

SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

THE FIRST AND ULTIMATE BLESSING.

A Sermon

PREACHED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JULY 16TH, 1865, BY

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AT THE SURREY TABERNACLE, BOBROUGH ROAD.

“For the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground.”—Genesis ii. 5.

It is next to impossible to read the literal history of the creation without feeling that it hath some reference in its manner and circumstances to that new creation which is to remain for ever. Hence you find that when the heavens and the earth were finished, the whole was dedicated to God by the seventh day. Jesus Christ himself is that sabbath day; he is our release from labour, and he is our rest, and he is our light. And as in the account here given there is no morning or evening given historically to the sabbath day, that lays before us, as in the case of Melchizedek and the priesthood of Christ, the eternity of the Saviour, that he is our everlasting light. “This is the day the Lord hath made, and we will be glad and rejoice therein.” Now all the people of God, then, are dedicated to God by Jesus Christ; he is the release; he is the sabbath which the Lord hath sanctified, and which he hath blessed. And then we are assured in the former part of this verse that “every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew,” was made by the Lord. We cannot read this verse without being reminded of the Lord choosing his people even from everlasting. He constituted them plants and trees in his own eternal mind, and that before the world was. And amidst the rest, hath not our text a spiritual meaning? “The Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground.” I will not occupy your time with any of the speculative and curious opinions which are upon record of various learned men as to the literal meaning of our text, but after a remark or two shall at once proceed to notice it in that which, I think, is spiritually implied. Now “the Lord God had not caused it to rain.” I shall have to notice, first, *what is meant by that rain which was to come*; secondly, *how Adam, in many respects, was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ*.

Now here is an interval between the creation and rain; and this appears to me to represent three intervals that belong to the new creation. First, there is the interval of space between the first promise and the coming of Jesus Christ; secondly, there is the interval between the soul being born of God and the time when it realizes the blessings of the gospel; and then, thirdly, there is the interval between the soul's departure from its time state into eternity, before the ultimate blessings are brought down. And then we shall see that the Lord granted a lesser blessing until the ultimate and great blessing came; and this is a doctrine which I may call the doctrine of little helps, until the great helps shall come; and it sets before us, therefore, very many things pertaining to the experience of the people of God, and the Lord's dealings with them. I will therefore, in the first place, notice the rain which is here referred to, which

had not yet come; secondly, how the Lord sustained things until he did send that rain; and then, thirdly, that the Saviour is that great husbandman that was to come, and bring about that state of things beautifully typified in this chapter. I notice, then, first, the rain here referred to. "The Lord God had not caused it to rain." Every one at once sees how completely rain is at the Lord's commands, and therefore expressive of his sovereignty. It is said of the remnant of Jacob that "they shall be as dew," which is, of course, a kindred idea, "that it tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men." I may at once just observe that Jesus Christ is the rain that was to come. Hence, in the 72nd Psalm, "He shall come down like rain," which, of course, is an abstract with a relative meaning; that is, the Lord Jesus Christ—for rain is made here, as we shall presently have more largely to observe, a figure of all the blessings of eternal mercy which are by the Lord Jesus Christ—and as grace and truth came by him, so he, therefore, is spoken of as the rain; "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth." And there is a great deal more in this than may at first sight appear. Now first, then, we notice the blessings indicated by the rain. In the old covenant it stood thus:—26th of Leviticus, the Lord said unto the people, "If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them, then I will give you rain in due season." Here you will see that the former and the latter rain, and those blessings they needed as essential to their temporal welfare, were promised to them on the ground that they would walk in God's statutes, and should keep his commandments, and do them. Such was the way of the old covenant. Now let us see how we are to handle this matter. It is thus: the people themselves had to take up the conditions of that covenant; the people themselves had to overcome that *if* that stands there—"If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them." Let us see, then, how we are to Christianize it; for the blessings were to come just in proportion as they walked in God's statutes and kept his commandments to do them. Now we come to the new covenant, and we come to the Lord Jesus Christ. And it gladdens my heart—the very thought of it gladdens my heart—that neither the Scriptures nor our own experience, neither angels in heaven nor men on earth, nor even devils in hell, are able to throw the least suspicion upon this one great truth, that the Lord Jesus Christ did in perfection walk in God's statutes; that the Lord Jesus Christ did in perfection keep God's commandments to do them; that this stands out as a truth all through the Bible; and you are not to have the blessings by your walking in his statutes, by your keeping his commandments and doing them; you are not to have the blessings in this way; for, instead of a blessing, if you attempt it, you will get a curse; "Cursed is he that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." And if the Israelites lost the temporal blessing, and could not walk even temporally in the statutes and commandments of the law, so as to keep up their national and temporal prosperity, how much less can you, with a wicked heart, a fallen nature, perhaps an afflicted body, a tempting devil, a trying world, perplexing circumstances! You undertake to continue in all things written in the book of the law to do them! You undertake it! Why, poor moth, poor worm, you might just as well undertake to create a world. Let Jesus Christ come in, and let him be the end of the old covenant law, as well as the end of the law of ten commandments; and he did walk in perfection in God's statutes, he did keep God's commandments. I will not this morning run through them, which I have done many times before, to show that he did. And you are to have the blessings not by your doings; no; the law speaketh in this wise, that he that doeth these things shall live in them; but the word of faith, which is the word we need, poor creatures as we are—our high privilege, the highest privilege any man can have on earth, is

