

# SERMONS

BY

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## SERMON I.

PREACHED ON WEDNESDAY EVENING, AUGUST 19TH, 1874.

“I know it is so of a truth.”—JOB ix. 2.

WHAT a mercy to be able to realize what David did when he cried out, “My heart is fixed, my heart is fixed, I will sing and give praise.” It is a mercy indeed, sinner, to be at a point about our religion, to feel with the great apostle, we “know in whom we have believed,” and as such, that “He will keep that which we have committed unto Him against that day.” To be able to realize with Job, “I know”—to be at a point about it—“I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.” This religion was burnt into Job; his friends battered him right and left, the devil buffeted him sore, and unbelief too, but neither the unbelief of his heart, the sins that he felt and found, not all that the devil could do, or his friends either, could move him from that point. He knew, the same as the Samaritans said to the woman, “Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard Him ourselves, and we know that He is the Messiah.” So with the children of God; what God teaches them they are at a point about, whether it be little or much, what He teaches them, you cannot move them from. As God teaches, so they stand fast, although again and again they may be ready to give up their confidence in other things, they refer back to that again. Now what does God teach them, and they know of a truth it is so? He teaches them the truth of His word that “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;” that the imagination of their hearts is only evil from their youth up, and from the crown of their heads to the soles of their feet they are full of wounds, bruises, and putrifying sores, that in their flesh dwells no good thing. As God teaches them that there is no moving them. You may talk about perfection in the flesh, and bettering the old man, these are at a point, they are all painfully and solemnly taught, and sorrowfully know that in their flesh dwells no good thing. Whatever the Word declares of the badness of the heart, they set to their seal it is true; not in a notional way that they could be talked out of by any power of reasoning. They know it, not merely because the parson insists on it continually, nor because they have learned it at the Sunday school, or from the instruction of their mother. Take the Bible away from them, burn it, they have got the truth of the Bible in their hearts. Therefore their feelings are, “Woe is me, I am undone; I am a sinner;” so the words of their mouths are the feelings of their hearts. When they hear the Word of God setting forth the fallen state of man, their heart echoes “It is true, I know it is so.” Now do you know it to be so? “Yes,” say you, “I do painfully; if men were to argue about human nature being better than it was at the first, I should feel in my conscience it is not so. I am quite sure I never yet heard any man describe the fallen, ruined, undone state of man by reason of sin worse than I find it in my heart.” The Word of God declares enough what we are by reason of sin. “I saw thee,” says God, “cast out to the loathing of thy person,” in all the blood, in all the filth and guilt sin and the devil could

plunge us into. Therefore the man knows this to be so of a truth. What does it do? Makes him sigh on account of it. As you know it is so of a truth, this has made you sigh, mourn, and grieve. What does the Scripture declare? "They shall be as doves of the valley, every one mourning for his iniquity." "Wherefore do I see them with their hands on their loins like a woman in travail? This is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it;" striking his hand on his breast, "God be merciful to me a sinner." What does God say of such as these? Set a mark on them which sigh and cry for the abominations which are done in the land." So when the man is reading the Word of God, he says, "That is true; I know it is so." "Whether I am saved or no," perhaps some may say, "I cannot tell, but I know man is an undone, filthy creature, on account of his sin. I know that, as the Son of God declares, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, and so forth, and these are the things that defile a man."

"I know it is so of a truth." If you can say so feelingly, hear what God saith, "They shall hear, and say, It is truth." Then you have put one step in the way to the kingdom. The Word of God does not describe you too bad. I never heard any man describe how base my heart is; it would not be prudent to do so; the Word of God is sufficient; God discovers "deep things out of darkness." I will tell you another thing, till you know this painfully and mournfully, you will not prize Jesus Christ. This is a real truth of dear Hart's.

"Sin's filth and guilt, perceived and felt,  
Make known God's great salvation."

"Sinners can say, and none but they,  
How precious is the Saviour."

"To see sin smarts but slightly,  
To own with lip confession  
Is easier still, but O, to feel,  
Cuts deep beyond expression."

