

SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

TOPHET.

A Sermon

PREACHED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JANUARY 9TH, 1870,

BY MR. JAMES WELLS.

OCT 66

“For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.”—Isaiah xxx. 33.

THE 31st verse of the 7th of Jeremiah will show us what this Tophet was. We there read, “They have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not,” saith the Lord “neither came it into my heart.” So that this Tophet was a very hell, and is thus made evidently a type of hell itself. This is *what* it was. Then in Joshua you learn *where* it was. You learn from Jeremiah that it was in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and in the 8th verse of the 15th of Joshua you learn that this valley of the son of Hinnom was on “the south side of the Jebusite; the same is Jerusalem,” I have quoted these verses to show that the Bible itself gives us a great deal of information upon matters, which enables us sometimes more clearly to enter into the solemn and spiritual intention of such scriptures.

I shall deal with our text as referring to the ultimate destiny of the lost. I should not like any of you to be able to say,—Well, we have attended from time to time the Surrey Tabernacle, but we haven't so much as heard whether there be a hell; we have heard nothing about what that hell is; we have scarcely heard anything about the wrath to come, or what that wrath is; and therefore hardly know why so much ado has been made concerning a Saviour, when the hell hereafter and the wrath to come have scarcely been touched upon. I should be very sorry for you to be able to go away and say this. And when we view our text as relating to the destiny of the lost, what a tremendous scene does it bring before us. When I look at the hell which sin has entailed, the almightiness of the wrath

which must ere long be poured out; when I look at the endless duration of that hell, I am ready to ask whether there is a man or woman in all Christendom so earnest in their religion as the infinite and eternal importance of the subject demands. I know it is one of the greatest griefs to my mind that I do not feel more solemnly the weightiness of these things, and am not made more earnest in these eternal matters. Well for us, that there was one on earth to plead our cause, who was perfect in his earnestness. He lived earnestly, and prayed earnestly, and died earnestly, and pleads our cause earnestly, and abides by us earnestly. We may well prize this wondrous Redeemer, that hath by such great suffering delivered us from so great a death. Also I may just observe that this Tophet being ordained of old, it was in the first place formed and ordained by men; for the Lord was not the author of this literal Tophet. And as to the word Tophet itself, it is very uncertain as to its etymology; but I think the idea that the majority of the learned agree upon is, that it means "the place of burning." But when we take the antitypical Tophet, hell, then we see that hell is that place and that punishment that God himself hath appointed as the reward of sin. Thus then I shall this morning try to set before you some of the awfulness of the things contained in our text. In so doing, I notice, first, *the King*; secondly, *the dimensions of this Tophet*,—it is "deep and large;" thirdly, *its contents*;—"the pile thereof is fire and much wood;" and fourthly, *the completion of the woe*;—"the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it."

First, *the king*;—"yea, for the king it is prepared." Of course the king here must mean Satan. That scripture in the 25th of Matthew will explain this;—"Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." And you are aware that Satan is called the king of the bottomless pit. What is and has been the object of Satan's reign? What has he aimed at? I have not taken these words merely for the sake of pointing out the wrath to come, but for the sake of so pointing out the wrath to come as to set the Saviour forth in contrast thereto; that we may be led more and more to prize that Saviour, and the interposing mercy of that God who hath delivered us from so great a death. The object of the reign of Satan, then, was originally and still is to keep us away from God,—to keep us away from God's truth. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." Let us see how the Saviour hath met this king. I never can look upon