to be led by the Holy Ghost to believe in Jesus Christ, and to look for the rain from heaven, to look for the blessings, by what he hath done; and therefore the word of faith speaketh on this wise, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, then the promises are thine, the blessings are thine. What life, what blessing, is there that doth not belong to him that believeth? Now thus we get rid of the *if*, and thus we get rid of the curse, by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now let us go on to look at some of the blessings. The Lord says, if this be done;—it has been done; must stick to that; it has been done. Well, but you make us out poor nothings; so you are poor nothings; and if you are offended at that, you must go farther than that; the word of God declares that we are less than nothing; an expression I shall not attempt to analyze; I think it stands best as it is, that we are nothing, and less than nothing. Now, then, there stands the truth that Jesus Christ hath brought in righteousness as durable as eternity itself; that he hath brought in a perfection as durable as eternity itself; and the word of God declares that grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, and that there is no blessing without him; “No man cometh unto the Father, but by me;” and he hath given all things to Christ; blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ. So, then, it is come to us by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. “Now to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly;” his faith cleaves to Jesus, and the man by that faith gets rid of his character as ungodly, and becomes a godly man, a believing man, a new man, and interested in all the blessings of the covenant. Now the Lord says, “I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruits. Where shall we get a Scripture explanation of this? 5th chapter of the Romans. Mark, the rain was to come at the right time, just where it was needed, and when it was needed, and in that proportion in which it was needed. 5th chapter of the Romans: “When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” There is the rain, there is the rain. “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” “God commendeth his love to us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Here, then, is the due season. So that by Jesus Christ, then, we have all the blessedness by precious faith in him we can need. But just a word upon the due season. When we were unconvinced of our state, we were not in due season then for the gospel. We could read of this blessing of heaven then, but we have thought nothing of it. Now, through the Lord’s mercy, we think a great deal of it; namely, that “as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” Now has it not done so? Hath not the Lord so softened our hearts, and hath he not so lightened our eyes, that there is not that I know of anything more clear to us than this, our need of Jesus Christ. Ever remember, to feel your need and see your need rightly of the mercy of God, the evidence of this is to know your need of Jesus Christ. There are many professors will acknowledge their need of mercy, and even their need of grace, but not according to the Scriptures I have just now stated—that Jesus Christ is the end of the law, and that by him the blessing comes; by him we have life, and everything the Lord hath ever promised. And then what is there said in the 55th of Isaiah, to which I have referred, is realized more or less in the experience of every Christian—namely, just

