

SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

A FRIEND ON HIGH.

A Sermon

BY MR. JAMES WELLS,

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"Now to appear in the presence of God for us."—HEBREWS ix. 24.

THE great subject of meeting God is that which in saving conversion is sure to be laid solemnly on the mind ; and such will be restless until they not only know how and in what way they can obey that great command, but also know whether they themselves are in possession of that that shall enable them to obey that great command, "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." For meet him we must. There is no evading that ; there is no escape ; it is beyond all dispute certain that when the body dies the spirit returns to God, to meet him as a sin-avenging God ; or if one with Christ returns to God, to have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. So then "Christ," saith the apostle, "is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true ;" so that the tabernacle and the temple were the meeting-places ; or to view them as one, which they were in spirit and in meaning, it was the meeting-place where God and man were to meet, where we could meet the Lord in all peace and blessedness. How very solemnly is this matter of being condemned or of being justified by the Lord set forth in the beginning of Solomon's prayer. He there saith, "If a man sin against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to make him swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house ; then hear thou from heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, by requiting the wicked, by recompensing his way upon his own head ; and by justifying the righteous, by giving him according to his righteousness." Now look at this. Who is the man that sinned against his neighbour ? and who is the righteous one that was sinned against ? The answer is very simple, and at the same time very solemn. The man that sinned against his neighbour was

none other than the Jewish nation. That Jewish nation was the then existing man of sin ; they had apostatized into a spirit of murderous enmity against the Lord Jesus Christ, therefore that nation was the man of sin, the son of perdition ; their religion was from beneath, and so they are called a generation of vipers and serpents ; "how can ye escape the damnation of hell ?" And who was the neighbour ? Ah, Jesus Christ was the neighbour. "Which thinkest thou of these three was neighbour unto him that fell among thieves ?" Why, "he that showed him mercy." And did not the Saviour come for this very end ? Did he not find us all, as it were, fallen among thieves, and hath he not showed us mercy ? hath he not poured in oil and wine ? hath he not taken care of poor sinners, and doth he not become responsible for them ? doth he not give his name as the security of their persons, and as a pledge and assurance that their needs shall be supplied ? When he went among the Jewish nation, if they had not been so besotted and satanized and blinded by human traditions and false doctrines as they were, they would have said, If ever a neighbourly person appeared among us, this Jesus of Nazareth is that neighbourly person. If a neighbour means one that is kind to you, ah, look at his kind discourses, look at his kind miracles ; he goeth about from day to day doing good. Oh, who can hate, or despise, or make light of such a person as this ? We may well say, Wonder, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth ! that that very mercy which the dear Saviour showed to sinners was that that gave the great offence ; because Satan saw that the Saviour would by the greatness and adaptation of his mercies, by his discourses, and especially by his life and death, conquer Satan, and deliver countless millions from sin, death, hell, and the grave. Therefore Satan stirs up the minds of the people against this very person, and the case came before God. The Jewish nation was as much in its spirit a man of sin as Popery is. Indeed, every religion that is enmity against God's truth is nothing else but a development of the man of sin. The case came before God ; and Solomon prayed that the wicked should be dealt with according to his wickedness, and that the righteous should be dealt with according to his righteousness ; and so we see the dreadful judgments that came upon that nation. Take Judas as a kind of representative of the whole nation, for the whole nation were of the same spirit—of course we except those among them who had been called by grace ; but if Judas be called the son of perdition, if he be called a devil, or whatever applies to him, he is in his spirit a representative of what they all were. We see, then, what solemn judgments came upon that nation ; we see how God dealt with the wicked—those wicked enemies that had thus crucified and slain the Lord of life and glory ; he condemned them,

