

SERMONS

by Edward Griffin

A collection of sermons by Edward Griffin, featuring messages such as 'Christ, A Refuge From The Tempest' based on Isaiah 32:2. The sermons explore Christ as protection from affliction, guilty conscience, fear, divine wrath, and temptation, using vivid imagery to illustrate His comfort to suffering souls.

11 Chapters

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An Exhortation to Serve the Lord

An Exhortation to Serve the Lord by Edward Griffin

"And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul." Deuteronomy 10:12.

Complaints are often made against the ministers of Christ that their preaching is too rigorous and pungent. I sincerely wish that the world might once see what discourses the eternal God would himself deliver should he undertake to preach to men. —What do I say? He has published a volume of discourses, and they have been more harshly treated than any of the sermons of his ministers. The words which I have read were taken from a sermon which God delivered in tones of awful grandeur from Mount Sinai, or else through the medium of Moses. If it seems hard to you to be required "to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways and to love him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul," be it remembered that the source of this command is not ministers, but God himself. If any murmur at this, I have no controversy with them; I leave it to be settled between them and their Maker. Having often preached with little effect myself, I would now retire and leave the God of Israel to preach to you. I would stand concealed in humble awe behind him, while he delivers his heavenly instructions to the people. Sermons are often heard as the words of men. It is difficult, to a distressing degree, to produce a realizing sense that the truths we preach proceeded from the lips of God. In the present case I hope this difficulty will not be felt. Had you stood at the foot of Sinai and heard the trumpet and the thunders, and heard the words of our text issuing from the thick darkness, you would not have doubted that they came from God. But they were heard in substance by a million people, who trembled and fled as these sentiments were poured upon their ears from the burning mount. And now, after the lapse of more than three thousand years, it is still as true as ever that they proceeded from the lips of God. Receive them therefore with as much veneration as though a throne were set in this house, and the God of glory were seated on it, and these words were sounded from his divine lips. And now, my people, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul? Who obeys this command? A part of my hearers obey it in some degree. They esteem God above every other object. They consider his glory as their highest interest, and communion with him as their supreme happiness. They would sooner forget father and mother than forget him. It is their greatest grief that their treacherous hearts are so prone to wander from him. Their most fervent desires pant after him. And when in a favored hour they find him whom their "soul loves," they hold him fast and will not let him go. I have no reproaches for these. It is our Master's will that we should speak kindly to them and encourage them in his name. But are all such? Would to God all were. But charity herself would blush should we so far profane her sacred office as to lend her sanction to such an opinion. Charity herself must fear that in such a congregation as this there are many who have never yielded any service to God. Yet in most cases it is difficult to fix the charge where it ought to lie. So superficial are men's ideas of God's service, that they often think

themselves his servants merely because they have been baptised, and attend public worship, and are charitable to the poor, and free from scandalous vices. But there is no service without love. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." "Good," you say, "and I love the Lord. I should be very sorry not to love so bountiful and good a God." Do you indeed? Do you indeed? Let us see. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other: you cannot serve God and mammon." There is no love to God which is not habitually supreme. For though love enough to give a cup of cold water constitutes a disciple, none are disciples but those who love Christ supremely. "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

Supreme love to God will certainly produce self denial for his sake. It will habitually avoid every thing which he has forbidden, and obey, not a part, but all his commands. He that offends "in one point," knowingly and habitually, "is guilty of all." Supreme love will seek communion with its object more than any worldly pleasure. It will pant after him and after greater conformity to him; it will seek his glory as the highest interest; it will count him the most desirable portion; it will delight in thinking of him more than in any worldly thoughts; it will delight in prayer, —will renounce the world and idols and cultivate a heavenly mind. Unless we have that which will produce all these effects, we have no supreme love to God; and if we have no supreme love, we have no love at all; and if we have no love, as there is no neutral state, we are his enemies. "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters abroad." As humiliating as the thought is, we know that no man is otherwise than God's enemy until he is born again. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." Hence it is that so many people who attend public worship and lead regular lives, are unmindful of God from day to day, neglect prayer, put eternal things out of view, and lose themselves in the eager pursuit of the world. They must be conscious, if they will but reflect, that the world engages more of their care than God or their souls, and is of course their supreme deity. They must be conscious that the Sabbath is a burden unless devoted to sloth or amusement,—that prayer is a burden,—that religious society is a burden,—that the thoughts of God which sometimes intrude are unwelcome,—that the divine service is not agreeable to their taste,—that they would rather be employed in business or pleasure than in religion, in reading an amusing story than in searching the Scriptures. Surely such people do not love God. Such minds could not be happy in heaven if admitted to the place. They must undergo a radical change or certainly they can find no happiness beyond the grave. Ah Lord God, how many such are to be found among us,—among the dearest friends of our hearts. It is distressing to look through our congregations and see how men neglect God; how they live without him in the world, —live as though there were no God. Is there no remedy for our lost brethren? Will nothing awaken them to their duty and danger? The necessity of making some attempt to rouse them is so pressing, that I trust Christians will excuse me if I turn my attention altogether to these. Let them stand by and assist me with their prayers, while I attempt to recall from death this interesting multitude.

Come, my unhappy friends, and let us reason together. Lend your whole attention while one who hopes he is a friend to both parties, makes an humble attempt to reconcile you to your Maker. It is not an enemy you hear; not one who would needlessly disturb your peace. God knows I wish you nothing but happiness in time or eternity; and if the present address might be the instrument of making you all blest, I should account this the happiest day of my life. But in what language shall I

address you? What new arguments shall I set before you? The enemy of God in your breast has resisted so many sermons, that those who love you are afraid that nothing will ever avail. O when shall it once be? Would God that this might be the sermon. But so many better discourses have been lost upon you, that I tremble for the fate of this. The longer you hear without improvement the longer you may. Every resisted sermon renders future resistance more easy and certain. And this very address, unless it softens will harden you; unless it proves a "savour of life," will become a "savour of death."—Shall I stop or shall I proceed? —I must proceed; but first let me entreat you to lift one earnest prayer to God that he would carry the truth home to your hearts. You may have sometimes complained that your fears, rather than your reason, were addressed. You shall have no cause for this complaint now. I mean to appeal to your understandings and to treat you like rational beings. For such indeed you are,—rational beings, endowed with Godlike faculties, capable of enjoying and adorning the heavenly city; infinitely too precious to be lost and devoted to eternal blasphemy and pain. The great reason of your insensibility is, that under the stupifying influence of unbelief, you have secretly doubted whether there is a God, or if there is, whether you have any thing to do with him or he with you. The thought has lurked in your heart, that if there is a God, he is so far from you, and so unconnected with you, that you have nothing more to do with him than with an inhabitant of another planet. You have never conceived that you owed him your whole heart and life. But now for God's sake attend.