noticing in this part only the last verse, that "instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree;" that is to say, this blessing, this change which the gospel works, brings us out: for the thorn is a figure of our state of enmity, of worthlessness; and the brier is a figure of the same thing, our state of enmity and worthlessness; where this blessing comes, there we are brought out of that state; "and it shall be to the Lord for an everlasting sign, that shall not be cut off." And you will observe included in this one blessing—namely, by Jesus Christ—is everything you could think of. Hence the Lord goes on in that same chapter to assure his people that they shall eat bread to the full, shall dwell in the land safely. Now Jesus Christ, or the blessings which are by him—there it is we eat bread to the full in the spiritual sense, as the people of God bear testimony: "We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thine holy temple." And again, "O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full of the blessing of the Lord." So that by Jesus Christ there is all we need in the spiritual sense of the word. But then we need great spirituality of mind so to recognize it and to realize it, and to live that life of faith in Jesus Christ that shall enable us to make comparatively little of other things; the Lord alone can enable us to do this. It is, then, by Jesus Christ that the blessings were to come. And it is more than probable, more than possible, that our text by implication may even refer so far forward as the day of Pentecost. See what a time those clouds, shall I say those scriptural clouds of witnesses recorded in the 2nd of Joel, what a time they lay there. But when Jesus Christ had been, and ascended to glory, then the Holy Ghost descended, then these blessings descended, and thousands on that day realized the truth of the words of Moses, "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, and shall distil as the dew; as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as showers upon the grass." It is by Jesus Christ, then, that we get rid of drought, famine, and death.

And, indeed, running through that part, which I must not now stop to do, of the 26th of Leviticus, you will see that it commences with these blessings, and the Lord goes on describing these blessings until every evil is got rid of, whether it be wild beasts, or famine, or sword; let it be what it may, every evil is got rid of. And so by Jesus Christ every evil is got rid of. But then, when you go on in the 26th of Leviticus a little farther you find, "If ye will not walk in my statutes, if ye will not keep my commandments, then all these curses shall come upon you." So you see their obedience reached a very little way. But the obedience that we have imputed to us, namely, Christ's righteousness, screens us from all that; Christ's atonement screens us from all that. Oh, then, say some, we need not keep his statutes. We cannot keep them in the legal sense; we can keep them only by faith, and by laying hold of what Jesus Christ has done. What does this do? Why, it brings us into such a spirit of reconciliation with God as, in the highest and best sense of the word, to keep his commandments, not legally, but by faith. Hence, for instance, the Saviour said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and thy neighbour as thyself." And if we are brought into this acquaintance with what Jesus Christ has done, that he is that heavenly rain that puts an end to every necessity and to every curse, and brings us into every blessing, what doth this do? Why, it endears the Lord our God, it makes us love him, and it endears his people, for we see something in his people that we see in none others; in a word, it brings us into that unity of spirit, for love is the fulfilling of the law. No wonder, therefore, that the apostle should say that the law is fulfilled, though not *by*, yet *in* us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. Now that man that so loves the truth that he would rather part with anything and everything than part with that truth, that certainly is love sincere; and that man that would rather suffer anything than have a wilful enmity to any one child of God under

the heaven, why, that is love sincere. So that Jesus Christ, then, hath met all the demands of the law, brought in everlasting righteousness, and all the blessings come to us by faith in him; so that such shall realize the fulfilment of the Lord's word, wherein he has said that he will make his Zion and the place round about a blessing, and there shall be showers of blessing, and those showers, therefore, are by the Lord Jesus Christ. He, then, is that great rain of God's strength that has put an end to death, to sin, to the curse, and to everything evil. And what is our object in believing in him, or what is our object in looking to him? It is to go from strength to strength, until we realize in perfection what he himself hath done.

