

1887

SERMON XI.

PREACHED ON SUNDAY EVENING, JUNE 2, 1878.

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.”—JOHN xiv. 1, 2.

IN the morning we took a little notice of some of the troubles that the child of God was exercised with from the time that the Blessed Spirit quickened his soul. We noticed that one of the troubles that exercised and perplexed him was, the fear that his sins were too many and too great to find mercy at the hands of God, but we found that his heart need not be troubled on that ground, for Christ was able and willing to “save to the uttermost all that came unto God by Him.” There are no sins too many or too great for His blood to cleanse, and His mercy to pardon. We noticed that some were fearful they were not troubled enough, because they had not felt the terrors of the law, nor sunk so deep in distress, fear, and anxiety as others have; but we noticed that God looks to the works of His own hands. We noticed that, where there was an earnest desire to be right, faith in the Lord Jesus, love to God, and a desire to be saved, that was a good work, and such souls would come to their graves in peace. We noticed that some were much exercised, cast down, and troubled on account of the warfare they found, flesh against Spirit, and Spirit against flesh, so that they could not do the things that they would. They cried and sighed on account of the abominations they felt within, and said from their hearts, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” We noticed that such need not be troubled,

“Since death, which puts an end to life,
Will put an end to sin.”

It was a proof that they were made partakers of a divine nature, that made them sigh and cry on account of the works of the flesh. We noticed that others were troubled on account of the things they had to pass through in a temporal way; they found it was hard to get an honest living, to pay their way, and to render to all their dues. Their crosses and losses, their increasing family, the competition in business, and many other things made them anxious, and often caused them sleepless hours. We noticed that the hearts of such need not be troubled, their heavenly Father knows what things they have need of. When they come to their end they will have to say, as hundreds have said before, “Goodness and mercy hath followed me all the days of my life.” They will then find there was nothing wanting on God's part, while there was much wanting on their part, in gratitude and thankfulness, that they will acknowledge indeed, “Not unto us, but unto Thy name be the honour and glory.”

Now there is another trouble which the parson knows, that few here

before God are exercised with, I expect. The servants of God are often troubled because they can see so little good done, so few men and women crying out, "What shall I do to be saved?" and so few growing in grace and in knowledge, bringing forth the fruits of righteousness, lively in the ways of God, dead to the world, but alive to the things that make for their peace. This often causes tears from the eyes, sorrow in the heart, and cries to God. Therefore the Word of God comes to these and says, "Let not your heart be troubled; though Israel be not gathered, yet you shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord." Though the servant of God often cries out, "I have laboured in vain, and spent my strength for nought; where is the arm of the Lord revealed? Who hath believed the report?" then God comes in at times to comfort, to encourage, and to hold him up. Therefore God saith, "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth; so shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth; it shall not return unto Me void." "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not which shall prosper." "Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days." "He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap." Thus God comes at times to strengthen and encourage His servants, and says, as in the words of my text, "Let not your heart be troubled." We find the blessed Word of God to be a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path; it is a breast of consolation for every living, quickened, seeking child of God; so what a mercy it is to be found in Wisdom's ways, which are "ways of pleasantness, and paths of peace;" "for I cause those that love Me to inherit substance, and I will fill their treasures."

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me." Now you believe that God is a holy God, that He is a just God, that He is a great God, that He is a faithful God, that He is a mighty God, that He is a prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering God, you believe all this; then says the Son of God, "Believe also in Me, that I am a mighty Saviour, able and willing." "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me, and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." "Whatever is thy state, need, or condition, or whatever thou art in trouble about, I will in no wise cast you out. If you are a babe, a young man, or a father, I will in no wise cast you out." "If you cannot do without Me, I came to seek and to save that which was lost." What a mercy to have a grain of faith in the Christ of God, and to be able to say, "We do believe, help Thou our unbelief." What a mercy, my friends, that God's word is "Ye and Amen;" so, as you were singing;

"On this firm rock believers build;

His word shall stand, His truth prevail,

And not one jot nor tittle fail."

"Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." "Believe that I am your Brother born for adversity; a Friend that loveth at all times." When speaking of

His spouse, He calls her, "My love, My dove, My undefiled." He saith, "Whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My mother, and sister, and brother." What a mercy to believe in Him as such. You know it was the brotherhood that made Joseph treat his brethren so kindly, return their money in their sacks, and send them home well laden to their father. When he saw Benjamin he said, "Is this your youngest brother, of whom ye spake?" He fell upon his neck, and kissed him, and blessed him in the name of the Lord. He never did to the Egyptians what he now does for his brethren; he says, "I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Doth my father yet live? Go, and tell him of all my glory in Egypt; make haste and bring him down, you shall dwell in the best of the land. I will feed you, and take care of you; for yet there are five years of famine."

"O fearful, O faithless!" in mercy He cries,

'My promise, My truth, are they light in thy eyes?

'Still, still I am with thee; My promise shall stand;

'Through tempest and tossing, I'll bring thee to land.'

He means what He says; He is bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. We have an interest in the Blessed Son of God, therefore He will provide for us, look to us, and take care of us. In a spiritual sense, He is Joseph our Brother, and the Father has committed all into His hands, it is out of His fulness we receive grace for grace. Not a heavenly emotion, not an earnest desire, not a grain of faith, not a budding hope do we feel, but it flowed from the Blessed Son of God, all comes through Him. As long as we are in this wilderness He will see to us and take care of us. Look at His tenderness, pity, and compassion towards His disciples. He said to them at one time, "Children, have ye any meat?" They answered, "Nay." "Cast your net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find." How He saw to them. Look again at His tenderness and compassion, "When I sent you out without purse, scrip, or any thing, lacked ye any thing?" They said, "Nothing." "I send you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves," He said. When the people came to take Him, He said, "Whom seek ye?" "Jesus of Nazareth." "If ye seek Me, then let these go," He said; He would not have them touched, they all shall be spared; He will give "His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair," but He will save His brethren. You know what love there was on Jonathan's side towards David, it is said he loved him as his own soul; how well he spake of David to his father, how grieved he was when his father spake wrongly of him, how he rose from the table and went away. Now "ye believe in God, believe also in Me." While we have a rich, tender, loving Brother, who has got mercy in bags that were never opened, love that was never fathomed, grace and kindness that can never be told, and gold and silver and the hearts of all men in His hands, let us believe in Him.

Again, "Believe that I am your Husband." He comes closer still. "No man hateth his own flesh, but nourisheth it and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church;" for we are "members of His body, of His flesh; and of His bones." Therefore says Paul, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church." "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it." We will hear Him speak for Himself, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends." Hence, as the poet says—

"I feel at My heart all thy sighs and thy groans,
For thou art most near Me, My flesh and My bones;
In all thy distresses, Thy Head feels the pain,
Yet all are most needful; not one is in vain."

Therefore there is not a temptation, a trial, or a trouble goes across thy breast and thou art exercised with, but He has sympathy with and feeling towards, and will see that it shall work for thy good, and do thee good. Say you, "Surely this is too condescending for the Blessed Son of God to take notice of these things." Harken, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" "Who art thou, Lord?" "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; you have trodden upon My toes, you have touched My spouse, you have laid hold of some of My lambs." "Believe also in Me." Whatever is your need, or whatever you may be passing through, your Head feels it. You know, if any one were to tread on your foot as you go out from the chapel, or as you are walking along, your tongue would cry out, "How you hurt me;" they did not touch your head or your tongue, but it would call out because it has sympathy with the foot. "Thy Maker is thy Husband, the Lord of Hosts is His name; the God of the whole earth shall He be called." "Behold, I am married unto you;" therefore it is said, "He hateth putting away." When the people said to the Son of God, "Moses told us that we might give a writing of divorcement, and put away our wives;" He answered them, "Because of the hardness of your hearts Moses wrote you this precept, but from the beginning it was not so." The Son of God left His Father, forsook the Jewish church, His mother, and married the poor Gentiles; and "what God has joined together no man can put asunder;" therefore He calls her His spouse; "My delight is in her." "Since thou wast precious in My sight thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee." "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me," that I will take care of you. There is not one but would say he was not fit to be called a husband, who would disregard his wife, and take care of the servant. Paul says, "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." What!

would Christ unite us to Himself in faith, draw our affections after Him, so that we can say, "Thy desire shall be to thine husband, and he shall rule over thee;" espouse us to Himself by the blessed influence of the Holy Ghost, and then take care of and see to the world, and let His own spouse want, be trodden down and persecuted, or die in wretchedness and despair? "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice."

