder that the apostle, therefore, after all the favours bestowed upon him, should still be praying that he might “know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.”

Our text divides itself into two parts. Here is, first, *the enemy to be conquered*; here is, secondly, *the registration of the conquerors*. “All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”

I notice, then, in the first place, *the enemy to be conquered*. This enemy is a tyrant that tyrannizes over God's truth; that would put down the truth of regeneration, the perfection of mediation, the sovereignty of God; in a word, that would put down the gospel in that shape and form by which alone sinners can be saved. And this enemy is made up of various sects and parties, as will naturally come before us as we go along. Hence at the head of this chapter you read of the beast having the body of a leopard, the feet of a bear, the mouth of a lion, and that the dragon, the devil, giveth him "his power, and his seat, and great authority." Now in the 8th verse of the 17th chapter this beast is described in a very peculiar way, and that will enable me to set this part of the subject before you, I think, with some degree of clearness. It there saith that this beast—that is, this tyrannical power; it does not mean any particular man, nor any one particular people, but it means the spirit of tyranny, which I shall have to speak of rather sharply presently, when I come to that part,—it saith that this beast, or tyrannical power, ascendeth from the bottomless pit, and that it goeth into perdition; and that "they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from"—it there saith—"the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is;" there is the key to the whole. Now I will take a fivefold view of this beast that was, that is not, and yet is. I will apply it first to Jerusalem. Jerusalem, by its apostacy from God's covenant, forsaking his covenant, digging down his altars, slaying his prophets—Jerusalem thus became a wild beast; and that tyrannical beast exercised its power in crucifying the Lord of life and glory; that wild beast exercised its power in following up to the very utmost of its power, with persecution, the holy apostles of the Lamb. Thus, then, any spirit of tyranny against Christ is the beast; but those whose names are written in the book of life will not bow to that tyranny; they will hold fast the truth, let them suffer what they may, let the consequences be whatever they may; and the consequences have been as direful to the flesh as it is possible they could be, yet the saints remained unconquerable; they overcame this tyranny; this tyranny could not sever them from the love of God that was in Christ Jesus; they were more than conquerors there. Thus Jerusalem was the beast that was, and is not. Presently that beast loses its power; Jerusalem is destroyed, and the members of the beast are scattered to this day, like bones at the grave's mouth. There is the beast that was, is not, yet is. There is the wild beast, there is his work, he is destroyed, he is not. Where are those that he tyrannized over? See the heavens opened; see the Crucified One; see the Dying One, the Groaning One, the Sorrowful One, the Bleeding One, the Slain One; see him shining brighter than ten thousand suns at God's right hand; see him rise from his august seat to receive the departing spirit of Stephen, his faithful witness. There, wild beast, see the end of thy work; what hast thou done? Thou hast sent the Saviour to heaven, and damned thyself to hell. And all shall worship this wild beast except those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. Again, "The beast that was, and is not." Where are the holy apostles, Peter and others, that this beast slew before he himself was slain, where are they? Listen to their tremendous request: "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held; and they cried with a loud voice"—with accents of deeper solemnity than we can imitate,—saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season"—a thousand years in heaven is but a little season, if I may so, I was going to say, terrestrialize heaven for a moment; the progress of time is not felt there—"they should rest yet for a little season,"—until some more of their brethren shared the same fate, then should the vial of the wrath of

Almighty God be poured out upon the members of this beast, for conquered they must be. Here, then, is the beast, there is his work, and the beast now is not. "And yet is." Paradoxical, say you. "Yet is." There was a work some time ago—I do not know whether it is printed now or not—called *The Jewish Chronicle*. Take up that work, sir, read it, and you will find in it the same spirit that crucified Christ; you will find in it the same spirit that persecuted the saints. The whole body of Jews now possess the same spirit of enmity against Christianity that they did when Christ was crucified, and therefore, though this tyrannical power no longer organically exists, it is not in that sense, yet in spirit it is, and they only want the opportunity, and they would shed the blood of the saints, inspired by that Satanic influence under which they are now, and were in bygone ages. Thus we see the beast that was, is not, and yet is; see the changes he undergoes, every one to his disadvantage; see the changes the saints undergo, every one to their advantage. Now, then, all should worship this tyrannical power, that is, when it is in the ascendant; but it is now in its detriment and fall, terms which the learned editor of the *Standard* does not understand. Now this beast, then, I say, exists in spirit, and all shall worship him whose names are not written in the book of life. But those whose names are written in that book, they trace their ancestral line in the genealogy of heaven; they trace their descent from Deity itself, born of God, loved of God, chosen of God, heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ. On my side omnipotence, on my side eternity, on my side the Creator of the ends of the earth; and shall I, with such a God on my side, bow to any tyrannical power, however great? If I traced my conversion up to the doings of this pious beast; if I traced my conversion up to those that compass sea and land, and I must trace my genealogy to them, why, then, of course, in all humility I must bow down and worship them. But no, I disdain all these, turn my back upon the whole, and trace my spiritual birth and ancestral line up from everlasting, even from before the foundation of the world.

