

1887

## SERMON X.

PREACHED ON SUNDAY MORNING, 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.

THE Scriptures declare that "man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upwards;" but then there is the sorrow of the world that worketh death, no real good comes out of that. I will venture to say there is not one before me this morning, who has not got something they would like to have removed, some thorn, some briar, something they would like to be free from. The great thing is to have that trouble which sends us to God, it is that which will end well. When Herod and the people of Jerusalem heard of the birth of Jesus they were troubled, it is said, but it did not send them after the Son of God. An evil spirit from God troubled Saul, but he went to the witch to find some comfort. There is a trouble that ends well. David says, "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and delivered him out of all his trouble." The prophet Jeremiah says, "Alas, for that day is great, so that there is none like it, it is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it." God saith, to comfort those people who are troubled in the way that my text would speak about, "They shall not bring forth for trouble, for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them;" so it will end well. NP. Now what is that trouble which will end well? It is soul trouble, it is that trouble which the world is ignorant of; as the Scripture says, the wicked are "not in trouble like other men;" there is a trouble that is peculiar to God's elect, to those who are bound for heaven, which they feel when the Blessed Spirit convinces them of their sin. That is Jacob's trouble; there is no trouble like soul trouble. These souls know something of what David says, "The pains of death gat hold upon me, I found trouble and sorrow." If yours is a right trouble it will bring you where it brought David? "Then called I on the name of the Lord, O Lord, I beseech Thee, deliver my soul." Where does your trouble take you to? If it is a trouble that will end well, I am persuaded that it will bring you here; "Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble." What is the sequel? "He delivered them out of their distresses." He takes His own time where, when, and how, but then the thing is certain. When God the Holy Ghost really convinces a man of sin he feels and finds sin to be sin, an evil, cursed, damnable thing, that exposes him to the vengeance of God, and the righteous judgment of the Most High; this makes him cry out indeed, "What shall I do to be saved?" How he sees and feels one thing is needful, he does indeed. Now he is fearful. You will never be right for the devil or your unbelief for an hour, they will either tell you you have

not been in trouble enough, or else your sins are too many. You will never be right only as God shines in your heart and tells you you are right. Whatever fears you may have about being too great a sinner, "Let not your heart be troubled." I will grant that your sins may be as many as the hairs of your head, in your feelings, I will grant there is not a worse sinner, not such a vile wretch in all the parish of Croydon, if all your filth and guilt was exposed you would stand head and shoulders above every one else as a vile wretch, yet "Let not your heart be troubled;" there is more virtue in the blood of the Son of God to cleanse than guilt in thy sins to damn thee.

"Think what the blood of Christ can buy,  
Invaluable blood!"

John might indeed cry out, as he saw the Darling of heaven, the Saviour of sinners, "Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world."

"What is thy sin to His great grace,  
That cancels all the sum?  
For Him there's ne'er too hard a case,  
Past, present, or to come."

When the Holy Ghost would speak of what our sins are, and what the Son of God can do, He says, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." God says, "I have opened a fountain for sin and uncleanness;" therefore, poor, troubled heart, hearken to what the Son of God declares, "I came to seek and to save them that are lost." If you are one of those He came to save, and thy sins really trouble thee, press thee down, squeeze thee, and bring such fears, terror, and trouble into <sup>your</sup> soul respecting thy dying day, you will surely end well. It is said in Scripture, "Their soul is melted because of trouble." Does your heart melt, break, and soften under it? Does sin make thy heart bleed, and make the tears run out of thine eyes by the feelings of thine heart? "Yes, it does," say you. Blessed be God, He bottles those tears of thine, you may depend upon it He listens to thy cry; though you may be tossed up and down because of trouble, He will bring you to your desired haven; you will say, one of these days, "O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men." If it is the teaching of the Blessed Spirit in thy soul that is causing thee trouble and anguish, I will tell you how it works in your heart: "~~How do you know?~~" say you. ~~I know right well it is in this way,~~ "They poured out a prayer when Thy chastening was upon them." You will pour it out to God, you will want no book to teach you, the words of your mouth will be the feelings of your heart. However deep the plague and sore may be on account of your many sins, God help thee to remember that, "Where sin abounded, grace does much more abound." What a good word that was once to me; it opened up to me in this way—my sins, though many, were all the sins of a creature, but the merit, grace,

sufferings, and blood of the Son of God was infinite; therefore, though my sins were as the sand on the seashore, His suffering and merit was the blood of God, therefore it overcame all my sins, and sank them like a stone in the mighty waters. May you feel indeed, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." "Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, that all that believe might be justified freely from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses." O, poor troubled heart, my text says, "Let not your heart be troubled." "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance;" so

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

"Lord Jesus, on Thee I venture to call,  
O look upon me, the vilest of all,  
For whom didst Thou languish and bleed on the tree?  
O pity my anguish, and say, 'Twas for thee."