"Ye believe in God, believe also in Me, I am faithful and loving, mighty and good, all that is in God is in Me." Do you believe that God is what He is? "If you believe not that I am He, you shall die in your sins." So, you see, we have ten parts in the King, He is our near kinsman, He must see to us. You may stand still, you will see He will do it. Naomi knew all about it, hence she said to Ruth, "Where have you gleaned to-day, my daughter?" She said, "The man's name with whom I wrought to-day is Boaz." Naomi said, "Blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off his kindness to the living, and to the dead. The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen. You do what I say, see where the man lays down to night, go, and lay yourself down at his feet, and tell him when he awakes he is your kinsman, and ask him to do the kinsman's part." She saw where he lay, and she went and uncovered his feet, and lay down there. When the man awoke in the night a woman lay at his feet, and he said, "Who art thou?" "I am Ruth thine handmaid; spread thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman." Boaz said, "There is a kinsman nearer than I, but if he will not do the kinsman's part, I will do to thee all that thou requirest; for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman." Then he gave her an earnest, he filled her veil with corn, and said, "Do not go home empty to your mother-in-law." When she got home Naomi said to her, "Sit still, my daughter, for the man will not rest until he has finished the thing this day." You know how it ended. Then Boaz said to the people of the city, "You are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's and his sons', and Ruth the Moabitess have I purchased to be my wife." Has the Blessed Son of God never given you an earnest when you have been waiting upon Him? Has He not encouraged your heart when you have been seeking His face, and entreating His favour? Has He never given you a sweet token, shed abroad His love in your heart, given you faith to believe in Him, and to lay hold of Him, and made you feel, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee?" He is our next Kinsman, He is bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. "Forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;" and "bring life and immortality to light through the gospel." Therefore what does He say? "Ye believe in God, believe

also in Me." "Behold I and the children which God hath given Me." When He comes to the Father, He says, "Not one of them is lost, but the son of perdition." "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." See what a rich and loving Husband we have got, He will never put away.

"With heaven and earth at His command,
He waits to answer prayer."

Angels fly at His bidding, and devils tremble at His frowns. He will see after us, because we have an interest in Him.

"In My Father's house are many mansions." This is in a way of figure; we do not expect there are houses either of gold, silver, brick, or stone, in heaven, but something better than these. O! what the child of God has got in reversion! The best is to come, man; we may indeed say, "Hold out, faith and patience." What is to come?

"Released from sin and sorrow here,
The conflict now is o'er;
And, feasted well with heavenly cheer,
They live to die no more."

Therefore we may say—

"Death is no more a frightful foe,
Since I with Christ shall reign;
With joy I leave this world below,
For me to die is gain."

Paul knew that, so he said, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." Does it not make your mouth water? O to get there! Bunyan tells us when he saw Hopeful and Christian go in, he saw the streets were all of gold, and such glories, beauties, and dazzling things, that, as they shut the door, he wished he was there, too. Does thy heart pant to be there?

"O may I live to reach the place
Where He unveils His lovely face,
Where all His beauties you behold,
And sing His name to harps of gold."