Now this beast also means Rome. Rome was once in the ascendant; Rome was once in the seat of the dragon; Rome once had dear old England at command, and we ought to be shot, to save the trouble of hanging us, if in our day we suffer Popery to get old England into its clutches again. It is trying at it, and professors are fast asleep, a great many of them. Time was when Rome commanded the kings of the earth, and wielded the secular sword, and cut down thousands of the saints of God, and the old whore became drunk with the blood of the saints. This is the beast that was. But up rose mighty men, made mighty by the power of God; one gave the beast a wound, another gave him a wound, another gave him a cut on his head there, and one of the heads of the beast was wounded to death, and the poor old beast groaned, but he did not die; he lay down, and has been lying for four hundred years now, and the priests are trying to lift him up again; but God forbid he should ever rise. No; he was, and there is an end of him. Those were times in which people did not use set phrases in prayer meetings, as they do now,—“I beseech thee,” and “The Lord bless us,” and so on; do not hardly know what to say; empty words, over and over and over again; stereotype concerns, empty, formal nothings. No; in that day they were knocked about, and kicked about, and driven about, and slandered about, and reproached about; you would not have been at a loss for prayer then. When Christians prayed in that day they prayed in reality; they sighed, and groaned, and cried to God, and mighty power rested upon them; they could laugh at their mightiest foes, rejoice amidst the fiercest flames, bear the most cruel tortures, could lie on a gridiron till they were roasted on one side, and sarcastically say to their tormentors, “Turn me over; I am done on that side, then I shall be fit to be served up.” That is religion, sir; there they defied the beast.

All shall worship him, except those election people; they were always reckoned very stubborn people, very obstinate people; never could bow them; they did not worship him, they would not worship him; they could not worship him; they would worship God, and God only. So, then, the beast that was and is not, and never is to be again,—at least I hope not, in our country or other countries either,—and yet is—yet is, in spirit. Who doubts the design of the Pope now? who doubts the design of Catholicism now? who doubts the wicked end they have in view? who doubts that that religion is the smoke of hell? who doubts that it comes from the bottomless pit, and must go into perdition, whence it came. Thus it shall go back to its origin, as the soul that is born of God returns to God, and shall behold its glorious original. Ah! say some, yes, sir, that beast did once exist, but it is not now; it is a better spirit now; we ought to worship it now; we ought to be friendly now; we ought to be quiet now. I assure you that our sisters of mercy are dear creatures, and that the priests are dear creatures, and therefore as matters are now become so calm, let us all have one purse, let us be all quiet, and go on comfortably. These are the propositions of flesh and blood, and to this the majority of religions tend. But no, the beast still exists in spirit. The poor reptile is frozen; just take it into your bosom and warm it. You, sir, that would nourish it, would be the first man the viper would bite; and therefore beware of this spirit. Thus, then, “all shall worship him whose names are not in the book of life;” and so they did, and so they do. The beast once was, it is not, in its ascendant power, yet in spirit it still is.