that scripture in the 14th of Luke without being reminded, not only of our discipleship, but of how the Lord Jesus Christ hath met this king, Satan, who hath reigned to keep us away from God. When the Saviour would there set forth our discipleship, the words will apply, I think, very beautifully to himself. "What king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace." This the Lord Jesus Christ never did. We see how he met Satan; we see how he met him in the temptations, and we see how the Lord Jesus Christ overcame Satan. I will tell you, in almost one word, how the Lord Jesus Christ overcame Satan. Jesus Christ overcame this king of the bottomless pit by standing fast in perfect obedience to God, without one deviation, without one particle of guilt, sin, spot, or fault. Therefore when Satan came to the Saviour, and the Saviour had to meet him—when Satan showed him all the kingdoms of this world in a moment of time;—"All these will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me;" the answer is, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." The Saviour could not be moved. You and I, friends, by the attractions of this world have been moved innumerable times; but he was never moved. Let our anchorage then, of hope of escape be in him that could not be moved. And when Satan again said, "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down" from a pinnacle of the temple, why did the Saviour not do so? Because it was not God's way; Christ could not be moved from God's way. "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." Why did not Christ do so? Because it was not God's way. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Unless Satan could have got the Saviour to sin, to step aside, to advance some error, to make some mistake, to take some false step, to do something wrong,—unless Satan could have got the Saviour to do this, Satan himself is entirely defeated. I am not sure that Solomon may not refer to this as one of the four mysteries which he brings before us; and one of those the ways of which, he said, he knew not is the way of a serpent upon a rock. And so this serpent, the devil, tried all sorts of ways, but could never move the Saviour. Satan is defeated, therefore, by the sinlessness and perfect obedience, in a word, by the perfection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us hear the Saviour, for our encouragement, speak of this in the 50th of Isaiah; for he is evidently there intended as the speaker. "The Lord God will help me;" and

why did the Lord God help him? Because he always did those things that pleased God. I was going to say, how can we contemplate such things, and look at the greatness of the death from which he hath delivered us, without being in love with such a Saviour as this? "The Lord God will help me;" therefore, coming to this same subject, "shall I not be confounded,"—nor was he; he confounded all his adversaries, but all his adversaries put together could not for one moment confound him. "Therefore have I set my face like a flint;" God grant us more of that spirit of solemn decision and real earnestness for vital godliness and for our eternal welfare; "and I know that I shall not be ashamed;" nor was he, nor is he, nor can he be. Not only is he not ashamed, but those that receive him will have no more to be ashamed of than he has, because in receiving him they come before God in what they are by him. Let us trace the matter out; we are speaking of Christ meeting Satan, destroying him that had the power of death, and these very footsteps enlighten us into the knowledge of God. "He is near that justifieth me." Ah, God the Father had not a single thing from which to justify Christ; God the Father could justify Christ in everything; and God cannot justify us in anything, for he himself declareth that there is none righteous; no, not one. The Lord kindly, for our instruction, points out our state,—that there is not a single thing we have by nature in which God can justify us; and there was not a single thing in Christ from which God had to justify him; he could and did justify him in all things; and Jesus Christ being such a person as to be justified in all things, he thereby justifies us from all things. If there were one fault in Christ, then that would leave a fault in us, because there would be something in which God could not justify Christ, and then there would be something from which God could not justify us; but as he justified Christ in all things, we ourselves, if believers in him, are, by his being justified in all things, justified from all things; and here comes in the challenge first to Satan himself, and then to all his agents, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." "He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together;" and so they did, in the temptations I have stated, and to our delight we see which way the matter went. "Who is mine adversary? let him come near to me;" and so he did come near, near enough to accuse him before the high priest, and before Pilate; he came near enough to him to crucify him, and yet the Saviour conquered when he fell. "Behold, the Lord God will help me; who is he that shall condemn me?" Why, says Satan, I will; saith the Pharisee, I will; saith the Jewish nation, We will. "Lo, they all," that condemn me—see the fulfilment,—"shall wax old as a garment;" and the Jews,

as though a solemn burlesque upon their own condition, have cried, "old clothes" ever since. "They all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up." Oh, how true that was. The Saviour, then, defeated Satan, not by any physical or carnal force, but by a perfection of obedience to God, from which the Saviour could not be moved. Satan's hope, no doubt, was very great in the Saviour's death, but there also he was again defeated. In what a variety of ways did Satan, by his agents, try to cause the Saviour to lose his self-possession, while he was tried and mocked as he was on the cross. But, no; the Saviour stood firm; he was not moved. It mattered not whether it was before he was on the cross, or when on the cross; let him be where he may, perfect self-possession; and at last said, "It is finished:" and here the reign of Satan ends. And once see that you can overcome Satan by the perfection of Christ, by faith in that, and immediately you are in a position to tread upon the lion, upon the young adder, upon the scorpion, and to trample the dragon under foot. "Behold," saith the Saviour, and here is the secret of it, "I give you power over all the power of the enemy, and ye shall tread upon scorpions, and nothing shall by any means hurt you." So, then, hell is still for the devil, for the king it is prepared; the devil is cast into the lake of fire, where the beast and the false prophet are; and heaven is still for Christ; hell is still for the man that lives and dies unacquainted with the perfection of Christ, and heaven is for every man that is brought to understand and know his need of the substitutional victory the Saviour hath wrought, for the victory was not for himself, but for the people.