If that is your longing, earnest desire, and the real beating of your heart, you will get there; you will sing there. Again you read in dear Bunyan's book; when Christian was on the road Pliable overtook him, and wanted him to go back, but he said, "No." "What have you got in view then?" He told him what glorious things were laid up in store. "Is it true?" says Pliable. "Read it in my book," said Christian. "But is that true?" he says. "It was written by Him that cannot lie." "Let us make haste then," says Pliable. "I cannot go faster because of the burden on my back," said Christian. We find as soon as they got into some little trouble, Pliable said, "You may keep the brave country for me." He had not tasted of the world to come, he had never seen the King in His beauty, what it is to get to heaven, and what these mansions are. What

are they? There is eternal love, in which you may live for ever and ever. There is immortal life, where the sun never goes down, but where the Sun of Righteousness fills the place. There is joy that never cloys, nor ever ends. Here we get just a drop of joy, but a great deal of sorrow; just a little bright shining, then many dark days; just a sweet look, and then have to sigh and cry, "When wilt Thou come unto me?" but there will be mansions of joy and love. "There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God." The river of God is full of water, eternal, everlasting, boundless love, for saints to swim in. Such mansions! The Lord will lead them to fountains of living waters, and will wipe away all tears from their eyes. There is a mansion of peace, without the least sorrow, bitterness, fear, doubt, or misgiving; all peace. The God of peace fills their hearts, and fills the place, so they sing and never tire, "Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

"In My Father's house are many mansions." Not such mansions as they are upon earth; some of the greatest that have been built have tumbled down. How men have embellished their houses with all sorts of precious things, and perhaps as soon as they have done so, they have been taken from them. How few people there are in this town, that can say the farm that they inherit, or the house that they live in belonged to their grandfather or great grandfather. I do not suppose you would find half-a-dozen persons in the town who could say so. I daresay some of you, when you go about, say, "That was my father's, or grandfather's;" but it has passed into other hands. In heaven are everlasting habitations. "If I go away I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." He means what He says; He is too holy to deceive us, and too good to forget us. "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the earth, to show Himself strong on the behalf of them that fear Him." "Mine eyes are upon My people, and ever towards them." "In My Father's house are many mansions;" you will surely inhabit them. Paul says, "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness," there is a palm and a robe. O to get there, my friends, How often I have felt, I expect if I live long I shall feel the same again, I would not mind crawling on my hands and knees all my life to get to heaven at last; it does sparkle in mine eyes, it does indeed shine in my soul. O, to get there!

"And there to see His face,
And never, never sin,
But from the rivers of His grace
Drink endless pleasures in."

Who can give us such things as these? The world often tells us about her pleasures and profits, gains and delights, but then she is a cheat. The world is to us just like the devil was in his promise to our first parents; he said "You take that apple, you will be as gods." He is such a liar. What did he do? He showed them the apple, but they saw not the hook

till it stuck fast in their jaws, then O what trouble and misery followed. You may say, "The world has deceived me a great many times;" and so it will again, if you trust in it. The world is like the sea; sometimes it looks all green, so pretty and pleasant, and seems to say, "Come on me." Boys often think they should like to go to sea, it is so nice and pretty, but perhaps they are not on it many days before the winds begin to blow, and the waves rise, then they think, "I wish I was at home with my father and mother now; I shall be drowned; O that I were at home." I have heard of a merchant, who sent his goods across the sea, that he might gain some profit, but the vessel was wrecked, and all his property lost. Some time after, when he was walking by the sea-side, it looked all green and calm, and he said, "You want to tempt me again, but I will trust you no more." He was a wise man. A wise man says, "I do not like that prosperity which hangs upon a reed." This is like the world. No doubt there are some here ready to believe what the world says, but you will find I speak right, I am impartial in what I say. I have no interest to deceive you, I have no desire to deceive you, I speak to you in sincerity and in truth, in the sight of the God of heaven. I wish you well, I desire your good and profit, and can lay my hand on my heart, and say, "Not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully, do I tell you this." I will tell you what the world will do, notwithstanding all it may tell you about its profits, pleasures, and gains, and what you shall have if you pursue it, it will serve you the same as Jael served Sisera. He was tired and weary, he came to Jael's tent, and said, "Give me a little water, I pray you." "Turn in, my lord," she said, "lay down here, and I will cover your feet, and will stand at the door to guard you." So she opened a bottle of milk, and he drank some, and thought she was a kind creature, and lay down securely, as he thought. No sooner was he asleep than with a nail and a hammer she fastened him to the ground. That is just how the world will serve you; it will tell you of many things, but it will give you nothing of all it promises. "The wages of sin is death;"—now "the mansion"—"the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." He will not deceive us. The world promises us a deal of good, but does not give it; the Son of God tells us about denying self, and taking up the cross, and then gives us a great deal of good. He says, "If you come after Me you will have tribulation, you will find plenty of things to annoy, distress, and perplex you in this life, but," (mind, He means this also,) "he that endures to the end shall be saved." When your body droops in death, and your spirit ascends, as God sends His angels to gather His people together, the first sweet taste and heavenly welcome will be this, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord, wherefore standest thou without?" These mansions are everlasting habitations. Gold, silver, and precious stones are as dirt, rubbish, sticks, and straws, to the smiles and presence of the Son of God, to be filled with the Holy Ghost, and to walk the heavenly streets in love and peace throughout eternity.