But I will now just glance a moment at the interval. Until the rain came, it is said, "There went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground." So the Lord found a way to bless the antediluvians. They longed to see the great rain of God's strength come; they longed to see Jesus Christ come; they longed to see the law actually fulfilled, and sin actually put away. They did not see this; they saw the promises afar off. But you learn in the 11th of Hebrews that even these antediluvians were furnished with a knowledge of Christ; by faith in Christ they were comforted and refreshed, but none of them were happy, perfectly so, so happy as they would have been to see Christ come. There is something, as we shall presently have to observe, in the real Christian persevering in this matter. So with the postdiluvians in the patriarchal age, they waited and longed for the coming of Christ, and so the ceremonial law was a kind of mist, as it were, by which the Lord watered and refreshed the people from time to time, but all of them longed for the coming of Christ. There is no doubt that Satan did sometimes work in their minds and say, Here are hundreds of years rolling away; no Messiah yet. Hence the dear Saviour, who knew well the feelings of the Old Testament saints, saith, "Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see the things that ye see, and have not seen them." They did see them, of course, in prophecy, but the dear Saviour's meaning was, in actual accomplishment. They longed after it; all the Old Testament saints were directed to that one great centre—the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. But the Lord found a way to support his people. We have, then, the doctrine here, that if the great and ultimate blessing has not come, the Lord finds a means of sustaining his people until it doth come. It may not, perhaps, have been very pleasant for Elijah to be by the brook Cherith, and to be fed by ravens; he longed for the rain to come, he longed for the plenty to come, he naturally longed for an end to this state of things. And so you read that while he had prayed for this drought for the good of the people, he also afterwards prayed, as you see, and interposed by sacrifice, for the coming of rain. But the Lord supported him. And I dare to say it might have been trying, perhaps, somewhat for Elijah—at least, for the woman and her son and Elijah—to live in that humble and scanty way, the barrel of meal and cruse of oil, just enough from day to day. And so it is; there may be on your behalf a great deliverance in the distance; until that great deliverance comes the Lord will give you a little help here and a little help there, and you will keep saying, "Well, all this is encouraging, all this is something towards it, but this is not the full deliverance, this is not the full manifestation I want; the Lord has given me a little help, but I want the great help, I want the entire victory, I want to rejoice as men in harvest, I want to come again with my sheaves rejoicing, I want to know all is well." So, if you apply this to Christian experience, see how expressive it is. There are some that are called by grace, and they are helped a little and a little all their days, but perhaps never blessed with a full harvest, never blessed with full enjoyment of the Lord's mercy until they come to die. Let us, then, not despair if the great deliverance for which