Is that the feeling of your heart, the desire of your soul, the very echo of your breast? There is salvation in Israel for thee. "You never shall perish, if Jesus can save." Harken to His sweet and blessed words, "Come unto Me, all ye that are weary, and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." This made Paul cry out, sweetly rejoice, and sing, "This is a faithful saying"—troubled, burdened, sin-plagued, law-cursed, devil-hunted sinner—"this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation." O that the Blessed Spirit would work faith in your hearts to believe it—"worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." There must be a chief one, although I will venture to say there is not one here, really, truly, and painfully taught of God, but feels the chief. There are no little sinners going to heaven, none are too great for His righteousness to justify, and blood to cleanse. "Hast thou an arm like God, or canst thou thunder with a voice like Him?" God will not deceive us, He says, "I will send them a Saviour, and a great one." What will He do? Help them out a bit? "He shall deliver them." What made the angels sing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and goodwill towards men?" What goodwill would it have been to you or me unless it could reach the worst, the vilest, and the farthest off? You may say,

"With terror I read my sins' heavy score,  
The numbers exceed the sand on the shore;  
Guilt makes me unable to stand or to flee,  
So Cain murdered Abel, and trembled like me."

But, as I said just now, thy trembling brings thee to God with tears in thy eyes, with rope round thy neck in feeling, crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

"Sinners are high in His esteem,  
And sinners highly value Him."

"Let not your heart be troubled" on account of the greatness of your sins

or the numbers of them, for it is declared, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins;" no limit as to how many or how great. I need not run up and down God's Word to show you the richness, freeness, and fulness of His grace and mercy to poor troubled sinners. How the Word shines with saved sinners; it sparkles with what Christ's merit, hands, power, and grace can do. "Let not your heart be troubled." The greater your sins are, the more need of a Saviour. Who is it that wants to be washed? Those that are dirty. Who is it that wants a covering? Those that are naked. Who is it that wants to be warm? Those that are cold. "The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." So,

" 'Tis the sick man, not the healthy,  
Needs the Good Physician's care."

"Come needy, come guilty, come loathsome and bare;  
You can't come too filthy, come just as you are."

I know this, I have gone to God again and again, in such a pickle and plight, to speak plainly, with such shame, blushing, and confusion in my soul, and have fallen at His feet, crying, "Have mercy upon me, O God; according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my iniquities." Glory, honour, and praise be to His matchless name, love, compassion and pity, His mercy has dropped into my heart, and I have got off my knees, feeling, "There is no God like unto mine; had I a thousand souls I would venture them all upon Him, and tell Him the whole matter." He knows where to get honour, He knows how to endear himself. Let Him pardon your sins, and say to you, "Son (daughter) thy sins, though many, are all forgiven thee," see how you would feel. "Oh," say you, "I would call upon heaven, earth, and everything to praise His name." You are the man that will do so. This is how He gets Himself a name and praise, and endears Himself to the heart. Who followed Him about when He was on earth? There was the poor wretch Magdalene, she could not leave Him, He had saved her soul from a burning pit, so she followed Him and ministered to Him as long as He was upon earth.

"Let not your heart be troubled" that you will not end well; you will end well if you are brought to cry to God, and to pour out your soul to the Most High. If you know what it is to melt on account of your sins, God will lift you out of the dust one of these days, and will set you among princes. I have no doubt some before God are saying, "I would not mind how deep I went into trouble." You do not know what you say, you would not get comfort out of your trouble. If God has made you right there is such an earnest desire in your soul to be right, that you are willing to go through anything, so that you may come out right at last. "That is it," say you. Poor anxious soul, you will go to heaven, you will not miss; your beginning is right, you will end right. Hearken, "The meek He will guide in judgment, and the meek He will teach His way." You say to