—Therefore the man knows the Word of God to be true; he will stand by that word whatever becomes of him. I will tell you what will become of him. God says, "They shall ask their way to Zion, with their faces thitherward." These poor things shall come with joy and gladness unto Zion, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away, as Christ is revealed in their hearts.

"I know it is so of a truth." What does the Scripture declare? "By grace we are saved through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God." Every child of God proves this to be true, that the Son of God said, when the people asked Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" He said, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." Every child of God finds that that faith which does him good stands in the power of God; he understands truly the two lines of that hymn—

"O, could I but believe,  
Then all would easy be."

—You can no more work faith in your heart than you can get blood out of a stone; it is above all nature can produce. Therefore, Isaiah cries out, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" "If God had not left us a remnant," if some had not been brought to believe, "we had been as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrah." The Pharisees and scribes cried out, "Have any of the rulers believed on Him?" Not they; their faith stood in sight, not in the work of God; for they said, when the Christ of God hung on the cross, "If He be the Christ, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe in Him." Many believed on Him as he hung on the cross; they did not want Him to come down that they might believe, they ventured their

souls on the Christ of God, and felt, "He is my Lord and my God." The others would not believe except they saw signs. Faith is a persuasion of the mind. Abraham and the other Old Testament saints did not see Christ come in the flesh, but they believed on Him, they died in the confidence of it, and blessed be God, they went to heaven. Every child of God knows that his faith stands in the power of God. He comes to the house of God, as he comes praying with such a desire to feel something, he hears his state described, the mercy and blessing of God to that man or woman that is feeling such things; the Word of God confirming what the servant of God describes; he cannot lay hold of it." "I saw the truth," he says, "as plain as the sun in the firmament. I could see myself described as the character, but it fell too short for me, or else went over my head." To prove to him that without Christ he could do nothing, that the fruit of the Spirit is faith, that it rested in the power of God. When at times in his casting down, and in his fears, he is kneeling before God supplicating for pardon, such a persuasion rises up in his soul, "I verily believe God has heard me; I believe God has done something for me;" his doubts and fears are gone, and for a few minutes what a happy man he is. Perhaps in half-an-hour it is all gone, and he says "It was not of God; my heart was willing to persuade itself of it." His faith stands in the power of God. He comes to the house of God; as he is hearing, the Blessed Spirit works such faith with it, he says, "I am sure that is the truth of God, and I shall go to heaven, I am sure I have rejoiced in God's goodness." Before he gets home it is all gone. Do you know anything about this? "Yes," say you, "I do too often." Cannot you kindle that faith again? "No," say you, "and for another thing, I cannot keep it." In one sense I am glad to hear you say so, though, if it were God's will, I would have you living, as Paul says, "I know in whom I have believed, and that He will keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." "I cannot persuade myself it was real," say you, "that it was a true persuasion and faith from God that I had." That shows where your faith is then, that it does not "stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God;" if God does not shine you cannot see, if He does not draw you cannot run. You can just believe what God works, and no more; if He does not work anything you cannot believe. "I know," say you, "what it is to believe, and how I am obliged to let it go; how I go for weeks and cannot believe, then I can believe for five minutes, then it is all gone." It is a mercy to be positive about one's religion; there is nothing I want men and women to be more positive about. When the apostle Paul is writing to the Ephesians, he saith, "After ye were illuminated ye endured a great fight of afflictions." Then he says, "According to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, that ye may know the exceeding greatness of that power to us-ward who believe." If ever you have had a grain of faith in your heart, and, according to your own testimony, you have had that, you can no more be damned than the devil can be saved. "O," say you, "that is speaking confidently." I am speaking according to the oracles of God. You may have faith that will remove mountains, you may have a faith that will do wonderful things, yet not that faith I have just spoken of. That faith I am speaking of works by love, and will produce things that no other faith will. "Being justified by faith we have peace with God." I will tell you what it will do; it will soften your hard heart, bend your stubborn will at times, bring quietness into your conscience at times, and it will bring God and you together. Hearken; to show you the certainty of such an one being saved, "receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your soul." That faith will bring salvation to your heart, and bring you into the presence of God with joy. Moses told the people he had been with them for many years, what miracles they had seen, how the Red Sea had been opened, how they had been fed with bread