poured out his judgments upon them ; as saith the apostle, "The wrath of God is come upon them unto the uttermost." But on the other hand, he justified Jesus, he received him from the dead, he received him into heaven, he received him at his right hand, he fulfilled the promise to him ; the Spirit was poured out, and the words of the Lord were fulfilled in the ingathering of Jews and of Gentiles. Thus, then, what we needed was a meeting-place of mercy, and the temple was a type of this ; and that meeting-place was to be the test between the friend and the enemy. The Pharisee when he comes does not come to acknowledge his need of the typical sacrifices, or rather of that one sacrifice that was the anti-type of all these sacrifices ; therefore the Pharisee comes with blindness and enmity. But the publican, when he comes, comes scripturally ; he comes as a poor sinner, and he came to the right place : "God be merciful to me a sinner." I may just say, before I enter upon the beautiful and interesting subject contained in our text, that the mercy-seat is the worst place you can bring human merit to ; for you cannot offer a greater insult to the work of Christ, or to the grace or love of God, or anything pertaining to God, than to bring in the doings of the creature to set aside that order of eternal blessedness we have by Christ Jesus. I do not therefore wonder at the apostle saying, Let even an angel be accursed that should bring another gospel. And on the other hand, if you go to Sinai with your works, what will you do there? As Mr. Hart says,

"Vain's the boast ; all is lost,
Sin and death are stronger."

If, therefore, we are accepted of God, it must be in Christ Jesus ; and if we are a part of the number for whom he appears in the presence of God, then we shall appreciate this great matter of Christ appearing before God for us.

I shall notice our text as dividing itself chiefly into two parts ; though I think the first will occupy the greater part of our time. First, *how the Saviour appears before God for sinners!* secondly, *why he appears before God for sinners ;* it is for us.

First, *how the Saviour appears before God for sinners ;* for he maketh intercession for the transgressors, he openeth his mouth for the dumb, he speaketh for them that cannot speak for themselves ; and it is a subject that we must at all times enter upon with pleasure. Let us first take the great day of atonement, and take a fourfold view of that. The first thing there was the sin-offering and the burnt-offering ; we have this twofold offering presented at the very beginning. I know not what this great subject of sacrificial substitution, Christ appearing before God as the sin-offering and as the burnt-offering, as having by his one offering put away sin, and as having in his person endured

all the fire or all the penalty,—I know not what this may be to you, but it has a wonderful effect upon my mind; it does make me at times drink into the spirit thereof, and forget my poverty. If anything can give us eagles' wings it is this blessed theme; if anything can make us as hinds let loose to give goodly words, it is this blessed subject of substitution. Look at it, then; it is true the priest had to appear for himself and for his household, as well as for the people; but our High Priest has to appear not for himself, but only for the people. The sin-offering and the burnt-offering,—that is one aspect in which he was to appear before God on behalf of the people. Ah, my hearer, what hath not Christ done as a sin-offering and as a burnt-offering? And I may just observe that it is a self-evident truth that God sent Christ to do this great work lovingly,—he sent him lovingly. "God so loved the world that he sent his only-begotten Son" into the world; he so loved the world,—not that we loved him, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to die for us. Now, just notice one thing,—that Jesus Christ was received from the dead, that Jesus Christ was received into heaven, that Jesus Christ's work was accepted by the living God on our behalf as lovingly as Christ was sent. God the Father not merely received it, but he received it lovingly; he not merely received Christ to his right hand, but he received him as lovingly as he sent him. Now I am sure you are all satisfied of this, that it was love that sent the Saviour, and the same love that sent him raised him from the dead, received him into heaven, and holds him there. He sent him lovingly; and it is a wonderful truth, but it is so, he receives the people just as lovingly as he received his own dear Son. "Thou hast loved them even as Thou hast loved me." Let me here ask, then, do we see ourselves and know ourselves to be such sin-condemned, law-condemned, conscience-condemned sinners, that we can lovingly receive the testimony of Christ interposing for us by his own blood, by his own self as the sin-offering and the burnt-offering? If so, if we can lovingly receive him, he will lovingly receive us. "If any man love me, he shall be loved of my Father, and we will come and make our abode with him." See the beautiful manner, then. Art thou a sinner? Art thou a great sinner? Art thou a dreadful sinner? But then thou art not equal in thy sinfulness to the greatness of the sin-offering of Christ. And dost thou deserve the wrath of God? But thou canst not surpass Him in thy deservings of God's wrath,—thou canst not surpass him as the burnt-offering; he has endured the penalty. Well might the apostle say that "we have boldness by the blood of Jesus to enter into the holy of holies." This, then, is one aspect of the Saviour appearing in the presence of God for us.