Secondly, I notice *the dimensions of this Tophet*,—"he hath made it deep and large;" that is, the devil has made hell very deep, and how hath he made it deep? By the depths of his sin, by the depths of his schemes and plans by which to deceive men. You read that he deceives the whole world. I will mention only one of his plans here,—Popery. What an infernal depth there is in that system; what a damnable system that is; what a devilish system. I care not how amiable after the flesh many of its professors are; the system itself is that which usurps the place of the Almighty, the prerogatives of Christ, the place of the eternal Spirit of God. Oh, the depths of Satan, as manifested in that wonderful and dreadful system, holding its millions in captivity. It is a deep system, and it is a deep hell;—Satan has worked out for himself and for his agents a bottomless pit. Then it is also said to be "large," because the range of Satan's sin has indeed been large. It extends not only to the whole human race, but to all the perfections of God, and to all the truths of the blessed God. Ah, what a frightful thing, then, to be cast into this deep, into this hell, into this pit, into this wrath to come,—there is

something frightful and solemn in the very thought. And our text grows darker and darker as it goes on. You have, in the first place, simply the place of burning; you then have Satan as the heir of that eternal hell; you then have its depth and its breadth; you then have its terrible contents; and lastly, the whole is completed by the almighty and eternal vengeance of the great God. Here is a complete contrast to the gospel;—the glorious gospel goes on better and better, brighter and brighter, more and more lovely, until these two lines, the law line and the gospel line, get an infinite distance apart. They seem to set out at the first, as it were, rather near together, but then part further and further, until at the last there is a great gulf fixed between the two, which there is no passing nor repassing. Now if there be a deep hell, if there be a wide hell, if there be this dreadful region, then what is the remedy for this department? We have seen how Jesus Christ is the remedy against Satan, how he has overcome Satan; now let us see how the Saviour has met this part. My text saith that it is “deep and large.” I wonder if I could find some scripture that would just come in in this department, and show that, deep as it is, the Saviour hath fathomed it; that large as it is, he hath compassed it: that terrible as it is, he hath overcome it. I should like to show this, and like you to feel, on the one hand, the awfulness of being left under such wrath; and the blessedness, on the other hand, of a knowledge of the way in which this solemn scene has been met. The 11th of Job will put us entirely to rights upon this matter. “Canst thou by searching find out God?” Yes, we can; if not to comprehend the whole of what he is in this great matter; yet if we can find out what he is, and after what order mercy reigns, we falling in with that order, shall rejoice in the reign of that mercy. “Canst thou by searching find out God?” canst “thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?” Where is the perfection of God as concerneth us so conspicuous as in the perfect work of Jesus Christ? “It,” this perfection, “is as high as heaven; what canst thou do?” Oh, sweet Redeemer! He reached to heaven when he was on earth; and as he reached to heaven by his worth when he was on earth, the consequence was that he personally reached there; and as he personally reached there, he took his people virtually with him; so that whatever he is, that they are. He took them there representatively in just what his perfection has constituted them. Here, then, not a cloud is seen in all the region. “It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do?” There is nothing to do; Jesus hath done the whole, and our rejoicing is to receive the same. “It is deeper than hell; what canst thou know?” How little we know of the meaning of that scripture in one of the Psalms, where the Saviour saith, “Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps;” and David

saith, "Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell." Christ went down below all the plans of the devil, below all our sins, below all the curses, overturned the mountains by the roots. Let me receive this Jesus Christ; then the heights of heaven are mine, the depths of hell we need not fear; for he that is founded upon the rock cannot sink, because the rock cannot sink.

"How can we sink with such a prop,
That bears the earth and its huge columns up."