from Heaven, and the rock brought forth water; yet, he says, "God has not given you a heart to understand." It must be something more than our eyes can see, it is called "precious faith" to distinguish it from all other faith; it is called "the faith of God's elect." Hence Paul saith, "Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh, believed on in the world." Now says Paul, "There is a wonderful thing, that men and women should believe the truth of God." "Believed on in the world." They said, "Have any of the rulers believed on him?" No, no; they did not believe; you know it is so, that you cannot believe without God. It is said, "The multitude were of one heart;" you find all God's people say without God they can do nothing. When you hear men insisting that we should believe, and that it is the Word of God, and we should take it; then say you, "You are not of one heart with the Apostles." It is said, "As many as were ordained unto eternal life believed." When Paul had been preaching, it is said, "some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not." Paul says, "We are not of them that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." The others may go a long way. That faith will bring a man to heaven which stands in the power of God, and he finds he cannot work it; he knows it is so; he is ready to say, "If you preach all unbelief out of my heart, I will give you a thousand a year." "How could he do that?" say you. The Son of God says, "When you pray, believe that you have the things you ask for, and you shall receive them." I know what that faith is; I know what it is to pray both for spiritual and temporal things; I have prayed and believed that I should have them, and have had them, so "I know it is so of a truth." Then say you, "Why do you not always believe?" Because it stands in God's power, and I cannot. How often I fear from Wednesday to Saturday whether I shall get a text; then at times, when on my knees, there will be a feeling, "God will give me something to say;" in another ten minutes down I sink in fear. Then I know that "by grace I am saved, through faith, and that not of myself, it is the gift of God." Cannot you say so, too? "Yes," say you, "that I can; I have been trying to believe for many years that Christ loved me and gave Himself for me; at times I get a little hope, then down I go."

"O, my distrustful heart, how small thy faith appears."

Then you are at a point that it stands in the power of God. Have not your friends tried to strengthen you? "O, yes," say you, "they have tried all in their power, and have left me just where I was; I have said, I think I cannot have the right religion, and have gone mourning and sighing to bed." Nobody can persuade you that you can work faith. "I would work it directly," say you, "if I could." Peter declares, "To you that believe He is precious." If you have got that faith which will save your soul, at times you get glimpses of Jesus, O, if you could but call Him thine, what a happy man or woman you would be. That proves yours is the right sort of faith, because it makes Christ precious to you. Faith discovers to the man that he is a sinner; he sees a suitability in the Christ of God, and his faith goes out after Him; he will never be satisfied till he brings him in. Faith will sue and supplicate, till he says, "I have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write What do you think of Christ?" "O," say you, "He is the most desirable of all objects, I feel if I had Him I could die in a ditch." Yours is the same faith as Peter had; you see more in Christ than all the poor blind Papists do, though they wear a cross round their necks, or go cringing to it. You see what Peter saw when the Son of God said to him, "Whom do men say that I am?" "Some say thou art Elias, some say Jeremias, and others one of the prophets." "Whom say ye that I am?" "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." "Blessed be thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." That is your faith; at times you

cannot exercise that faith, you cannot see that beauty and desirableness in Christ; sometimes you see such things in the world that it is everything, and Christ is of little esteem in your feelings. If faith does not work, you will not see much beauty in Christ! you know it is so, nobody can talk you out of it. I will tell you what that faith will do, too, it is a principle active and young,

"It lives and labours under load,  
Though damped, it never dies;"