Secondly, there were two creatures—two goats—made use of on

that day, to give to us a twofold representation of the atonement of Christ. You will find in Leviticus xvi. 5, that both these goats were said to be for a sin-offering, and yet only one died; and a little further on you find that the goat which was sent away into the wilderness was said also to be for an atonement. Therefore we must take them merely as figures, as representations; and the goat that died is a representation of Christ's atonement; in its death is a representation of Christ putting away sin by his death. It is a sweet thought that when Christ died sin lost its life; it has no right to live after that, it has no legal force or power in it. Sin after Christ's death is like old debts—you may turn the books over; you yourself, the debtor, may get hold of a book, and say, Here is a book black from beginning to end with debts, and all these debts were against me; but they are all paid, they are every one gone; and therefore all the lawyers in the world will not be able to give legal force to the demand of the creditor; the debts are paid, the debtor is free, all is clear, and clear for ever. So that Jesus Christ paid the penalty; he died to set us free. I should be ashamed to hold the doctrine of a partial gospel freedom, of an uncertain gospel freedom, after what the Saviour has said:—"If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Why, if the sins I feel in my heart from day to day are to be brought against me, or anything else brought against me, then you neutralize the atonement of Christ, and contradict his testimony,—“If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” And then the other goat, that was sent by a fit man into the wilderness;—now a fit man would be an honest man that would really take the goat away into the wilderness. And you all know it is a beautiful type of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore the goat that was to be sent into the wilderness after the sins were ceremonially laid upon him, represents the atonement of Christ as taking sin away into a land of oblivion, where it is never to be seen and never to be heard of again. And I have not much doubt but that the goat going into the wilderness means a great deal more than we may perhaps sometimes apprehend. For instance, this goat ceremonially took the iniquities that had been ceremonially laid upon it into the wilderness; and suppose some wisecrack had said,—Well, the sins of these people are taken away, but I know where the goat is gone to, and I will go and bring them back again. Well, you go, and for the life of you you cannot see the sins. Where are they? You cannot see them. Does not the prophet refer to something of this kind when he says, “At that day the sins of Israel and of Judah shall be sought for;”—who will seek for them? Satan and his agents. And besides, we live in a day when there are some professors who could not live if it were not for the sins of other people. If you

get into their company, they are always talking about other people's sins. Well, if they were not very fond of sin, they would not be always chewing it. I do not believe any one chews the cud if he does not like it; and so these persons never seem happy only just in proportion as they can live upon other people's sins; and if the people they hate have not any fault they can find with them, never mind, they will fabricate a lot of faults, and set them down to the account of others, and make a meal of them. But there stands God's testimony:—"The sins of Israel and of Judah shall be sought for, but shall not be found;" I will pardon them by the sin-offering whom I reserve, and then they are thus taken away into the land of oblivion, never again to be seen or heard of. So that the people come up out of what and where they are into the liberty of the everlasting gospel, and rejoice that Jesus thus appears in the presence of God for them, having put their sins far away, cast them all behind his back, so that they never can be found. Can we know too much of the Christ of God? The more we know of the Christ of God, the more we get baptized into the love of God, the more we get immersed into the spirit of God, and the more we get sweetly assimilated in our souls to God himself; for what is Christ but that pattern to which we are to be conformed?

Then, thirdly, the priest was to have his hands full of incense;—he was to take a censer full of fire from the sacrificial altar, and his hands were to be full of incense, that he might thus cover the mercy-seat with the incense. Now there are but few things in nature that will give out a great perfume and an exceedingly pleasant fragrance when they are burnt; most things give out an ill savour when they are burnt. Therefore this incense is a beautiful type of Christ. Instead of his sufferings causing him to send forth the ill savour of rebellion, as did the Israelites in the wilderness, and, alas! alas! as I myself often do—put me into the fire—what will appear then? Fragrant perfume? Alas! no; the dross, the scum, the unbelief, the rebellion, the atheism, the infidelity. But put Jesus into the fire, the more he is tried the more his holiness flows forth, the more his love and mercy flow forth—everything fragrant and pleasing—from his sufferings. As the fire was to bring out the fragrance of the spices, so the sufferings of Christ brought out his love. Doth he so love us that he really will die for us? Doth he so love us that he really will undergo all this for us? Doth he so love us; when he is put to the test, how will it be? Ah! the Holy One still. I therefore take this incense to be that excellency that flows forth from Christ in his sufferings. Hence, when he came to the grave, the Holy One still,—“Thou wilt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.” Now, the priest was to go in with his hands full of