Here, then, the hell that sin has entailed was met by the unfathomable sufferings of Christ, by the unfathomable agonies of Christ, and the whole of it compassed, because he was God as well as man, and therefore, large as it was, he compassed the whole. I can hardly get at this—indeed, I cannot, for it saith, "What canst thou know?" Whatever similes we might use, they are very poor in comparison of the magnitude of what he comprehended, embodied, and suffered. "Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain." However large the region of our sin was, he comprehended the whole, compassed the whole, surrounded the whole, reached the whole, and has destroyed the whole. "Deep and large." "The measure thereof," of this mediatorial perfection, is not only high as heaven, deeper than hell, but it "is longer than the earth." Ah, yes, this perfection will take us to heaven, and be our glory when we get there. "Longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." If you take the sea there to mean our sins—broader than the sea; and if you take the sea there to mean tribulations—broader than the sea,—all is gone, all is tranquil. It is a great mercy for the soul to be brought into the light, and to see what a deadly adversary Satan has been to us, and that Christ alone could defeat him, and that we can gain the victory only by faith in him that hath conquered Satan. It is indeed a mercy for the eyes to be opened to see that there is a deep and yawning hell waiting for all that are not found in Jesus Christ, and to be solemnised in the contemplation of this. For what is human life, after all, in comparison with these weighty matters? We live a few years, as David saith, and we soon fly away, and the places that know us now shall know us no more for ever. Oh, then, how great the mercy of being brought to feel the weightiness of these things, and to see that Jesus Christ by his perfection delivers us from this hell which sin hath entailed. It is, then, deep and large; but the Saviour's work is deeper and larger. Oh for more faith, to drink in more of this spirit of mediation, to drink in more of this spirit of divine interposition. The apostle might well say of our God that "he hath delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver, and in whom we

trust that he will yet deliver." Let me here pause for a moment and ask, What could creature works do in this matter? What can any creature do to overcome Satan? What cares Satan for Joshua? Joshua stands there, and Satan stands at Joshua's right hand to resist him. What cares Satan for Joshua? Just nothing at all. But then, say you, it doth say, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Yes, friends, when Jesus Christ comes in, and you have faith in him, and are enabled to lay hold of him, then by Jesus Christ you gain the victory. You know the disciples in the Saviour's absence had forgotten, that if they cast out devils it must be by Jesus Christ; they left that out, they did not believe it, not just then; they had forgotten themselves; and so, for want of faith, why, the devil almost cast them out, and they could not cast him out. How is it we could not cast him out? Why, because you did not believe that I was essential to his being cast out; you did not believe in me—you thought because you were disciples you could do it; because you were my favourites you could do it. And some ministers say, if you are a Christian you can do anything. Can you? You can defeat the devil, and do this, and that, and the other? So can I, after the apostle Paul's fashion; he says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." But when Christ is not there, I find out to my sorrow the truth of the Saviour's own words; "Without me ye can do nothing." Then, again, as to the depths of hell, how can you and I go down into those deeps, and overturn the mountains there, and work out our own deliverance? And as to the extent of hell, how can you and I range over a breadth as wide as our sins have ranged against an infinite God, and do anything with them? I do delight in the thought that hundreds of you so see into these things as to see in connection therewith that none but Immanuel, none but the God—man-Mediator, could have stood in such a position, could have defeated such an adversary as Satan, could have undermined all his plans, gone down to the deepest sin, overturned the mountains—gone down into the whole breadth and range of it, swept the whole away, and brought us up before God in all the glorious liberty of the everlasting gospel.

But, thirdly, *the contents*—"the pile thereof"—what an expression, "the pile thereof." Why, it looks as though souls were piled one upon the other; it looks as if there were stacks and mountains of souls; it looks as though there were tremendous mountains of souls in hell. "The pile thereof is the fire and much wood." What this wood is I will presently show. The fire here does not mean the fire of hell, and yet it is the fire of hell, too—the contents fire and much wood. Here the word "fire" does not mean the wrath of God; the wrath of God is brought before us in the