we are looking has been with some of us delayed, whether that deliverance be spiritual or whether it be temporal. As the Lord here caused a mist to ascend from the earth and to water the whole face of the ground, so he will find a means of succouring, supporting, and bearing you up. Indeed, it matters not what we have to bear if we can recognize the truth of the Lord being on our side. For myself, although as faint-hearted as any one, still at the same time if I can recognize the great truth, and feel it, that the Lord is on my side, then there is nothing daunts me; nothing could daunt me then. I hardly know how it is that I am at times so discouraged and cast down after all the experience I have had, but it really is so. Who would have thought that John the Baptist, after all he had witnessed, could have had any doubt in his mind as to whether this was the true Messiah? But I have learnt from my own experience it was possible for that wondrous man (and a wondrously spiritually-minded man he was), yet when things seemed to go so contrary—here is John shut up in prison; there is a man raised from the dead, there is another healed of the leprosy, and there is a miracle wrought there; and the Lord seems to remember everybody, and to be kind to every one, except John. This staggered John very much, and his heart began to sink within him. What made his heart sink within him?—the prison? No. Because the Lord delivered others and did not deliver him? No; that is not the secret; the great secret was, Am I deceived after all? Is this the true Messiah? Was the voice I heard really and truly the voice of God at the river Jordan? Is this the Lamb of God? Is this really the Lord? If not, I have been deceived; God is not mine; and if God is not for me, then I come under that scripture, "Woe unto them when I depart from them!" Because the Lord is with them that are not his, sometimes, up to a certain point; and when it comes to that point he forsakes them, as he did king Saul, and neither by prayer nor anything he could do could such a man gain access to God. Then the heart sinks. Ah, John might well, therefore, under such feelings send two of his disciples, saying, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" Perhaps some of you are not thus tried, but thus harassed. It is a dreadful trial. I do not know anything—there is no bodily affliction, there is no loss, there is not anything I can think of—Job's trouble would be a mere shadow in comparison of such trouble as that of which I am now speaking, when it is keenly felt. Ah, the Christian says, The living God depart from me? what is there for me if he depart? Satan, sin, death, hell for me; I am lost, lost for ever. He was with Judas for a time; presently he forsakes Judas, and Satan took care that Judas should rush on into his own place. It is a trying path is this, a very trying path. Said David, "There is but a step between me and death." But how different was David when the Lord helped him with a little more help! David says then, "The Lord is my light, and the strength of my life, and whom shall I fear? Though ten thousand"—that is a great many—"set themselves against me, my heart shall not fear;" for the Lord hath said that five of you shall chase a thousand, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight. But suppose the Lord is not with me; suppose he is not on my side; there lies the discouragement. Now, then, the Lord God hath not caused it to ruin yet; the deliverance is not come yet; the assurance is not come yet. And under such exercises of mind, like Elijah's servant we pray, and pray, and we say, "There is nothing;" again, "There is nothing;" again, "There is nothing;" until the seventh time; then, "A cloud riseth, about the size of a man's hand." Now there is some sign. Ah, the rain descended, the deliverance came, the plenty sprang up; now all is well. Now there is one thing, under such exercises—I do not know hardly how it is I am led this way this morning, but I cannot help so speaking.—there is one thing, if the Lord should bless you with this one grace under these exercises, they are every

for you, they are salvation for you. And what is that? The two hundred were so faint that they could not pass over the brook Besor, but they abode by the stuff, they tarried by that. So, if you can but abide by the truth, hold fast the truth, believe in the truth, trust in the truth, and believe that the Lord will not suffer you to be tried above that you are able to bear, "as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff; they shall part alike." I look back over my now, perhaps I may call it, rather long life in these matters, and I have had some tremendous trials in my own soul, and yet amidst it all, the truth has been dear to my soul; cannot part with that. Mr. Huntingdon in one place says, "I was so cut up, and cast down, my religion seemed all gone, and I seemed to have got everything ready to sign my recantation, as it were, of God's truth; but when I came to that," that great man said, "I felt I could not do that." If I am lost, I will be lost in the belief of the truth; if I perish, I will perish in the truth; if I am damned, I will be damned in the faith; and if I go to hell, it shall be in decision for God's truth. To be lost in that state is to be lost in a way no man ever was and no man ever will be. So, then, if the Lord God hath not yet caused it to rain upon thy soul, if he has not yet brought the blessing, however much drought thou feelest, there stands the promise that he will pour water upon the dry ground, and floods upon him that is thirsty; and the ground in his estimation is not dry enough yet; you are not tried enough yet, not scorched enough yet, not cut up enough yet, not exercised enough yet. When the ground is as dry as he thinks proper, then will he pour water; when the thirst is as intense as he thinks proper to make it, then will he pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. Thus, then, "the Lord God had not caused it to rain;" but he found a way by which he somewhat freshened the earth; so he will find a way by which he will just sustain you, just help you a little, help you with a little help, until the great rain of his strength shall cause you to arise, and bring your sheaves with you, rejoicing in him. Thus then all the blessings that put an end to our evil are by Jesus Christ, and he makes his people wait for him, deeply exercises them, and makes them prize the blessings all the more when they shall come.