Thirdly, I have a word for Mrs. Church this morning as well. The Church of England was in tyrannical power. Just read, for instance, the history of that murderous woman Queen Elizabeth; see a man torn from his home and his family by that *nice* lady, see him put into Newgate, see his limbs drawn back, his arms and legs and shoulders drawn together behind him till the blood spurted out of every part of his body, and so he died. Who did that? the Church of England, sir; she was a beast that was. But by the heroism of truth, the heroism of the dear old Puritans—though some of them were hardly clear in head they were right in heart;—they used the panoply of heaven, and in defiance of all the power that old beast once wielded, they belaboured her with the sword till they levelled her with the ground; and so the beast was, and now is not, and yet is—yet is. Ah no, she is very much altered. Is she, sir? What does Puseyism mean, then? What do your lighted candles mean, then? What do your crucifixes mean, then? What do your Church of England convents mean, then, if she is altered? Hence she is not, yet is. Ah! if thou knowest the Lord, thou wilt not worship her. Well, but say you, some good men are in her communion. I know there are, in that Babylon, or else the Lord would not say, “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” No; the Church of England prayer-book has some good things in it, but it is of no more authority than a letter that I might write to a friend. The priests and ministers and bishops of the Church of England are made priests and ministers and bishops by the secular power, and not by the Holy Spirit of the eternal God; and all that bow to the system worship the beast that was in tyrannical power, is not now, yet is in spirit. Say you, “You seem rather saucy this morning.” This is nothing to what you will have presently, and next Sunday morning. I tell you.

Fourthly, there is the Dissenting beast. What have we lately? We have *hypers* uniting with low doctrine, and with no doctrine! What for? Why, to put down liberty of conscience; that is their aim, sir. I admit they are but cubs at present; I admit that they cannot make much noise, nor do much at present; but they are coming together, bone to his bone;

high doctrine, low doctrine, no doctrine, and any doctrine, all coming together; we shall have the leopard's body presently; we shall have the bear's feet, the lion's mouth; we shall have the devil exalted, the truth degraded, and the people of God despised. Will I worship it? Let my breath stop first, before I bow to any sect, party, or system that would trammel my conscience, and deprive me of the liberty of judging for myself. Sir, I would no more trust a company of modern Dissenters than I would trust a company of ultramontane Roman Catholic priests. If they could tyrannize they would; it is not for want of will but for want of power. My name is in the book of life; my ancestry is independent of them, my inheritance and my hope are independent of them. I am a thorough Baptist-Independent, that is what I am, and I want you to be the same. Now, then, that beast, consisting, made up of several little cubs just at present, which is, and by-and-bye will not, and yet will be—bow to none.

Now if I am spared till next Sunday morning I have to give what I think I may call my defence, but it will not be such a one as some of you might think. I have been in a conciliatory mood, desiring so to explain things as to conciliate my opponents, and bring matters to a peaceful issue. But that day is gone, sir; these last twenty-four hours have brought about an irreversible revolution in my mind. I will hear no terms of peace; I will accede to nothing that shall in any way bring my conscience into bondage. I am got beyond all remonstrance, all reasoning. Much as I love our deacons, and happy as I am with them, not a soul shall I listen to contrary to the position I have taken to defend myself sternly and decisively against my opponents upon the faith of Rahab. Much as I love you, the members of the church, and care for you, yet not a sentence shall move me; much as I love the congregation at large, and friends about the country, yet I have passed the Rubicon, the matter is done, my sword is drawn, my shield is anointed, my credentials clear, my watchword given, "Conquer or die." "War to the knife," sir, shall be my motto now as long as I breathe. I will be tyrannized over by none. When Julius Cæsar, having halted at a stream of water, called the Rubicon, which parted Cisalpine Gaul from Italy, said, "If I do not cross the river, I am undone; if I do cross it, how many calamities shall I by this means bring upon Rome!" He mused a few minutes, and then cried, "The die is cast." Hence ariseth the saying, when unalterable decisions are taken, "I have passed the Rubicon." So have I. And I will in this part of my subject tell you two or three things. There is an end I have in view. Ah! say some, you will make matters by that course ten times worse than they are. I hope so—I hope so—that's my very hope, that's my very desire; I shall be disappointed if I do not; that is the very end I have in view, sir. Why have you? I will tell you what end I have in view by that. I can take a great deal; I have borne it all very quietly; but I have done now, do not think of peace now; no, it is over. A kind Providence and the grace of God have put me out of the reach of my persecutors. But there are ministers differently situated from myself that are on my side, and on your side, that are not out of their reach, and they are now turning their tyrannical power and tyrannical hands against these brethren, and they will continue to do so. I will give you one sample:—A minister that preached in a chapel a few days ago happened to give a hint that he belonged to the Rahab family. Divine genealogy! Ah, the old gaoler of a deacon took him into the pew and rated him well, and gave him such a lecture, put the manacles on his feet and his hands, and a muzzle on his mouth; but—the wicked fellow!—he had the ill grace to slip the muzzle off, and slip the manacles off, and leave them in the pew for the old gaoler of a deacon to put them on somebody who could wear them. Now, then, there are a great number of ministers in the country that see as I see, that are on my