God, "I want to be right, to have a right religion, and to die well;" "Let not your heart be troubled," as sure as God liveth, "there is a good thing in your heart towards the Lord God of Israel;" you will come to your grave in peace. Your fear is, "I have never been deep enough," but you have had as much trouble as you can bear. You could not say, "I am right, I shall go to heaven, God will look after me, if I look after Him." "No," say you, "I am so troubled, fearing I have not begun right. When reading at times of the depths of trouble some went into, how the thunder of Sinai pealed in their conscience, or how they were struck down by this or that sermon, all my religion goes out at once, and I think I know nothing." What does that do? "It makes me miserable," say you, "I think I would not mind going into their trouble." They found no sweetness in their trouble, it is when we are brought out we can sing. "I am afraid I do not know what a law work is," say you, "therefore I shall not know the blessedness of the gospel." This is a law work, "By the law is the knowledge of sin." Do you know what sin is? "Yes," say you, "I know it is an evil and bitter thing to sin against God; it has brought me to cry out, 'Have mercy upon me, O Lord.' Has it stopped your mouth? 'Yes, it has,' say you. Poor thing, you have had a law work.

"For to convince and to condemn  
Is all the law can do."

It has convinced you you are a sinner, and it has condemned you as such. "Yes, it has," say you. You have had a law work. Paul says, "Measuring yourselves by yourselves is not wise;" we are to measure by the Word of God, that is the measuring line, if your religion measures according to that it is a right measure. "Every mouth must be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God." I will venture to say that all in this chapel have not felt that; they will say, "We all are sinners." Has your mouth ever been stopped before God on account of your sin? "I cannot say it has," say some, "I hope I shall be better, God is merciful, kind, and loving, so if we do our best, we shall be all right." Some may say, "I am not so religious as I ought to be, I am not so prayerful or particular as some are; sometimes in the way of business I tell a fib, but God is merciful, and I trust I shall be better some day. Notwithstanding these things I do, I have got an honest heart, I mean to do well." Poor creature, Jesus Christ is not much to you. Now honestly say if you would part with anything for Him? Are there not things that you esteem, desire, and want to have more than Jesus Christ? "Yes," say you, "there are; but as nobody knows who I am I can say it is true, although it hits me hard." I wish it would send you home, saying, "What a sinner I am;" instead of saying, "What a good sermon it was." But here are some who are going to heaven, that have a thousand fears whether they shall get there, and who are troubled for fear they should miss it, and can say, "Sir, that is not my case, I am so troubled for fear I shall

not get what I want, and, for fear I have not been deep enough, at times I say, Lord, plunge me into the ditch; let my sins tear me to pieces." As I said before, you do not know what you ask for, you would not find comfort in all the trouble you might pass through; it is not your sins tormenting and teasing you will bring you to say, "Mine is a right religion." I know that you want to be right, and that the real matter of fact is you think, "If I went further into trouble, then I should see my way plainer." No, you would not see your way plainer then. I want to encourage you, if you are really troubled for fear yours is not a right religion, and your cry is, "Lord, make me right and keep me right;" you have begun right. Perhaps you may have plenty of trouble before you get to the end of your journey. "O do not build me up in a false confidence," say you. God forbid. In the case of Jeroboam's son, we do not read that he sighed and cried like David did, that he was troubled and distressed like Manasseh was, or that he was plunged into the ditch like Job, but the Holy Ghost saith, "There is a good thing in his heart towards the Lord God of Israel." There is a good thing in your heart towards God; you desire to please Him, and to be found in wisdom's ways, which are "ways of pleasantness, and paths of peace." That is really what you want. "It is indeed," say you. That is a good thing towards the Lord God of Israel; I am not afraid that, when death is about to close your eyes, you will say, "Covell was a liar, and his speech nothing worth." When Mary saluted Elisabeth, she said, "As soon as thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy." What is said of John? "He was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb;" he had not had much trouble, you see that developing itself in after day.

"Let not your heart be troubled." There was a certain man among the publicans named Zacchæus, he was rich, and he desired to see Jesus, who he was. He climbed into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was to pass that way. Jesus said to him, "Zacchæus, make haste, and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house;" and he came down and received Him joyfully. He said, "Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." Jesus said unto him, "This day is salvation come to this house." I dare say he found plenty of trouble afterwards. When Paul went by the river side "where prayer was wont to be made," a certain woman was there named Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken by Paul. She had got an ear to hear, a heart to feel, and love towards God's truth. Do you think she went to heaven? "Yes, I am sure about that," say you. Is your heart open to receive the truth in love? Does it not soften, revive, and comfort your heart at times, so that you feel, "I would sooner be a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord, than dwell in the tents of ungodliness?" "That is true," say you. You will sing with Lydia then, you have got the same

religion as she had. Have not God's servants and His truth a place in your heart? Say you, "I can say at times, 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth.'" I do not believe any can say this, but those that are bound for heaven. Say you, "I can say, 'Peace be unto them, and prosperity too.'" "Let not your heart be troubled." You may depend upon this, the devil will trouble you, because he is damned and you are saved; he will torment you with a malicious joy.