"What dost thou here, Elijah?" Child of dust, what dost thou here in this world? Who sent you hither? and for what end? You are conscious that you did not create yourself, and your parents know that they did not create you. It was God that made you what you are, and put you into a world which he had richly furnished for your use. Have you nothing to do with him or he with you? You are absolutely his property, and he is your Lord and Master, and has a right to you and to the use of all your talents. What was the precise end for which he sent you into the world? I wish to draw your attention to this single point: for I am persuaded that if this one consideration could be fastened on your mind, you would be convinced that you have neglected the great end of your being. Do you imagine that he created you and raised you so much above the brutes, and put you into a world on which he had expended so much labor, that you might wander from him into the regions of darkness? That you might seek your happiness out of him, and live in rebellion against him? that you might spend your life only in preparing to live in this transitory state? Or that you might live only to eat and drink? The latter the brutes are fitted to do; but can you imagine that you have no higher end than they? Indulge no such fatal mistake. As God is true, he sent you into his world for the same end that a master sends a servant into his vineyard,—to labor for him. The sole reason that you are in this world rather than not here, is that you may have an opportunity to serve and enjoy God. He has sent you into the field abundantly furnished with powers and means to serve him, and has strictly commanded you to use these talents in his service. Say not that he is too far above you to be apprehended.

He has brought himself down and spread himself out before you in his works and word, and it is only to unbelief that he is invisible. As your Proprietor and Master, he has a right to expect that all your time and talents, all your wealth and influence, should be consecrated to his service; that your affections should all be engaged for him; that every motive and aim should be "holiness to the Lord;" that "whether you eat or drink" or whatsoever you do, you should do all to his glory; that this should be the general scope of every action and the leading care of every hour.

Having sent you into his vineyard, he looks after you to see whether you are faithful or not. Has he nothing to do with you? His eyes are upon you every moment,—upon the very bottom of your heart. They follow you wherever you go, and mark you out and contemplate all you do, as though you were the only object of his attention in the universe. The fixed design for which they follow you is, to observe whether you perform or neglect the great business for which he sent you into the world. Dream not that he is too distant to concern himself with you; he is "not far from everyone of us." He is by your side and on the very seat with you this moment. Has he nothing to do with you? In him you "live and move and have [your] being." For so many years he has sustained you out of hell, and suffered you to live on his earth and breathe his air. And why is all this? I beseech you to consider the end for which he has done all this for you. Why do you feed and clothe your bond servant? It is that he may not die but live and labor for you. And what would you think, if, while living at your expense and sharing your kindness, he should altogether neglect your service? Should you assign him his task for a certain day in the field, and lie behind the hedge and watch him, and see him all day long doing nothing but wasting your property, what would be your feelings towards that servant? God has sent you into his field,—has solemnly charged you to be faithful to him,—has supported your life,—has fed and clothed you,—and from his invisible seat has kept his eye upon you through all the day of life; and now the day is drawing to a close, and you have not yet begun your work, but have been only marring his estate. And now you are about to return from the field with nothing done, to give in your account to your Master. And what, in the name of eternal justice, will your account be? How will your Master receive you? Ah think of it; it will be a serious hour. Your Lord and Master, having sent you into his world to serve him,—having sustained you from year to year, with great expense and care, and kept you from the eternal pit, for the express purpose that you might live and labor for him; has added one mercy more which has astonished heaven and earth. At the expense of the life of his own Son he has redeemed you from death. And why was all this? For no other purpose than that you might yet live and labor for him. He has given you opportunities for the means of grace,—has followed you with calls,—has offered to pardon the past if you will only be faithful in future,—has waited upon you and labored with you, with so much pains, for so many years, under so many discouragements, to see if you would not at length feel some sincere regrets and return to his service; and yet, to the shame of all creation, you refuse to serve him still. These amazing kindnesses have well entitled him to the name of Father. He is your Father, and as such you owe him honor. He is your Redeemer, and as such you owe him the tenderest thanks that a grateful heart can render. And have you nothing to do with him? Is he so distant and unconnected with you, that you have no cause to move a thought towards him? Better to say that the inmost fibre of your heart is a stranger and foreigner. Better to sever the bonds of nature and turn off your dearest friends as outcasts from your love. Did your Creator turn you loose into the world, to run wild in pursuit of your own imaginations, without law or restraint, intending to look no further after you, but to throw you out from his care? Woe to you if he had done this; though this, I fear, you have often wished. But he did no such thing. His intention was still to follow you with his cares, as beloved creatures whom his own hands had formed,—to exercise government over you,—to establish eternal communion with you,—to lead your desires up to him,—to fill you with his own sublime happiness, and to make you a part of an harmonious, blessed, and glorious kingdom. To accomplish these ends he put you under law,—a law admirably calculated to unite you to him and to consummate your happiness. As he is infinitely the greatest and best of beings, whom no man can hate and be happy; who, in order to further an harmonious

kingdom, must be acknowledged as the Head, and must be the centre of affection and the great bond of attraction; therefore he has commanded all his rational creatures to love him supremely. In this he has required no more than was his due, and the very least that it was for his honor to accept. Indeed he has conferred an infinite favor on creatures by making a law so essential to public order, and pointing out the only way to individual happiness. The unreasonable will complain of anything, and murmurs have filled the world because this law requires the heart. But were it otherwise,—were God to relinquish his claims on the heart and compound for outward service only, would it be better then? Could they be happy here, could they be happy in heaven, without a holy heart? They had better never been born than be excused from loving God. Should God give up his law, still they are wretches to eternity without love to him. The law enjoins nothing but what in the nature of things is essential to happiness. Have you nothing to do with God or he with you? You have forgotten that you are subjects under law, bound by all the authority of Jehovah. "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart." This comes to you under the great seal of heaven. It is the express command of the eternal God. Whatever you may think of it, neither the praise nor the blame of making or publishing it belongs to men. From this moment you must either renounce your Bible, or understand that God accounts you rebels for not loving and serving him with all the heart and soul. He admits no excuse. Your plea that you cannot, is only pleading guilty. A heart that refuses to love the Creator and Redeemer of the world, is the very thing for which God condemns you,—is the vilest rebel in the universe. And now have you nothing to do with God or he with you? Know well, my unhappy hearers, that God will have to do with you through the interminable ages of eternity, and on his sovereign pleasure it depends whether you shall spend your eternity in heaven or hell. You cannot be disconnected from him if you would. You are in his hands, and you must remain in his hands to eternity.

O my dear hearers, my flesh and blood, you have not sufficiently considered these things. There is no realizing sense of one of these truths in minds that can remain at ease in a state of enmity against God. You have not considered who sent you into the world, and for what end,—who supports your lives, and for what end they are supported,—who redeemed you from death, and why you were redeemed. You have not considered what God has earnestly commanded you to do, and what connexion you must have with him to eternity. These things you have not considered; but God considers them all. He indeed keeps silence, because this is not the state of retribution, but of trial. He keeps silence, but is angry. He is angry, and he will one day speak. He will speak in a manner which does not admit of present description, but it will be such as fully to assert his rights and wipe off the stigma which his long silence has occasioned, that he is "altogether such a one as" yourselves. He will take account of his servants to whom he committed the talents. "Every work [shall be brought] into judgment, with every secret thing whether it be good or evil." At the close of all he will command them to cast "the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." And now what will you say to these things? Has not every word been calmly addressed to your reason, and been supported by positive declarations from the Word of God? If then the Bible is not a fable,—if it is the book by which you will be judged at the last day, your case is such as calls for immediate attention. God has a very heavy account against you. There is wrath gone out against you. It behooves you to get the sentence repealed without delay by deep contrition and application to the blood of atonement. Do you think it will answer for you to live any longer idle under the very eye of your Master? At this late hour ought any more time to be lost? I wish I knew what resolutions you are forming. My dear