side, but they dare not show it. What is to be done? I'll tell you what ought to be done—something we have not yet done. There are a number of ministers about the country; there is a man in that town, a man in that town, a man in that village, under such pressure that they dare not speak out. They would, if they could be free, be useful preachers; but their wings are clipped, they are muzzled; and then they are blamed for not being attractive preachers and filling the place; their mouths are stopped; and then they are blamed for not preaching better. What, then, is to be done? I hope to make matters ten times worse; then the eyes of men that hate bondage will be opened. We shall have, I hope, before next spring passes over, a glorious meeting in this building—scores and scores of oppressed ministers—to form ourselves into a band to stand fast for the liberty of conscience. We ought, God sparing us, to raise a fund, and find the means to fetch out some of our poor, obscure brethren in the villages and towns, where they are doomed to preach in a loft, or a stable, or a back room, and are hated and scouted. We have not done as we ought to have done in this matter. I think that chapels in villages and in towns might be built for such earnest, godly men, and that if they were brought out and made free, where they are preaching now to half-dozens they might be preaching to hundreds. They dare not open their mouths. I mean to fight, but I mean to fight fairly; I will not fight in a dastardly way. But for me to lay my highest honours down submissive at the feet of my opponents—let me die first. Now I am started, the sword is drawn; and I say now (for I am this morning speaking to thousands of people who are not here)—I say now, Ye oppressed ministers, send to the *Earthen Vessel* and to the *Gospel Guide*, and there your wants and wishes will be made known. Let all who are determined not to worship the beast come forward; let them throw an agis of protection over the oppressed minister, who perhaps has a large family, a little income, and is fettered, and cannot preach as he would do if he were free. Something must be done to free these oppressed men, and to give them that high, dignified position which they would occupy with a very little help. That, sir, is the end I have in view. Ministers go dawdling on now, quite content things should be as they are. Why, I do not much wonder at Roman Catholics laughing at our slow progress; I do not much wonder at other sects and parties laughing to see us so fast asleep. And those who profess to be our own brethren—I will go into that next Sunday morning—look at the writings they have issued lately. And when their attention is called to this building, what do they say? “Their boasted chapel, their fine chapel, their magnificent chapel.” Oh, shame to man when he sees a building rise to accommodate hundreds of precious souls for their eternal salvation, instead of falling on his knees before God, and blessing him for one step in the right direction, he sets to do all he can to degrade the minister, insult the people, and stop the gospel, and thus show he is led by the spirit not of God, but by another spirit. I seek reconciliation. Never shall it be mine to bow or sue for grace at their hands. I need no mercy, I shall never receive justice, and I will stand fast by the truth, and you will stand fast by me; I know you will. I am not exactly the piece of boiled bread they take me to be; I am not the one to be squeezed into any shape or form they may please. No. I have to war not with men, but with principles,—any further, of course, than men involve themselves in those principles. I have to wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with those little principalities whose spirit is the very spawn of Popery; against powers, against the powers of darkness of this world, against powers that would try to injure, and against spiritual wickedness in high places setting themselves up above others. And I may as well say in this part (for I suppose I shall not get to the latter part of my text this morning) I did not get into this warlike spirit until yesterday, but I

shall never get out of it again as long as I live. I do not mean that I am going to preach contentiously, in a wrong spirit; but I mean that I shall never forsake my colours, but stand fast. And that piece sent to me upon the words of Rahab, written in the old *Gospel Magazine*, which magazine was commenced by the great Toplady, that piece sent to me shall be printed with my defence next Sunday. If I pawn my coat to pay the printer, it shall go. Away with tyranny. I attribute one cause of the prosperity we have had at the Surrey Tabernacle is that the people have, by the grace of God, governed themselves. The minister has never governed them. They have governed themselves, they have judged for themselves, they think for themselves. And the people that sneer at you, and say, "Anything their parson says they will swallow." I tell such men they are egregiously mistaken. Let those gentlemen that charge my congregation with such ignorance and sycophancy, let them come into this pulpit and preach some of their trash; they would find out their mistake very soon.