this incense ; and Christ entered heaven in all the fulness of that fragrance that flowed forth while he was here below. He poured out strong cries and tears ; they were tears, I had almost said, of infinite value ; they were cries from a soul and heart of purity ; all was pure, all was fragrant. Here then was the incense divinely appointed, and none was to be made like it, because there is no fragrance like the fragrance of the blessed Redeemer's name. And so the rebellions, the faults, the drawbacks in our poor prayers are all lost in the fragrance of Jesus. "There was given unto the angel much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of the saints ;" and the incense given to him was nothing else but the fragrance of his own obedient life and of his atoning death.

I may just name one more point here as the way in which the priest appeared, though there are many more,—such as the sprinkling of the blood on the horns of the altar, to denote the efficacy of the atonement, and to denote the time would come when this glorious truth of Christ's atonement should be proclaimed, east, west, north, and south, as represented by the four horns of the altar ; and the sprinkling the blood on the altar and in the holy place, and the sprinkling the blood on the mercy-seat,—all keeping up the idea of the Saviour appearing before God by his own substantial work. But there is one thing upon which great stress should be laid, and that is this, that the high priest was to appear in the holy of holies alone ; there was to be none with him. This may seem at first sight a very simple matter, but to my mind it is a matter of infinite and eternal moment. First, then, there was to be none with him. Let us apply this in a two-fold sense to the Lord Jesus Christ. He obeyed God's law ; there was none with him ; he did what none began to do before him, and he did what none could do after him, because the work is done. No mere creature could have done the work, therefore his own arm alone brought salvation to him. The whole of the righteousness, the whole of the atonement, was of Christ. He came under our sins alone, he came into the solitude alone, he came under the curse alone. He said to Peter, "Whither I go thou canst not follow me now. First, you are not able to bear what I am going to bear ; and secondly, you never could come under your own sin, under God's wrath ; you never could come into the hell of his wrath ;—whither I go thou canst not follow me now." As though the Lord should say, though he did not say it, because that would have distressed poor Peter ; but I may say so, because my words would have no effect upon him even if he were here ;—as though the Lord had said, Well, Peter, you are a poor, blundering thing ; you have blundered here and there, but you will never

blunder into hell. "Whither I go thou canst not follow me now." What shall I do then, Lord? "Thou shalt follow me afterwards." Just stand still a few days, while the angel of the Lord doeth wondrously; just stand still a little time till I have accomplished and achieved this wondrous work, and then I will see you again, and bless you again, and revive you again, and gather you in again, and assure you again, and confirm you again, and manifest myself to you again as I do not unto the world. So the high priest went alone, to typify the beautiful truth that the dear Saviour achieved our eternal salvation by himself, he and he alone. Then secondly, apply this to us, personally. If you are righteous before God, it cannot be by righteousness of two, it must be by the righteousness of one,—Christ Jesus; if you are free from sin, it must be by one making you free, not by two having any hand in it;—he doeth all the work, he makes you free. In the Old Testament age, on the great day of atonement, it was death to do any work on that day; if any man did any work on that day he was to be put to death. And be assured of this, if we are taught of God, and know our lost condition, we shall renounce our own supposed wisdom, holiness, righteousness, strength, and be nothing but poor sinners, just as the publican was, and receive Jesus Christ as alone our justification, as alone our redemption, as alone the way in which we can be perfect before God. If we are taught of God we shall thus see that Christ, and Christ alone, must save us. How many sing that hymn—I don't say among us—there may be some few among us perhaps a little thoughtless over it, but in many places that hymn is sung,—

"Thou must save and thou alone."

it is one thing to say that as a matter of doctrine and mere mental belief; and another thing to feel that you are a poor, depraved, lost creature; that if you are not saved by the completeness that is in Christ, simply by receiving the testimony of what he has done, you cannot be saved at all. These are the people that God looks upon with approbation, because they make that use of his dear Son that he appointed him to be of; they make that use of Jesus' name that God intended they should make; they make that use of his atonement which God intended they should make. So much then for the first point,—the manner in which he appears before God for us, —there is everything encouraging. As I have said, the Lord sent him in love, he received him in love, and he reigns in love, and we receive him in love; and so the great end shall be brought about —to make the people perfect in love.