hearers, what do you intend to do? What use will you make of this exhortation when you depart? Some, I fear, will think no more of it until it meets them in judgment. Others may be impressed for a season and afterwards return to stupidity. But will not some one be wise enough this once to believe God? O God, if any are hesitating, interpose and fix their resolves! Nay, let not that thought arise again, When I have got a little more of the world I will attend. So thought Felix, but the thought was fatal. A resolution to postpone, is half a resolution to die as you are. If it were not so pressing a case, I would not be so pressing. But you have souls capable of amazing happiness or amazing woe, and they are now under sentence of eternal death. "He who does not believe is condemned already." Can a rational being rest in such a state? You see also what pressing claims your Creator and Redeemer has upon you. Most of you would be agonized at the thought of defrauding one of your fellow men. But will you be scrupulous to "render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's," and feel no concern to "render unto God the things that are God's?" O that this sentiment might vibrate in your ears and be deposited at the bottom of your hearts, "Render unto God the things that are God's." Let every thing sincere in you be stirred up at the names of Father and Redeemer, and arouse you to "render unto God the things that are God's." Then will he no longer frown, but smile upon you as dear children, and our joy on your account will be full. Amen.

Christ, A Refuge From The Tempest

Christ, A Refuge From The Tempest By Edward Griffin

"And a Man shall be as a hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Isaiah 32:2 This prediction, which was uttered in the days of Ahaz, is thought to have had primary reference to Hezekiah, and to the relief from wicked magistrates which would be experienced in his reign. But in the opinion of the best commentators it had ultimate reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. In the person of our Redeemer, who is very man as well as God, it is fulfilled that "a man shall be as a hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." In a serene day when no wind is up, when no rain is falling, a man may see by the wayside a shelving rock and may pass by it without emotion. Not so the weary traveler who is fleeing before the rising storm or the beating tempest. In a season of rain or in a land of waters, one may pass by a river with little interest. Not so a traveler in the Arabian deserts, surrounded with burning sands, fainting with heat and parched with thirst. The sight of a stream of water, and especially of "rivers of water," in such a place, would transport him. In a country covered with trees, a huge rock might offer its shade unwelcome; but amidst the parched wastes of Arabia, where the weary traveler, exposed all day to the intense heat of a vertical sun, sees not a tree nor a shrub, but only one boundless waste of burning sand—there a cool retreat beneath the shade of an over-hanging cliff—there "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land," would be most welcome.

These observations suggest a principal reason why the Savior of the world, whose very name ought to be music to every human ear, is treated with such cruel indifference by the greater part of mankind. It is because they do not feel their guilt and misery and need of a Savior. They are blind to the infinite majesty and holiness and loveliness of God, and to the immense obligations by which they are bound to him; and therefore they do not see the infinite guilt of rebelling against all his commands, all his mercies, all his glories and interests; and therefore they are not pressed down under a sense of their awful condemnation and ruin. Hell is not laid open before them as their proper punishment. They do not stand amazed at the patience which has kept them out of it so long. They do not see themselves to be utterly ruined, and utterly helpless and hopeless without a Savior. And therefore his precious Gospel, which ought to fill the world with wonder and delight, with gratitude and praise—is cast aside as an idle tale, and the name of Jesus is treated with the most dreadful indifference. But let a man be thoroughly convicted of sin; let him see himself covered with pollution from the head to the foot; let him stand in sight of the eternal judgment, and apprehend that divine justice has no choice but to crush him into everlasting torment; let him see himself just about to receive the descending wrath of God with the weight of a thousand worlds—in that awful moment let him obtain a glimpse of Jesus, who came to "save his people from their sins;" let him lift his trembling eye to a God reconciled in Christ and smiling upon him—I ask that man, "What do you now think of Christ?"

"O!" says he—but language fails. A sacred reverence settles upon his countenance; his uplifted eye speaks unutterable things. I see it glisten—I see it weep. His hands are clinched and forcibly raised to his breast. The opening of the last judgment could not add solemnity to a single feature. O the height and the depth, the length and the breadth of the love of Christ! Where has this glorious mystery lain hidden—that I have never seen it before? To such an eye how precious does the Savior appear as the great medium through which the love of God has come down to men—as the Word by which all the wonders of the eternal Mind are expressed—as the great Prophet who has brought down all the instructions that have blessed the world from the days of Eden—as the Priest whose atonement and intercession have astonished heaven and earth—as the King who has governed the world from the beginning, and has always protected and provided for his people, and has all their interests in his hands, and all the treasures of the universe to impart! To one who is indifferent to the blessedness of communion with God and of conformity to him, there appears no form or loveliness in Christ why he should desire him. But to one who feels an insatiable eagerness to rise from this dark world to a knowledge of all the grand and interesting things which are taking place in the kingdom of God—who longs to be united to all holy beings, and to share in their immortal friendship and blessedness and honors—who has no desire so great as to be godly, and conformed to the God he loves; to such a one Jesus must appear exceedingly precious as the one appointed to open the universe to view, to pour all its light upon the eye, and to exalt the soul to all its purity, to all its dignity, to all its happiness. To an anxious and afflicted soul, the Savior appears peculiarly interesting in the light in which he is exhibited in the text. In the charming simplicity of eastern figure, he is presented "as a hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Here are three separate figures, very striking to an eastern ear, which admit of distinct illustrations.

"A hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest." This is but one figure—for the latter clause, as is common in eastern poetry, is only the echo of the former—presenting a hiding place and covert from the windy storm and tempest. Jesus is found to be the best hiding place and covert from the winds and tempests of affliction! A poor disconsolate soul, after it has been chased through the world by the frowns of pursuing fortune—after it has been hunted from place to place, and not allowed to rest in any corner of creation—will find in Christ that protection and repose which all other places denied it. The weather-beaten wretch, after bearing the storms of this inclement world through the long night of affliction, may find in him a shelter under which he may hear the tempest howl without, and feel it not.

Jesus is the best hiding place and covert from the tempest of an agitated conscience. When the lightning of conviction flashes upon the soul, and guilt with its thundering voice spreads its dark folds over the mind, nowhere but in Jesus can be found a covert from the bursting storm. To what other refuge can a sinner fly, when the horrid nature of his sin is laid open before him? At what time his ingratitude to the God who made, redeemed and preserves him appears; at what time he is terrified and confounded by the frequent repetition of his sins and the obstinacy of his corruptions; at what time guilt, superadded to guilt, rolls its dark wreaths over the soul, like clouds that "return after the rain"? Nowhere but in Jesus, can he find a refuge from the gathering tempest. The blood of Christ, sprinkling his conscience from dead works, has a wonderful power to relieve from the pangs of conscious guilt. It is the most sovereign balm to a wounded spirit. "Give me Jesus or I die!" cries the agonized soul. "None but Christ, none but Christ! Take away that cloud

that I may see him—and I shall live!"