There is one more sense which may apply to some of you. There may be some man or some woman offended with you, and they may be in circumstances capable of oppressing you and persecuting you. That is the beast. Never mind, do not compromise, do that which is right, keep your conscience clear, hold fast the truth, and that beastly spirit that leadeth them to oppress you will by-and-bye be destroyed; God will come and smite the tyrant down, as Goliath was smitten down, and as Nebuchadnezzar was driven into the fields, and the Lord's people set free. The beast that was, is not, yet is in spirit; care not for the spirit all the time they have not the power. Now all those names, then, that are in the book of life shall stand upon freedom's ground; they shall worship God, and God only; each shall know the truth for himself, and shall abide thereby.

Now the question arises, What is the book of life? I have no time, and I shall not attempt to enter this morning into any detailed account of the latter part of our text; I therefore simply point out the book of life in conclusion, and leave you to judge whether you answer to the character of the man whose name is in the book of life. If so, God is on your side; stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and it shall be well with you. And lest I should make any mistake about it, I will just read the book of life to you, and you will find the character described; and if your name is there, why, then, you will worship God, and God only, and you will not side even with good people if they get into a wrong spirit. If any one saith to you, "Oh, but don't you think such and such is a good man?" "Yes." "Don't you think so and so is a good man?" "Yes." "Don't you think so and so is a good man?" "Yes." "Then we ought not to talk like this." Stop; do you know what is coming? I suppose you hold that Calvin was a good man? Oh yes. And would you side with him in burning a man alive, as he did Servetus? Would you not oppose him in that? I am not going to oppose any man, only where he opposes my liberty of conscience—that is all. I am not going to oppose John Calvin in the truth, I love him there; I am not going to oppose him in his popularity and usefulness, I love him there; but I stand against him in burning a poor man alive because that man did not see as he did. That man had just as much right to burn John Calvin alive for differing from him as John Calvin had to burn him alive; just as much; it would not have been more criminal. Not that I hold with the sentiments of Servetus, whom Calvin burnt alive; much less do I hold with the murderous conduct of one man burning another for not seeing exactly as he does. Well, now, here is the book of life, and the character: "In that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book." What are the words of the book? you will see as you go on; I want to know what the words of the book

are. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." Can you hear that? Yes, say you, I love that; I love to hear the words of life. Well, that is the book of life. "In that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness." Is it so with you? Once you did not see Jesus as the altogether lovely, you do now; once your visual powers were so obscured you could not see the glory of the everlasting covenant as you do now. Then, if you do see, your name is in the book of life. "The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor"—they are poor; so you, can you see you are poor enough to need God's mercy and salvation?—"the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. For the terrible one is brought to nought, and the scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity"—to feed upon the supposed or real sins of God's people—"are cut off;" that is, in God's purpose, and those that are cut off in his purpose by-and-bye shall be cut off by his power; "that make a man an offender for a word," practically so; "and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turneth aside the just for a thing of nought." The book of life is the gospel, then; and those whose names are there are those who see the beauty of Christ, the order of the covenant, who listen to these tidings, and who are poor and needy, and have no joy but in the Lord their God. Now mark the promises to those that receive these testimonies. "Therefore, thus saith the Lord, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob, Jacob shall not now be ashamed"—now that God has cast the devil out, put away sin, brought in everlasting righteousness; "neither shall his face now wax pale. But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the midst of him;"—we saw twenty-four last Thursday night, and were here till past ten o'clock listening to their testimonies; and if we could have heard them all out we should have been here till twelve o'clock. I thought I would mention that, because I am a poor hand at commenting, and when I can give you a practical comment, it does better than theoretical. And I have seen several since that said they would have been here if they could; so we shall have them next, bless the Lord for that. Now, then, when he saith "children," there I understand it to mean divinely formed children, spiritually formed children, children of God, heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ. "When he seeth his children, the work of mine hands in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name;" and so they shall be as happy as possible before they have done. Well, say you, If some of our opponents had been there, they would have hung their heads down, thrown their daggers away, cast the mask off, and said, "What fools we have been;" but then they were not there. Well, come, here is a promise for my opponents; for it says, "They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured," because poor Rahab was justified, "shall learn doctrine." God grant it may be so. Amen, and Amen.