last clause. The fire here means the burning fire of enmity against God. The flames of hell do not annihilate the enmity of the human heart against God. Suppose, for instance, the rich man in hell had come out of hell;—we will suppose such a thing possible, with just the same views and sentiments that he had in hell; and had begun on earth to have preached;—what would he have preached? Just what every Armenian preaches; just what Popery and every damnable system preaches is what the rich man would have preached. “If one be sent from the dead, they will repent.” I do not believe it is the Holy Spirit’s work; I do not believe it is God’s work;—man can do it;—that is the doctrine. There is the rich man in hell,—the fire of his enmity against God’s way of mercy is not even now, annihilated. The devil will hate God to eternity; the lost will carry their enmity with them, and that enmity will be a part of their misery. They can hate God effectually now, in a sense;—they can so hate the Bible as to keep away from it; but they cannot so hate God as to keep away from him then;—they can so hate God as to keep away from his house now, and say,—I do not want your parsons, and your preaching, and your religion. But they cannot so hate God as to avoid his presence then. “If I make my bed in hell, thou art there.” There will be the fire of their enmity, and there will be the presence of a sin-avenging God. Oh, to be delivered from this satanic, murderous enmity, and to be reconciled to God by Jesus Christ, is indeed a treasure of infinite and eternal value. But what is the wood? “Much wood.” My very blood runs cold while I read the words,—“Much wood.” What is the wood? Why, the people;—“much wood,”—much people. Ah, the pile thereof, the fire of enmity, and much people. How do you prove the wood means the people? I should hardly imagine you need proof, but I will bring the proof;—19th verse of the 9th chapter of this same book; “the people shall be as the fuel of the fire.” 15th of Ezekiel,—“As the vine tree among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so will I give the inhabitants of Jerusalem.” Are there dead branches, dead professors,—professors, and only professors? fruitless branches? These shall be broken off, men shall gather them, they shall be cast into the fire. Are there tares among the wheat? They shall be bound, as it were, in bundles, and cast into the furnace of fire, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Ah, mark the language,—“Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. “Many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able,” being ignorant of their need of what Christ really is; because “strait,” or difficult, “is the gate that leadeth unto life;” and yet Christ in his finished work is that gate; that blessed truth

in its real character everywhere opposed. "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." "The pile thereof is fire and much wood," much people. If you could descend now into that region, and see the piles of souls, and range through that are there now, writhing! for no sooner is the soul of the lost man out of the body than it is in hell. "In hell he lifted up his eyes." And no sooner out of the grave than the judgment will be passed at the last great day. Here then is the "much wood,"—much people. Some men deny that there is a hell at all; and they say, all the hell there is is in this world before we die. But the rich man had no hell in this world;—he fared sumptuously every day, clothed in purple and fine linen. His hell came the moment he died;—"in hell he lifted up his eyes." Hell comes immediately upon death, and then hell comes immediately upon judgment; and as to the termination of hell, we will have a word upon that presently. "Much people." What can we do? Do, friends? I only say that I hope these things will sink down deeper and deeper into our hearts. Let us, then, not play with hell, nor trifle with hell, nor think it a mere sound, a mere name, a mere sham; let us look at it as an infinite and an eternal reality. "Fire and much wood," much people. Does not this accord entirely with the world? Look at the world, now;—look through London. We bless God for the thousands of real Christians we hope we have in London; but they are a mere fraction in comparison of the numbers inhabiting this metropolis. Then if we go through the United Kingdom, and then go through the world and look at the twelve hundred millions supposed to be about the present population, and see what a fraction out of that vast number even profess Christianity, and but a fraction out of them that know the Lord. I am sure here is plenty of room for prayer, plenty of room for preaching, plenty of room for earnestness. God make our last days our best days; make us more and more interested in these overwhelming and eternal realities. "Fire and much wood,"—much people. The wood, then, to my mind, represents the people; they are to be fuel, burning to eternity, but never consumed; writhing, with no mitigation, no alteration, no termination, no returning, not one drop of water that shall ever cool the burning tongue. Ah, my hearer, here again we see the dear Saviour as the only remedy. We are here to-day, but we shall soon be in eternity. Happy those of us that see Jesus before we die; happy the people included in that sweet promise, "There be some standing here that shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." And lest you should think that is not a promise of mercy, then we will bring another scripture, and happy the people interested in such a scripture as that;—"It was