Secondly, not only was there the day of atonement, but there was also daily service in the temple; no day was omitted. Ah, the Pharisees would have said, it is very well for you priests to work all

the week, but when Sunday comes what will you do then? Of course we shall bring our traditions then, bring something of ours then; you must not get profaning the temple and profaning the Sabbath by sacrificing on the Sabbath day. No, not if the people do not need mercy on that day, not if the people do not need the favour of God on that day, and the presence and blessing of God on that day. Therefore the Lord suffered nothing to set this sacrificial service aside; there was the daily service. You know the Lord promises his people daily strength; he does not promise them weekly strength, or monthly strength, or yearly strength, although all these are included, but the form in which he put it is,—“As thy days are.” I don’t know whether I shall be dead or alive next year, and I have no business to trouble myself about it; I am alive to-day, and I shall be supplied to-day, and as long as I live. It is daily,—it is every day. So, as the sacrifices were carried on daily, hear what the apostle saith,—that our high priest “abideth a priest continually.” It is every day. Have you never thought of this, friends, that the Lord was never weary of sending the manna?—he sent it every day. Ah, says the Pharisee, how shall we do for Sunday? The Lord was beforehand with them; so he sent twice as much on the Saturday;—he sent it every day right to the end of the journey;—daily bread. So the dear Redeemer pleads our cause every day, every moment. It would be a good thing for us if the Lord gave us grace to have a little more daily religion in our own souls;—to say the first thing in the morning, The Lord has spared me through another night;—what is my desire to-day? Why, that my soul may go out in sweet confidence in the Lord, in prayer to God, in love to God; that I may serve him to-day; that while I am working to-day, have his temporal mercies, and have his blessed word and the knowledge of his name, the day may not go without some thoughts, some feelings towards him either of prayer or of gratitude or something, for we daily need it. It is a great thing to be able to pray that prayer every morning, “Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.” As the supply was then to the end, so the priesthood of Christ goes on. Why, saith the apostle, “he is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession.” See the manner, then, after which he appears before God for us. Bless his holy name, he knoweth how to unite our prayers and the evidences we give of belonging to him,—he knows how to unite these with his own name, and to send down answers of peace.

We must now take another view of his appearing before God;—that he appears for the people on the ground of that work which he

wrought on earth. Let us listen for a few moments to the representation which the apostle gives us in this chapter of the work that Christ achieved on earth as the ground on which he entered heaven, "Neither by the blood of bulls and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Ah, what a sweet thought is that,—“having obtained eternal redemption for us.” So that his redemption stands between you and your sins, and it is not which is the stronger of the two—you or your sins? it is, which is the stronger of the two—sin or his redemption. His redemption stands between you and Satan, and it is not which is the stronger of the two—you or Satan? but which is the stronger of the two—Christ's redemption or Satan? And that redemption stands between you and hell; and it is not which is the stronger of the two—you or hell? but which is the stronger of the two—hell or Christ's redemption? And his redemption stands between you and death; and it is not which is the stronger of the two—you or death? but which is the stronger of the two—his redemption or death? And you know what he saith upon this:—"I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." Wondrous achievement! Now I am sure these few remarks will almost bring to your mind what the apostle saith,—“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” You see what kind of strength it is;—it is his redemption that is placed between you and all that is against you. You all know the marginal reading of that scripture in Exodus xi.—“that ye may know that I do put a difference”—the marginal reading is, that I do put a redemption—“between the Egyptians and Israel.” So then he appears in the presence of God for us by that eternal redemption which he hath obtained. And hath he not been put to the test? hath he not proved the stronger? Tell me that Christ's redemption could not bring me to God! that Christ's redemption will not carry me safely through death! that Christ's redemption will not fetch me out of the grave! Oh, it is a great mystery, say some, the resurrection. So it is, friends, but it is a truth as clearly declared as any other truth in the Bible. We are to come out of the grave, legally speaking, on the ground of his redemption; literally speaking, by the exercise of his omnipotent power and infinite skill; for when he comes to raise us from the dead there will be an exercise of infinite skill,—to raise your body and so construct it that it shall never have another ache, or pain, or sigh, or affliction, or weakness of any kind. He will say,—Now you are fitted for eternity; your sorrows have gone, your last tear is wiped away, your last sigh is healed, and now I have raised

you up into my own wondrous likeness, and you shall be happy for ever and ever. Thus he appears in the presence of God for us. I fear we understand very little of the mediation of Christ in comparison of what there is yet to be seen. All the depths of the Most High are there; all the deep thoughts, all the deep counsels; all the depths of his love, and mercy, and mind centre in the mediation of Christ. That is very clear, because it is God manifest in the flesh, and it is God in Christ; and God is not there without his thoughts, his counsels, his purposes, his love. Therefore it is by Christ Jesus that we go down into the deep things of an eternal world.