What other refuge can a soul find that is racked with guilt? Let him go to his wealth, his honors, his pleasures; they are all unsavory ashes in the mouth of a man dying with hunger. Let him go to philosophy, it is a stranger to his case, and knows nothing either of his griefs or his needs. Let him go to speculative divinity, it is no physician, but only a corpse laid by the side of a dying man. Let him go to the courts of the Lord—let him go to his Bible, to his knees—and all without Christ are nothing. Let him go to God, and God out of Christ "is a consuming fire." But let him only come in sight of Jesus, and get near enough to "touch" if it be but "the hem of his garment," and all his pains are instantly relieved—the fire in his conscience is quenched, and he is as much at ease as though he never felt a pain.

Jesus is also the best covert from the tempest of fear when it agitates the soul. There is a material difference between conscious guilt and the apprehension of punishment, although, like light and heat, they generally go together. I see a sinner convulsed with the fear of a judgment to come. With an eye wildly rolling and marked with horror, I hear him cry, "Who can dwell with devouring fire? Who can inhabit everlasting burnings?" His anxious eye looks above and beneath and searches creation through, but not a ray of hope can it find—nothing but clouds and darkness and tempests. At length it falls on Jesus. Instantly the heavens are calm; the sound of the distant storm dies upon his soothed ear, and every care is still.

Jesus is the only hiding-place from the tempest of divine wrath. A rock of adamant he stood, and allowed this storm to spend its force on him; while his people, enclosed "in him," lay hidden from the beating tempest. The storm is past, and now their faith looks abroad and sees an unclouded sky, and all nature smiling in fresher beauties than though no storm had been. To finish the illustration of this figure, Jesus is the only hiding-place from the storms and tempests which forever beat upon the regions of the damned. Not to them, is he a covert. They rejected the canopy of his grace when he would willingly have spread it over them; and now he is nothing to them. But to his own dear people, he will forever be a covert from the hail which will eternally lash the howling millions of the damned!

It is time to make a transition to the next figure. "As rivers of water in a dry place." The most obvious idea on the face of this figure is, that Jesus conveys satisfaction and refreshment to those who can find them nowhere else. There is a thirst for happiness in the soul of man, but there is a drought in all things but in God. And for human souls, a drought in all things but in the God who shines "in the face of Jesus Christ." Such is the constitution of things, that no man can find satisfaction, but in Christ. Nor will any ever find it there—but those who despair of finding it anywhere else. But "when the poor and needy search for water and there is none, and their tongues are parched from thirst, then I, the Lord, will answer them. I, the God of Israel, will never forsake them. I will open up rivers for them on high plateaus. I will give them fountains of water in the valleys. In the deserts they will find pools of water. Rivers fed by springs will flow across the dry, parched ground." When one has ranged creation through in search of happiness; has sought it in the field and in the city, in the haunts of business and in the circles of pleasure—and has met with nothing but disappointment and rebuffs; when he has wandered restless from scene to scene, from employment to employment, perhaps from country to country; when, a pilgrim in the deserts of life, he finds himself "in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water," and faints to think that happiness is no

where to be found; then the Gospel meets him and thus accosts him—"Why do you seek the living among the dead?" It is not here. Refrain from your idle pursuit. There is but one point whence refreshment can come. Lift your eyes to the Savior of sinners. He lifts his eyes; he lifts his heart; and finds "waters breaking out in the wilderness—and streams in the desert." Ah, says he, this is where I should have come before. It would have saved me many sore disappointments and many years of anguish! When one is plucked and crushed by the hand of adversity—has found nothing but grief and perplexity in his connection with the world—carries the aching wounds where dearest friends that have been torn away from his heart—mourns alone without father or mother, without brother or sister, without wife or child—unpitied by the crowd of strangers that gaze upon him and pass him by—while his tattered garments remind him of better days—I hasten to where he sits weeping, and gently say to him, 'Has no man pitied you?' 'Ah,' says he, 'I am in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water, and no satisfaction or refreshment for a wretch crushed beneath misfortune!' From my soul I pity you, but do not despair. Let me lead you to the mourner's Friend. I bring him to Jesus—and when I see the balm applied to his wounds, and the countenance of the sufferer beginning to brighten, I bow and take my leave, and return to my house with gratitude and joy.

Here is another pressed under a sense of heavy guilt. He also is in a land where there is no water. He has sought on all sides for relief—but sought in vain. His thirst is for reconciliation with God. In quest of this he has applied to external reformation, to outward duties, to the means of grace. He has sought the counsel of ministers and Christians, and has tried to repose on the good opinions of others. He has made the desperate attempt to rest on universalism, and even on infidelity; but all to no purpose. The fever of his mind remains. His thirst for pardon and peace is unabated; but nowhere can he find anything to allay it, until at last he approaches the Gospel. He hears it say, "If any man thirsts let him come unto me and drink." His attention is strongly arrested. He examines the passage. It is the voice of the Savior himself. He ultimately seizes the invitation and goes to him—and his astonished soul finds this way of salvation exactly suited to his needs. He finds within "him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." The last figure employed, though appropriate and striking, conveys no meaning materially different from the other two. The idea is that of rest in a cool and refreshing place. "As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." The figure represents a traveler in one of the eastern deserts, burnt with intense heat, worn out with toil, fainting for water and for shade. His resolution and strength fail. He abandons the hope of ever reaching the end of the desert; when all at once he discovers before him a high impending rock, under the cavity of whose side he finds a refreshing shelter from the scorching sun and burning sand.

Such a retreat does our dear Redeemer afford to those who are fainting under the labors and discouragements of this wearisome life. This valley of tears may well be called a weary land. There are many in it who are ready to faint under the load of affliction, and can say with Job, "My soul is weary of my life." Many are weary of sin—wearied out with a long course of painful struggles with the world, the flesh, and the devil—are often discouraged with the greatness of the contest, and sink under the apprehension that they shall never get through with safety. These evils press them so hard that they often sigh for the grave where the weary are at rest. But a nearer and more delightful retreat is to be found in him who says, "The Lord has given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." "I have satiated

the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul." When his Church wandered forty years in the Arabian wilderness, among burning sands, without a shelter or a shade, God covered them by day with a pillar of cloud. What this was intended to signify, appears from the application made of it by the prophet, "Then the Lord will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there—a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over all the glory will be a canopy. It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain." At what time a poor fainting soul, weary of affliction, weary of sin, weary of temptation, casts itself under the shadow of this rock, he feels a sensation of relief which nothing else can bring and which none can fully describe. My brethren, what everlasting thanks do we owe to God for providing such a refuge from the beating tempest—such rivers of refreshment in a dry and thirsty land. What could the weather-beaten pilgrim, what could the faint and weary traveler do without them in such a world as this? How greatly does this view tend to endear the Savior to us. What new motives rush upon the mind to abide in him, that we may every hour enjoy a "hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest,"—that we may constantly lie at the fountain of living waters, and feel the permanent shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Why do the people of God find so little relief from the distresses of life and the troubles of conscience—but because they abide no more in their everlasting refuge?