revealed unto Simeon that he should not see death till he had seen the Lord's Christ." Ah, he was to see the Lord's Christ going into hell for him; not into the hell of the lost, but into the hell of God's wrath, and this wondrous Person saying, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." Jesus, therefore, went into the hell of God's wrath, into the hell of our sins. Simeon was not to see death till he had seen the Lord's Christ. I wish to speak in such a way, if it be the Lord's will, as to show you the awfulness of eternal misery, on the one hand; but not to stop there,—to show the remedy as well. And upon this matter how beautiful are the dear Saviour's own words,—“This is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son”—that is, with the eye of understanding; you see how he has defeated Satan, how he has overcome hell, how he has met the flaming sword, how he has quenched the wrath, how he has wrought deliverance, brought in eternal righteousness, and how by him mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace embrace each other; you thus see him, and he becomes the foundation of your hope; you so see him as to believe on him with that faith that worketh by love; “every one that seeth the Son shall have everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation.” Thus then here is that king over all the children of pride from whom we are delivered by the manifestation unto us of the victory Christ has wrought; here is that hell that is deep and large, from which we are delivered by the depth and breadth of the Saviour's sufferings; here is the fire of enmity, and much wood, much people, from which we are delivered by the discriminating grace of God, and are willing that our lot should be among the few,—we would rather be one of the eight inside the ark than one of the whole world outside; we would rather be solitary Lot leaving Sodom than one of the inhabitants of Sodom; we would rather be among the few where the Lord is than among the many where the Lord is not.

Lastly, *the completion of the woe*:—“the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.” I shall take a twofold view of this,—first, the breath of the Lord as having already blasted us; secondly, the breath of the Lord in that eternal storm, in that eternal blast, in that eternal tempest, that can never be hushed to silence. First, how the breath of the Lord hath already blasted us. How so? Sin came in; then what did the Lord breathe? His breathing was this; that “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” Hear the words of Isaiah upon this;—“The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the

flower of the field ; the grass withereth, the flower fadeth ; because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it." Thousands of years have rolled over since the Lord breathed out those words ; have they ever been recalled ? have they ever been altered ? has God changed his mind ? Is not man as much a dying mortal now as he was thousands of years ago ? Is he not subjected to the same now ? Is not the grave waiting for us all, and must we not soon be there ? Can any one stay the spirit in the day of death ? Can any one extract from our nature its mortality ? Can any one extract from our nature the seeds of death ? No ! There is the blast,—the breath of the Lord. David saith, " My bones are burned as an hearth." How is it that the bones of the very aged get dry and brittle ? The flesh fades away, the skin wrinkles, the eyes grow dim, some of the other senses lose their power, and perhaps the aged man lives long enough to become a mere existence, and that is all. What is the reason ? It is not because the man is nearly a hundred years old ; it is not because of his age ;—that is not the secret. It is because of sin that is in us, and the poisonous arrows of the Almighty stick fast in us. " Dying thou shalt die ;" there is no escape ;—great is the misery of man. Well, then, doesn't this make way for the tidings that Jesus Christ hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light ? See the 15th chapter of First Corinthians. Dear Redeemer, hast thou brought about such a change as this ? Hast thou not only redeemed our souls from hell, but our bodies from the grave, from corruption, from mortality ? And then what is the last blast the Lord will breathe ? " Depart from me, ye cursed,"—there is the breath of the Lord,—" into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Is there a single sentence in this clause about termination ? When men tell us that hell has an end by and by, and that the lost are to be annihilated, where is their authority ? " Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and all his servants." There is not a word about mitigation, there is not a word about termination. And the Saviour repeats the eternity of the punishment in the same chapter—in the same 25th of Matthew. Sometimes, when he uttered a sentence liable to be misunderstood, he would follow it up with some explanation ; but he repeats the thought in this same chapter. " These," his enemies, " shall go away into everlasting punishment." After declaring that it is everlasting fire, he now calls it everlasting punishment. And in the Revelation we read that " the devil was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are." Who is the beast ? The whole unregenerate world. Why is the whole unregenerate world called a wild beast, as the original there means ? Because every man is alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in him.