—it will separate you from the world, and from the herd of professors; it will teach you this, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate." It is something different to the separation of poor monks and nuns. What a piece of pride to come out from the world in body before they come out in heart. God brings his people out inwardly; as he does this it will separate outwardly. When Elijah thought he would get away from everybody, God said, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" "I have been very jealous for the Lord of Hosts." "You go forth," said God. The Son of God says, "When men light a candle, they put it in a candlestick, that men may see the light." Who is going to see the light in these dark cells? When God laid hold of Luther's heart he soon separated him inwardly, that separated him from the world outwardly, then he came out of the convent and shewed forth the grace of God in him. The man knows that his faith stands in the power of God. How you would like to believe to-night. "Yes," say you, "that I should; if I could only believe it is God's work in my soul, and that I am bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord Jesus Christ, how happy I should lie down, that I should." If God does not save such as you, who will he save? "Well," say you, "I believe that they are the men and women that he will save, yet I cannot believe." You believe that Jesus Christ will take to heaven broken hearts and poor beggars, are you such? "Yes," say you, "I am." Then, why not believe? "I cannot stretch forth my hand," say you, "I look and long, and cannot do more." Do you look and long? *Do you look and long?* "O, that I do." Then I am sure that you will get it. Harken; "I will replenish every sorrowful soul, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness." "I will never bring to the birth and not cause to bring forth." "I will fulfil the desire of them that fear me, I also will hear their cry, and will save them." "For the sighing of the needy I will arise." "I will bring forth the prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water." The promises of God are all on your side, you will have it. "O, say you, "I cannot believe it." How your faith stands in the power of God; you know that these things I say are true. What a firm believer you are in the power of God to work faith in your heart. You are persuaded that I would not deceive you for all the parish of Croydon, yet you cannot believe it. What a mercy to be such a believer! You are a believer. God says, "Bring forth my witnesses." You would stand before all the Plymouth Brethren in the parish, and prove that faith stands in the power of God; you know you would. "Yes," say you, "I could not help it." Then you are as firm a believer as Job, or the great apostle himself. That faith will justify your soul, sooner or later; you will find peace with God.

"I know it is so of a truth." What do you know to be true? That the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, so that you cannot do the things that you would. You know that; painfully you know it to be so, more or less, every day. You rise in the morning with anxious desires, "Lord, do not let me sin against thee in thought, word, or deed;" when you get down stairs these feelings are soon gone, somebody wants something; it may be a poor man, and you send him away without anything. In the course of the day you see if you can pray, and as soon as you get behind a tree or get up into your room, you think you are not obliged to call on God now, you are compelled to give it up, and come

away chafed and grieved in your conscience. Then at night how the flesh is opposed to all the good motions you had in the morning. You cannot do the things that you would; you desire to do it, "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." You have got into bed a filthy, polluted wretch, feeling, "If I get to heaven it must be by sovereign and rich grace, which alone can save such." At times you will find a motion in your heart to give something to a poor person; if you are not quick about it the flesh will come in and say, "Do not do so much." The flesh works close on the Spirit. You will come to the house of God praying to God to comfort your soul; as soon as you sit down you are full of carnality and worldly-mindedness; you know it is so. "What will ye see in the Shulamite?" As it were a company of two armies." "When I would do good, evil is present with me." "I find a law in my members warring against the law of my mind." "So do I," say you. How long have you been in God's ways? "Thirty or forty years," say some. What have you found to be true? "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," it was born a vile, sinful, earthly body, so it is now. Men talk of getting perfection in the flesh; you will see about that. I will venture to say, if you go to one of the best of them, and tell him of some of his faults, see how he will take it, see if he will not say "You are not altogether free;" that would show he is not perfect. Our flesh will never be any better. "Sanctified nature," says Herbert, "is sanctified stuff." The man sets to his seal that the Word of God is true; what a witness he is for God; he has got the Bible in his heart. Let men take away the Bible from us, we have got the Bible in our hearts. Let them preach contrary to this, "That is not truth," we say. Therefore it is said they sit down at the feet of the Son of God, every one shall receive of His words; they believe what He declares, "Without Me ye can do nothing." What a mercy it is to have that religion in your heart and mine, that "we need not that any man should teach us, but the same anointing teaches us of all things, and is truth, and is no lie." Then God says, "Bring forth those that have eyes and those that have ears; ye are My witnesses." John says, in the Revelations, he saw those that had gotten the victory over the beast, (the beast is all false religions) stand upon a sea of glass mingled with fire. What is that? The sea of glass is the Word of God; mingled with fire, "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; they stood on the Word of God, therefore it was only those that got the victory. "They loved not their lives unto the death;" they would sooner die than deny it, or give up one iota. You know how they tried some if they would give up only one thing, but they would sooner be burned and die than give up any part of God's truth; so they continued in it, and died in that faith.