How surprising it is, that in a world where a covert from the tempest is so much needed, it is so much neglected, and that even by those who have often found it a shelter when every other refuge failed. Would it not be strange to see a person ready to die with heat and thirst by the very side of a cooling fountain, and by the shade of an overhanging rock? Yet a still greater wonder is witnessed here. May not these sweet and heavenly truths be allowed to "light up a smile in the aspect of woe?" Will not mourners in Zion come to this refuge—and dry up their tears? Were you confined to these stormy regions without a shelter, you might well be downcast. But now, what need? I am speaking to those who know the truth of what I say. You have often found refuge here, and seen the agitations of the tempest composed, and all the fury of the storm appeased. The same shelter is ever at hand and is always offered to you; and at whatever time you are afraid—you may always find in Christ a sure retreat. What occasion have you then for these desponding griefs? What abundant reason have you to "rejoice evermore." And while we thus enjoy the blessed fruits of a Savior's dying love, let our souls arise and praise him; let a thousand tender recollections rise up in our hearts; let us renewedly devote ourselves to his service, resolving to live to his glory and to die with an eye fixed upon his cross! Amen.

Enoch Walked With God

Enoch Walked With God by Edward Griffin "And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him." Genesis 5:24

Enoch was the father of the long lived Methuselah and the great grandfather of Noah. It is said of him that he walked with God after the birth of Methuselah, three hundred years. It was a long time for a man to support a holy life and communion with God without any relapse worthy of notice. It is difficult for Christians now to do this for a single day: how remarkable then that he should have done it for the long space of three hundred years. Such approval did his extraordinary piety gain him, that when the time came for him to leave the world, God translated him, as he afterwards did Elijah, and suffered him not to taste the bitterness of death; perhaps to show mankind what he would have done for them had they never sinned.

We have many strong featured characters drawn in history. Some shine in all the brilliancy of martial achievements, and are renowned for the conquest of kingdoms. Others have gathered laurels in the paths of science and illumined the world with the flashes of their genius. Others by their counsels have swayed the fate of empires. And the deeds of these have been loudly sounded by the trumpet of fame. But more is said in praise of this man of God in the few short words of our text, than is said of them all. A greater character is given him in four words, than is ascribed to the most renowned warriors and statesmen by the whole voice of history and poetry.

There is something very expressive in the phrase, "walked with God." The Christian life is frequently called a walk, and believers are exhorted to "walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise." It is called walking before God. "Remember now how I have walked before thee in truth." The figure of walking before God was drawn perhaps from the position of those who worshipped in the tabernacle and temple. The Shekinah or visible glory of God sat enthroned on the mercy seat. The worshippers stood in the outer court directly before the Shekinah. Hence the common expression of appearing before God in public worship. To walk before God meant then to lead a life of devotion. But "Enoch walked with God." I do not find this character ascribed to any but Enoch and Noah. I will, I. Explain what is meant by this figure.

II. Show the consequences of walking with God.

III. State the prominent means by which such a walk can be kept up.

I. I am to explain the figure.

It seems to be expressive of something more intimate than the phrase to walk before God. We all know what it is for two friends to walk together, engaged in close and interesting conversation. And this is the figure by which is represented the intercourse of Enoch with his God for three hundred years. The figure is well adapted. The hidden life of the Christian, his retired habit of devotion, his separation from the world, (living, as it were, in the other world while dwelling in this,) his daily, intimate, unseen communion with God, are very fitly represented by two intimate friends walking

together, engrossed with each other, un- mindful of all the world besides, unseeing and unseen. This general thought comprehends several particulars.

1. When two friends thus walk together their communion is secret. So is the communion between the Christian and his God. The world wonders what the Christian finds to employ himself about when alone. They wonder what supports him under trials, and renders his countenance cheerful when they looked for sadness. Let them know then that he draws his comforts from another world; that he lives far away from this, where the changes and trials of the present state do not reach him. As well might they wonder whence Abraham and David derive their present joys, while clouds are darkening the world below.

2. When two friends thus walk together, their conversation is kind and sweet. So the man who walks with God pours into his Father's ear all his desires and complaints, and receives his kind and comforting answers in return.

3. When two friends thus walk together their wills and governing feelings are the same; for how "can two walk together except they be agreed?" They also keep the same course, and thus are advancing towards the same object. So the man who walks with God is conformed to him in moral character. Benevolence reigns in his heart, and his open arms embrace the universe. Like God, his feelings are in accordance with the holy law. He loves righteousness and hates iniquity. His object too is the same with his. The glory of his Father, the prosperity of Zion, and the happiness of the universe, constitute the one indivisible object of his pursuit. He is delighted with the government of God, and has no controversy with him who shall reign. His will is swallowed up in the divine will. He wishes not to select for himself, but in every thing chooses that his heavenly Father should select for him. He is "careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving," makes his "requests known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding, "keeps his heart and mind "through Christ Jesus."

There are two other things implied in walking with God which are not exactly suggested by the figure.

1. The man who walks with God walks humbly. God will not walk with him else; for "the proud he knoweth afar off." The whole of man's duty is summed up in doing justly, in loving mercy, and in walking "humbly" with his God. The Christian, with all his intimacy with his Maker, does not approach him with familiar boldness, but is the more abased the more he sees of him. "I have heard of thee," said Job, "by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

2. The man who walks with God exercises a living faith. This, according to the apostle, was the main spring of all those graces which gained to Enoch the reputation of walking with God. "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, and was not found because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God: but without faith it is impossible to please him."

II. I am to show the consequences of walking with God.

1. By thus walking with God the soul contracts a holy intimacy with him. The consequence Isaiah 2:1-22. That it makes advances in the best of all knowledge, the knowledge of God. An intimate

walk with God affords an opportunity to study his character, to see it developed in the free communications he makes, and to listen to his instructions. He is the great instructor of mankind; but his teachings are not extended to those who live estranged from him.

3. This closer inspection and clearer discernment of God, are the most powerful means to sanctify the soul. Views of God are transforming. While "with open face" we behold "as in a glass the glory of the Lord," we "are changed into the same image from glory to glory." Therefore,

4. A sure consequence of such an intimacy between God and the soul, is an increased mutual affection. The more the soul knows of God the more it will love him, and of course the more it will be beloved. What a most tender friendship did Enoch and Enoch's God contract for each other during their intimate communion for three hundred years. If we would enjoy the same blessedness, we must, like Enoch, walk with God.

5. Such an intimacy between God and the soul cannot fail to establish mutual confidence. The more God is seen the more securely can the soul commit the management of all its interests to him, and venture its everlasting all upon the truth of his word. On the other hand the more this confidence is found, the more God can confide in such a soul. He will not trust those to whom he can say, "I know you not;" but of those who are intimate with him and confide in him, he will say, "Surely they are my people, children that will not lie." It is the greatest happiness to feel this confidence in God and to know that he has this confidence in us. If we covet this, let us walk with him.

6. Such an intimacy with God will preserve us from bad company. A man who is walking with an honorable friend, is not likely to be annoyed by disagreeable intruders or to break away after low society. When the soul is in the immediate presence of God, neither sin nor Satan dares to invade; neither the world nor any of its perplexing cares will venture to intrude. Every Christian knows what distressing and dangerous companions these are. If we would avoid them and more fully enjoy the profitable and delightful society of Enoch's God, we must do as Enoch did.