"An awful, yet a glorious sight,
To see believers die;
They smile, and bid the world good night,
And take their flight on high."

"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you." "I would have told you there is nothing after death, you need not look out for or expect anything. I am the faithful and true Witness." "A faithful witness will not lie." "I go to prepare a place for you." Who are these people? He was speaking to his disciples at this time; we will look at one of them, he shall be a sample for the rest; you will see whether you are like him. Poor Peter cried out, as he saw somewhat of the beauty and holiness there was in the Son of God, "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man." Then it is for sensible sinners, penitent sinners, sorrowing sinners, grieving sinners. "I go to prepare a place for you" who are sorry on account of your sins, and are anxious to forsake them, that grieve on account of them, and really are sensible sinners. Are you one of these folks? Does the Lord see you at His feet at times, sighing on account of the abominations that are done in the land, grieving because you cannot love Him as you would, and because in many things you offend all? Do you know what it is to strike your breast, and say, "God be merciful to me a sinner; Lord, I am a sinner, I know; I am grieved and often cast down about it; pardon my iniquity, for it is great, and save me from my sins?" A place is prepared for you, poor thing. Who would ever think that a poor creature like you, that can say, "I who am but dust and ashes," that can say, with Job, "I abhor myself," and that can say, "I am not worthy of the least of all Thy mercies," should have such a place prepared for you? It is prepared for those that are poor in spirit. The Son of God looked round on His disciples when He was pronouncing this, and said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God." Have you got low eyes? He saveth them that have low eyes. Are you poor in spirit? Have you no righteousness to bring?

"Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Black, I to the Fountain fly,
Wash me, Saviour, or I die."

Art thou one of these? It is for you. "Surely it is too good to be true," say you. But it is true. It is for you whose hearts are after Him. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?" "Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee." Does your heart ever beat towards Him? Can you say at times, "Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee?" Can you say at times that you love Him above father, mother, husband, brother, and above all the world calls good or great? It is for

you. It is for you whose faith is upon Him, and who are willing to go after Him. Faith sees Him just as He is, and as the Word of God reveals Him. He says, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth;" that is, teachable, simple, sincere men, that sit down at His feet, and who can say in truth,

"Lord, send Thy Spirit down
On babes that long to learn."

If you are one of them, it is for *you*. This is as certainly true as the Word of God is true. "Well," say you, "I can say I am one of these people." The devil will dispute it, your unbelief will question it; I will venture to say you will try to hold it; it seems too good to be true, but less would not do. While I am speaking, you may say, "I am sure I am one of them; can it be possible that such a poor creature as I shall get to heaven and inhabit one of those glorious mansions?" It is true, but I have no doubt you will have a fight for it. God blessed some part of the tenth chapter of John to dear Bunyan, and the devil tried hard to get it away; he says, "He pulled, and I pulled." I have no doubt, while I have been speaking, you have said in your spirit, "It is for me." "Do not presume," says the devil. Your unbelief says, "Do not be too confident; you had better get another token." I will venture to say there is a tussle in your heart, you *would*, but *cannot*, believe; you would lay hold, but your hand is not strong enough; but Christ holds it for you. Hearken; if you cannot believe, "He abideth faithful, He will not deny Himself." Therefore say the words of my text, "I go to prepare a place for you."