I notice now, in the next place, what the Lord did in relation to the ground: "There was not a man to till the ground." And what did he do? Why, he formed one. As Adam was formed out of the virgin earth, ground, into a sinless man, so Jesus Christ was made of a woman: "That holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." How did Jesus Christ till the ground? I must have just a word upon this before I run through hastily some other things connected with our text. What was the ground that Jesus Christ tilled? There are two grounds, the gospel and the church; but I will notice only one, having dwelt already a little upon Christian experience; I will notice the gospel ground. There are promises in the Old Testament, predictions abundant; and did they need tillage (a figure of speech, that is all) to make them fruitful? Yes. Jesus Christ by his own obedient life has made the Old Testament fruitful; by his atoning death has made the Old Testament fruitful. Not one promise, not one blessing, could reach the soul but for Jesus Christ having by his obedient life—there is the tillage—and death made those promises yea and amen. When we read in the Old Testament the glowing predictions there recorded, the prospects they open, how is it they are fulfilled and realized? By what Jesus Christ has done. He has gone to the end of the law, and made the gospel fruitful. And is it not so now in the very preaching of the word? A man that preaches the gospel usefully to the people must preach God's Christ; that Christ that is delineated in the Scriptures; and what he has done by his life and death according to the Scriptures. And the Old Testament saints knew this,—they knew that not one promise could be carried into effect except

by Jesus Christ. Not one of the Old Testament prophets pretended to be sinless; they all confessed their sins and infirmities; but you do not find the Saviour confess any one of his own, because he had none. He therefore hath by his work rendered the Scriptures fruitful. There would be no promise yea and amen; there would be no ingathering, no enjoyment, no sustenance, no bread of life, no water of life, no wine of the kingdom, no pleasant fruits, no tree of life, but for his tillage, his wondrous life and wondrous death. And it is a great thing to be able to see him as entirely given up to God, he came into the world to give himself up to God, to live for us and to die for us. All other matters were indeed secondary in comparison of the work which he came to do. He has thus made the gospel fruitful. Just as in olden time it was the blessing of the Lord upon the land, by the mercy-seat and the temple; for the land yielded nothing without the blessing of the Lord by the temple. "Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes." And "Why?" the Lord saith, "Because of mine house that is waste." So they could not have fruitful harvests without the blessing of the Lord, and that blessing was to be by sacrifice, by the mercy-seat, by his presence. Here what a beautiful type we have of Jesus Christ! Now the land of Canaan was a good land, mark that, and yet it could not yield them fruitful seasons without the blessing of the Lord. So the gospel is a good land, but it cannot yield us anything without Jesus Christ. Therefore it is that as many as received him received everything. "He that receiveth me," says the Saviour, "receiveth him that sent me;" and he, therefore, that receiveth Christ Jesus receiveth all that which shall make the gospel everlastingly fruitful to him. But, secondly, the Lord placed Adam in the garden which he planted, to dress it, and to keep it. Here I take the garden as a type of the church. Adam was placed in the garden, but there was a tree of forbidden fruit, and Adam was driven out of the garden. We shall presently see how Jesus Christ kept from the tree of forbidden fruit, and, consequently, he never loses his standing in the garden,—can never be driven out. This garden I take, then, to be a type of the church; Adam was placed in it to dress it and keep it, and Christ is placed in the church to dress it and to keep it, and, as it were, to water it every moment. Hence the prayer and acknowledgment of the church, and the answer to the Saviour: "Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits. I am come into my garden." And, again, "Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice; cause me to hear it." "Why should I be," another saith, "as one that turneth aside?" And thus Christ is in the garden to dress it and keep it. And is it not so? Ah, when he comes, he makes our very souls as a watered garden, whose waters fail not. Now here was the man, then, to till the ground; Christ has tilled the gospel ground to make it fruitful; and he dwells in the church to keep that to rights; nothing else but his blessed presence can keep us right. There was a tree of knowledge of good and evil; that tree, as it pertains to us, evidently symbolizes God's law; but what is that tree of knowledge of good and evil that Christ must abstain from? And did he abstain from it? because if he had not he would have lost his standing. I do not see myself how that tree of knowledge of good and evil can symbolize sin, because there was no harm in the tree itself. Now it does appear to me there is a threefold tree of forbidden fruit which the Saviour had to abstain from; and I can tell you they were all three of them very hard—would have been if he had not been what he was—for flesh and blood to abstain from.