7. Another consequence of such a close walk with God is, that we shall find support under the unavoidable trials of life. When we are in distress, very soothing is the company of a prudent and sympathising friend, who, from the stores of his knowledge, can suggest subjects of consolation. But how much more blissful the society of God, whose heart is all tenderness, and who can open to the soul the most comforting of all truths. There is no consolation like this. Indeed it is well worth while to be a while in the furnace, for the sake of walking there with one in "the form of the Son of God."

8. Another consequence of walking with God is the enjoyment of his protection. Myriads of enemies and dangers swarm in all the way to heaven; but while God is near he will not suffer them to annoy us. When one of Enoch's spirit hears the thunders at a distance, his refuge is nearer than the danger, and he steps in and is safe. He hides himself where no evil or enemy, though searching for him throughout the world, can find him.

9. Another consequence of walking with God is, that we shall always have a faithful monitor at hand, to throw in timely cautions to keep us back from indiscretions and sin or to reclaim us when we have wandered. The conscience of one who walks with God is preserved tender, and God is faithful not to suffer a son who cleaves to him to err by his side without rebuke. To possess such a

monitor is one of the greatest blessings of life. Let those who would enjoy this exalted privilege, take care never to depart from the side of their Saviour and their God.

10. Another consequence of walking with God is an enlightened view of his providence and government, a clear discernment of the glories of the heavenly world, and a peaceful assurance of his eternal love. Tell me what is happiness if this is not. What, of all the enjoyments of the world, can be exalted happiness compared with this?

11. Another effect of walking with God is a higher enjoyment of ordinary blessings. By the placid love which by this means is kept alive, the mind is put in a frame to enjoy every other comfort. And the gratitude which is thus mingled with the enjoyment of God's gifts, renders them all the sweeter.

12. Another effect of walking with God is a greater preparation for usefulness. In proportion as the mind becomes wiser by converse with God, and holier by near and transforming views of him, it is fitted for stronger and more persevering and better directed efforts for the happiness of others. In proportion as its faith and benevolent desires are enlarged, its prayers will be mighty for the salvation of men. Its very breath will penetrate their conscience and their heart as no other means can do. And it will throw out upon the world the all commanding majesty and winning sweetness of a holy example. One such man will have more influence upon the order of society and the salvation of men, than millions who never walked with God.

13. Another consequence of walking with God is a peaceful death. In Enoch's case it was not death, but a triumphant translation. And in every other case, in proportion as a man has walked with God, his end, though he leaves his body behind, is still triumphant, or at least serene. How unspeakable a comfort, when one is struggling with the king of terrors and about to enter on eternal and unchangeable scenes, to have "the full assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost." How much better than to sink under awful fears of eternal wrath, or even under doubts which leave the soul to measure over the dark valley alone. Would you enjoy this triumph, or even this serenity in death, you must prepare for it by walking with God.

Finally, another consequence of walking thus closely with God, is an enlarged share of immortal glory. In heaven the blessed inhabitants all walk with God, every day and hour. And they find it no burden but a happiness which they would not exchange for the whole creation. Why was it not then a happiness on earth? And yet for an exemplary march in that happy course, millions have found their blessedness eternally increased. The enhanced joy of a single soul for a few hours, will outweigh all the pleasures of all the wicked on earth. The time will come when that additional blessedness of a single soul, will have out-measured all the happiness enjoyed on earth from Adam to the conflagration. A little further, and it will have exceeded all the happiness enjoyed by saints and angels in heaven before the day of judgement. And further still, but imagination faints and turns back from the pursuit, and can only exclaim, How infinite the good resulting from one degree of additional faithfulness. From the weight of all these reasons for a close walk with God, I hope you are now prepared to give your whole attention while, III. I state the prominent means by which such a walk can be kept up.

Humility and faith, as we have already seen, are not means merely, but are involved in the very idea of a walk with God. Without these we cannot approach God, much less walk with him. The same may be said of obedience generally. These in the inquiry are not considered so much in the

light of means, as a part of the walk which means are to keep up. And yet particular acts of disobedience may be mentioned as things to be avoided and particular acts of faith may be named as means to be employed. The means involve two things, the guarding against what is injurious and the attending to what is useful.

I. The guarding against what is injurious.

(1.) It is absolutely impossible to preserve the soul in the habit of conversing with God, without avoiding improper conversation with men; not only every thing false or impure or profane or malicious or revengeful or passionate, but every thing deceitful or slanderous or uncharitable or uncandid or vain. It is even said "that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgement. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

(2.) Vain thoughts are another hindrance to an intimate walk with God. This led the pious Psalmist to say, "I hate vain thoughts." There cannot exist a great degree of spirituality, unless the mind is habitually employed in spiritual contemplations. People who consume most of their leisure hours in thoughts of vanity, do not walk with God. It betrays a heart full of idolatry: and as well might the worshippers of Baal claim to walk with Israel's God. These cold thoughts diffuse chills of death through all the soul, and can no more coexist with its spiritual activity, than paralysis can coexist with the activity of the body.

(3.) No known sin must be indulged. One such Achan fostered in our camp, will prove that we have not only no intimacy with God, but no acquaintance with him. One indulged sin is as decisive against us as a hundred. "Whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

(4.) Undue worldly affections and cares must be excluded. Those affections for the world are undue which are not constantly subjected to the love of God; that is, are not ready, at all times, cheerfully to submit to the rules which he has made to regulate our use and management of the world, and to any sacrifices which his providence may extort from us or require at our hands. And those cares are undue which, from their number or pressure, seduce the heart from God. Every worldly care necessarily draws the attention from God for a season, as we cannot fixedly attend to two things at once. But if the heart is not enticed away, the thoughts and affections will spontaneously return to him at every interval of care and with ever fresh delight. Those affections and cares which, according to these definitions, are undue, obstruct our communion with God and abate our intimacy with him. Of course they must be guarded against if we would walk with him.

These are the things to be studiously avoided. And now, 2. Let us see to what we must attend.

(1.) We must punctually and earnestly attend on all the means and ordinances of God's appointment. Any neglect or irregularity or carelessness in this attendance, will cut the sinews of our spirituality, and diminish our strength to achieve victories and resist temptations in the future. Separate yourselves from means, and you may as well separate your fields from culture, and even from the rain and dews of heaven. All our light and grace come through the medium of means. This in general; but to be more particular, (2.) We must pray the prayer of faith and "pray without ceasing." Prayer is the Christian's life. Though every other ordinance be attended to, yet if this one be neglected, all is in vain. It is as impossible for the soul to be spiritually alive and active without a

punctual course of fervent and believing prayer, as for the body to be alive and active without breath. Prayer has more influence on the sanctification of the soul than all other ordinances. It is going directly to God to receive the life-giving Spirit according to an absolute and often repeated promise. "Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him." This is decisive if any language can be. The promise is absolute, and there must be an unwavering belief in the promise in order to give the application success. "If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord." But the faith instilled is not a belief that I shall receive, but that I shall receive if I ask aright. It is not a belief in my goodness, but in God's truth. It is a firm, unwavering, confident belief that God will "give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him" aright. This strong confidence in God's truth may be exercised whatever doubts we have of our own goodness or election. If we are troubled on these points it ought not to keep us back. We may leave them to be decided afterwards, and go right to God with unlimited confidence in his truth and consequent willingness to hear the cries of all who sincerely seek him. Whoever is elected, this is true of all. Say not, God will hear me if I am elected, and not without. Election or no election, he certainly will hear the cries of all, (be it Judas or be it Peter,) who seek him with the whole heart. This ought to be the strong confidence of every man, whatever opinion he may have of his own character or destiny. This, as the apostle testifies was the faith of Enoch. "Before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe [what? that he himself is good? that he himself is elected? no such thing: must believe] that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." There is a full chance then for doubting Christians to exercise this sweet and successful confidence in God. Tell it to the nations.