Another thing troubles God's people, it troubles me to this day, although I have been seeking the things of God for fifty years, it is this, "when I would do good, evil is present with me, so that I cannot do the things that I would." At times it makes me cry out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" This also troubles me, "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; so that I cannot do the things that I would;" from week to week, and month to month, God only knows the tears that fall from my eyes, because I cannot be what I would be. "What would you be?" "Lord, I would be holy, but sin is ever present with me." When I would offer a sacrifice to God like Abraham did, draw near to Him in prayer or praise, then how the birds come down, O the vain, sinful, evil thoughts, the carnality and devilism, that will work in my poor heart. "Good God, do something for me and in me." "Let not your heart be troubled." Why not? Because they that have no changes fear not God. If you were all flesh there would be no warfare. "What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were a company of two armies." If you were not a Shulamite, a saved soul, a child of God, you would not cry out with Jeremiah, "My soul is weary because of murderers." "Let not your heart be troubled;" it is only for a little while. But, my friends, I cannot help being troubled; although again and again, I suck sweetness out of these bitters, thinking, "If I were all flesh, I should not grieve and mourn as I do; my soul, the days of thy mourning will soon be ended, then you will see God as He is;" then I thank God, and take courage. "Be not troubled, as though some strange thing had happened unto you," says the apostle; but we are. I believe that, notwithstanding all my struggling, striving, and praying to be just right, and never to sin in thought, word, or deed, I shall die a sinner before God, although a repenting one, I trust, and find mercy at last. "Let not your heart be troubled." Your flesh will never get any better. "Oh," say you, "that is miserable comfort." You will find your flesh to be worse than you thought it was; sanctified nature is sanctified stuff, in our flesh dwells no good thing, you will never get good out of it. "Let not your heart be troubled," fearing that sin will beat you, or that it will prevail; grace shall reign, sin shall not have dominion, it will rebel and kick, it will torment and tease you; but more are they that are for you, than all that

can be against you. I often think if it could beat anybody it would beat me, but grace will not let it. None but God knows how I cry, and "lift up mine eyes to the hills from whence cometh my help." I cry to the Lord in my trouble, and blessings, honour, and glory be to His name,

"Hither by His help I'm come."

Do not be troubled because when you would do good, evil is present with you, you will find that two armies are within you, and the warfare will go on till the end of your days. "Let not your heart be troubled," because your flesh is just as bad as it was ten, fifteen, or twenty years ago.

"Let not your heart be troubled" on account of the temporal difficulties and trials into which you may be brought. "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful." I have known what it is to be in business, and to be troubled about how things will be when business falls off. What trouble some of you may have, thinking, "I may not be able to pay my way, or educate my children, and find them food and raiment." "Your heavenly Father knows that you have need of these things;" therefore Peter says, "Cast all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." At times when you have been so troubled that you could not sleep for a great part of the night, when you have got up in the morning, you have dropped on your knees at your bedside, and God has taken the trouble off you for an hour. What a relief it has been! Did you ever feel that? "Yes, I have," say you. Therefore, says the Psalmist, "Cast your burden upon the Lord, and He will sustain you;" He will see to you. All our care or trouble never makes one hair white or black, it is God's care that sustains us. I have known what it is to walk about and pity myself; I will tell you what that does, it sets me fretting against God, I rebel and kick, and think how hardly I am dealt with, I am jealous for God's honour, but He does not seem to care for His honour. When God comes and drops His pity into my heart, then I feel, "What a good and kind God, to look after such a poor nothing as I am;" then I lose all my trouble, God has got it; it is His pity dropping in my heart takes the trouble off my shoulders. If you look into God's blessed Word, and into the experience of His saints, you will see that God has been a very present help to them in times of trouble; you will find when they have passed through the waters God has been with them. Therefore you find this to be true, that "your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." So, "Let not your heart be troubled;" you will find when you come to a pinch, so to speak, God will come in, and make "crooked things straight, and the rough places plain." But we must leave it for the present.