And not only doth he appear by this redemption, but also by the consecration he has wrought. "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Dead works: what is a dead work? Why, if you from time to time say prayers mechanically, written, paper prayers; if you go through certain formalities, prescribed ceremonies; they are dead works. There is not one work of the ceremonial law that was not in this sense, spiritually, a dead work,—merely mechanical, merely formal. But if this redemption has got hold of us, no more dead prayers for us; lip prayers will not satisfy us; mere lip praises will not satisfy us; mere lip love will not satisfy us; mere talk and mere appearing in the house of God will not satisfy us. Read a chapter; never mind what it says, or what it means. I have read through the chapter; yes, your conscience will not let you be easy unless you do. "Now," says the devil, "I will make that man think, when he has read a chapter and done his duty, that he is one of the most amiable creatures in existence;" and that man will go away and say, "Not like that publican, not like those Antinomians, not like those dreadful high doctrine men; I am not like them." A mercy for you if you were. But where the blood of Christ comes in, what is there there? There is in that man a thorough conviction, from his own soul's experience, that nothing but the infinite efficacy of the blood of Christ can take away his guilt, give him peace with God, shed abroad God's love in his heart, and so endear the Lord to him as to enable him to say, "Thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." "Dead works!" I know a minister now who writes his sermon, gets it printed before he preaches it, and then reads it, and there it is at the door ready to be sold for a penny as you go out—the sermon he has just preached; and the people wonder, how in the world is it? They cannot make it out; must be a miracle some-

where: why, the man has only just preached it, and here is the sermon for sale: what is this? It is dead work, and the devil's work. When the Saviour sent the apostles, what did he say? "Tarry in Jerusalem." If you go and think your intellect will do it, if you go and think what little you have acquired from hearing me will do it, if you go and think simply because you are disciples, that will do, you will come no better off than the sons of Sceva; but "tarry in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high;" then you shall speak with power, preach with power, the devil shall fly, sinners be awakened, saints rejoice; for the blood of Christ shall purge you from your dead works, your religion shall be a living religion, worthy of the living God, seeing it is by the living Spirit of the living God, by the living Christ and the living love of the living God. "How much more shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience from dead works"—mere formality—and turn your religion into a vital, substantial, eternal reality; so that you shall say with the apostle, "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Thus, then, to appear in the presence of God for us. I can almost imagine one angel saying to another, "Just look at those people; see what Immanuel hath made them;—black, he hath made them white;—spotted as the leopard, he hath made them fair;—deformed as Satan himself, he has made them upright; repulsive and ugly as sin itself, he has made them beautiful; he hath beautified them with salvation. Is it any wonder that angels should desire to look into these things? May not the dear Redeemer look at what he has made the people, and turn round at the last to God the Father and say, "Father, I am satisfied;" and saith the Father, "So am I, well pleased:" and so with the Holy Spirit, and so with angels, and so our glorified spirits. Ah, my hearer, it is a lovely subject—consecration to God by the blood of Christ, giving life to everything pertaining to the glorious service of the blessed God. Thus the dear Saviour appears in the presence of God for us by his eternal redemption, and by thus consecrating us to God. This consecration to God lies not with the creature; it lies entirely with the Lord. When Peter saw his congregation,—“Oh dear me, Peter, people will say, ‘Has that Peter got a respectable congregation?’” “Oh, I saw them.” “What are they?” “Why, the ugliest creatures I ever saw—four-footed beasts, wild beasts, creeping things, and fowls of the air;—a thoroughly bad lot.” “Why,” says Peter, “I never can get on here at all.” “Ah,” says the Lord, “I will give you another lesson presently;—‘What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.’”