Let the joyful tidings circulate, through all the region of despondency and gloom. There is no confidence required of you respecting your goodness or election. The only faith demanded is to "believe" in God, "that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," whoever they are, whether it is I or another man, elect or non-elect.

(3.) We must watch. In that most trying moment when the powers of hell were let loose upon the suffering Saviour, he gave his disciples no other direction than this, "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation." So much emphasis did he lay on these two duties. In regard to watchfulness, I would suggest the following rules.

First, be vigilant to observe the first motions of the enemy. If he has made considerable advances before you move, your exertions will probably be too late. It is dangerous to parley with temptation. Check it early or it will probably prevail. Keep your eyes open to watch the different avenues by which the enemy makes his approach. He will often vary his mode of attack. Through all his variations keep your eye steadfastly upon him. Acquaint yourselves with his numerous devices.

Secondly, watch another enemy greater than this; watch your own heart. Keep an attentive eye upon the movements of corruption within you: otherwise some evils will gather too much strength for you to resist; others will work unseen, and go in to form your character unknown to yourselves.

"Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

Thirdly, watch opportunities for doing and getting good. Much is lost in reference to both by overlooking the favorable moment.

Fourthly, watch the motions and expressions of divine providence. It will throw much interesting light on the character and government of God and illustrate and confirm many things taught in the Scriptures.

Fifthly, watch the motions of the Spirit upon your minds. Sometimes the Spirit whispers an invitation to prayer or divine contemplation. If the suggestion is followed we may find the duties easy and pleasant, and the effect lasting. But perhaps we refuse to attend to the impulse. The consequence is, our hearts grow cold and lifeless; and then though we attempt to pray or meditate, we find no relish for it. This remark goes no part of the way towards denying God's efficiency, but only assumes that he leaves us sometimes by way of punishment. It may be illustrated by a passage from the Song of Solomon, understood to relate to the intercourse between Christ and the Church. The Spouse, half aroused from lethargy, says, "I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled; for my head is filled with dew and my locks with the drops of the night. [Now mark how her indolence pleads.] I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?"

[Now the heavenly Bridegroom makes a more effectual effort.] My Beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him. I rose up to open to my Beloved, and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock. I opened to my Beloved, but, [see the effect of not opening to Christ at first] my Beloved had withdrawn himself and was gone: my soul failed when he spoke: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him but he gave me no answer." This is enough to confirm my idea of watching and obeying the first suggestion of the Spirit of Christ.

I have thus shown what it is to walk with God, the blessed consequences, and the means. May I not now, my Christian brethren, urge upon you this delightful duty? It is what you owe to the blessed God, your Father and Saviour, who has astonished heaven by his kindness to you, and whose mercies, if you are not deceived, will hold you entranced to eternity. It is what you owe to him, and it will secure you a happy life, more than all the wealth and honors of the world. It is heaven begun below. Do you not wish to be happy? Bend all your cares then to walk with God. Be not satisfied with a general desire to do this, but fix systematically on the means prescribed. Pursue those means hourly, daily, yearly. Reduce your life to a system under the regulation of these rules. Good old Enoch could walk with God three hundred years. And he has never seen cause to repent it. Could you have access to him in his glory, would he express regret for the pleasant mode of spending the last three hundred years of his life? We are apt to think that we are not expected to aim at the superior piety of the ancient saints. But why paralyse every power by such a stupid mistake? Are we not under as great obligations? Is not God as worthy of obedience

now as in the days of old? Have the increased displays of his mercy in the Gospel impaired his claims? Has the affecting scene of Calvary rendered him less lovely in the eyes of sinners? Are the means used with mankind less than in the patriarchal age? Or are the happy consequences of a walk with God worn out by time? Why should we then content ourselves with being scarcely alive, when so many saints have been through life rapt in communion with God? Do we thirst for honors? What honor is so great as to be the companion and son and favorite of the everlasting God? Do we wish for riches? Who is so rich as the heir of him who owns all the treasures of the universe? Do we prize the best society? What better society can be found than Enoch had? Does any valuable consideration move us, or any ingenuous motive, O let us never cease to walk with God. Amen.

HEAVEN

HEAVEN SERMON XXX by Edward Griffin "For he looked for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God." Hebrews 11:10 This was the habit by which the patriarch Abraham sustained himself under the ills of life, while wandering a stranger and a pilgrim on the earth. It was reasonable in him so to do. When men are about to remove into another country, they are eager to catch the reports of those who have visited it, and if possible they visit beforehand to explore it. We hope by and by to go away to dwell in the heavens for the rest of our existence, and it is interesting to collect all the information we can respecting that country. It is interesting to see where our Christian friends have gone who have disappeared from our sight. If the Bible is not a fable and all the hopes of man not a dream, they are yet alive, in another and a better state. Why should unbelief put them out of existence? Cannot God uphold them in a state of pure spirits like his own? Could his benevolence be gratified by placing them here to groan and weep for a few days and then to be no more? If their present existence differs from our experience what then? Have we seen all the varieties of things even in this little world? To a mind that in thought has visited India and China and the islands of the southern sea, is it incredible that a state of things should exist widely different from our experience? And if our beloved friends are still alive and in that blessed state, how interesting to visit them there and see the home they have found.

There is no need that the inhabitants of earth should remain so little acquainted with heaven.- There is a ladder, such as Jacob saw, by which they may ascend and descend every hour. We ought daily in our thoughts to visit that delightful land and to make excursions through its glorious regions. The more we accustom ourselves to these flights the easier they will become. Why is it that we feel so little the impression of eternal glory, but because our thoughts are no more conversant with heaven? It is of the last importance that we should become more familiar with that blessed country. It would tend to wean us from this poor world, to support us under the trials of life and the delay of our hopes, to illumine us with the light of that land of vision, to transform us into the likeness of its blessed inhabitants, and to reconcile us to the selfdenials and labors which we have here to endure for Christ. It would tend to settle the great question of our qualifications for heaven. If we could gain distinct ideas of that blessed world, we might easily decide this point by ascertaining whether we could relish its sacred enjoyments, and whether this is the heaven we desire.

One reason that heaven makes so little impression upon us is that we contemplate it in generals, and of course confusedly. We must take it in detail. We must go through its golden streets, and traverse its flowery fields, and examine its objects one by one. Let us spend a few moments in attempting this, and for a season imagine ourselves there. The reflection of least importance respecting that world is that it is a pleasant country. In whatever part of the universe it is situated, there is a local heaven, where the body of Jesus is, where the bodies of Enoch, and Elijah, and those who arose with Christ are, and where the bodies of all the saints will be after the resurrection. Those bodies will be material, and of course will occupy space, and must have a local residence, as real as the bodies which are now on the earth. That country is already

prepared, (it was "prepared from the foundation of the world,") and is unquestionably material. The idea that the saints will have no place to dwell in but the air has no support in the word of God. Their city, in more senses than one, "hath foundations." It is a real country; and my first remark is that it is a pleasant country. He that could make the scenes which we behold, can unite the most beautiful of them into one and surpass them all. And there can be no doubt the place which he has chosen for the metropolis of his empire, and which Christ selected from all worlds for his residence and the residence of his Church must be the most beautiful of all the worlds that he has made. It is set forth in Scripture under images drawn from the most enchanting objects of sense. I know that these are intended to illustrate its spiritual glory, but can you prove that this is all? Why are spiritual things set forth by sensible objects? You say, because men are in the body. And pray, will they not eternally be in the body after the resurrection? And will not an exhibition to the senses of the riches of the divine nature be as useful an auxiliary to other revelations then as now? Nor can we doubt that unembodied spirits are capable of beholding and enjoying the material works of God. Otherwise the material universe would be a blank to the angels, and to human spirits before the resurrection.

We may then reasonably conclude that heaven is a world of more resplendent and varied beauty than mortal eye has ever seen. The next circumstance to be mentioned respecting that world is that it contains the most delightful society. The saints are forever delivered from the interruptions of the wicked, from the pollution of their society and the disgusting coarseness of their conversation; and are admitted to the most intimate friendship with the holy angels, and with patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, and the whole assembly that have been collecting since the death of Abel, including, in many instances, the most beloved friends they knew on earth. Parents will there meet their children, and husbands their wives, after a long and painful separation. Brothers and sisters will rush into each other's arms and exclaim, "Have I found you at last? This is far unlike the parting hour when I closed your eyes, and far unlike the solitary evenings in which I have visited your grave and wept over your dust."- Those blessed spirits will enjoy the most perfect friendship, with every distrust and rival interest banished; each loving the other as his own soul, and not a thought nor a joy but what is common. Their conversation will be high and satisfying, turning on the history of God's love and the wonders of his works; and the expressions of love to each other in their looks, deportment, and words, will be most tender and convincing. The employment of heaven is delightful. The saints are delivered from all the cares and toils of this life, and have nothing to do but to serve and praise God, to go on his errands to different worlds, to study into the mysteries of his nature and the wonders of his works, and to converse with their brethren on these high and exhaustless themes. Every faculty has attained its full employment- the understanding in grasping the great truths of God and declaring the glories of his nature; the memory in going over his past dispensations and collecting materials for an everlasting monument of praise; the heart in loving and thanking him; the will in choosing him and his service; the eyes in beholding his glory; the hands and feet in doing his will; the tongue in high conversation and bursting songs. In that world they have attained to the perfection of all their powers; not to that perfection which excludes progress, but to that which fits them for the highest action and enjoyment that their capacities admit. They are delivered from every hindrance to meditation, devotion, or service, arising from a weak or disordered body; from all the passions and prejudices which warped their judgement here; from all those indiscretions by which they feared they should injure the sacred cause they loved; and have attained to unerring wisdom. Their

memories are strengthened to recall the leading actions of their lives and the principal dealings of God with them. They are freed from all languor and wanderings in duty, and can hold their attention perpetually fixed without weariness or satiety.

They have attained to the perfection of knowledge; not that perfection, I say again, which excludes progress, but that which prevents error. They have advanced greatly in the positive knowledge of all those things which a sanctified spirit desires to know. The feeblest infant that has gone to heaven probably knows more of God than all the divines on earth. They see as they are seen and they know as they are known. Besides the light directly shed upon them, in the excursions which they make through the universe they have a glorious opportunity to study God in his works and dispensations.

They have escaped from all the sufferings of the present life; from sickness and pain and the mortification of being laid aside as useless; from want and the fear of want; and have attained to the perfect gratification of every taste and desire, - to the possession of all things. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." As heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, they own the sun, moon, and stars; they possess the eternal God.

They have escaped from all the degradation and scorn and slander which their poverty or their religion drew upon them here, and have reached the highest honors of the sons of God. They have been crowned and have sat down with Christ on his throne, and with their golden harps and robes of light forever sing and forever shine.

They have escaped from all the "vanity" that was found in the creature, which left them unsatisfied, uneasy, and vexatiously disappointed; the vanity too which consisted in the transient nature of earthly things, and disturbed the shortlived enjoyment with the reflection that it would soon expire. From all this "vanity and vexation of spirit" they have escaped, and have found a good which fully satisfies and brings no sorrow with it, and no apprehension that it will ever end.

They are perfectly delivered from sin, that body of death under which they groaned all their lives long. O how they used to look forward and pant after this deliverance. But now they have found it. Not a worry that will ever offend their God again. And they have attained to perfect positive holiness. They love and thank and delight in God as much as they desire. They could not wish, with their present powers, to be more tender or grateful towards him. They could not wish to be more free from selfishness or anger or envy, nor, with their present powers, to be more benevolent or affectionate towards every creature of God.

They are forever delivered from the buffetings of Satan. The enemy that annoyed them so long is shut up in prison and can never approach them again. No longer can those temptations vex them which made them weary of life and pursued them into the grave.

Every wall of separation between them and God is taken down, every cloud which hid his face is dispersed, every frown smoothed into smiles. - They are admitted to the perfect vision and sweet enjoyment of God and the Lamb. They see that God does not reproach them for the past, that he has not one less tender feeling towards them for all their sins, and that he loves them with an affection infinitely surpassing that of the tenderest earthly parent. - They are conscious of an

interchange of thoughts and feelings with him most affectionate,-of a communion no less real than that which subsists between earthly friends. They possess greatly enlarged views of his perfections, particularly of his unbounded love, and enjoy him to a degree of which we have here no conception. Their souls swell and expand with the mighty blessedness, and rise into raptures of wonder, love, and praise. The principal medium through which they see and commune with God is the Mediator. It is from his face that the strongest emanations of Godhead shine. He is the sun which illumines the heavenly city. "The city," as John saw it, "had no need of the sun neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb" was "the light thereof." It is through him chiefly that God speaks to the inhabitants of heaven, and through him as the representative of the Father they send up their thanks. They put them into his hands as the Deity expressed, much in the same way as they did in the days of his flesh. The incarnate God is constantly displayed in heaven on a resplendent throne, with much the same personal appearance, perhaps, that he had on Tabor and in Patmos. Though arrayed in glory that would overpower mortal vision, it is Jesus of Nazareth still;-the same body, the same features, the same scars in his hands and feet and side. O how do they feel as they behold him. When they look back to Calvary, and then down to hell, and then abroad over the heavenly plains, and down the slope of ages, and see from what he delivered them, and to what he raised them, and at what expense, with what unutterable gratitude do they cast their crowns at his feet, and say, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." And then they take their harps and fill all the arches of heaven with the song, "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever."

All this glory and happiness will be eternal. On earth their enjoyment was damped by the thought that it would soon expire. Their dearest friends, their health, their life, were held by a very uncertain tenure. But now they have no fear of change. When they first opened their eyes in that world and found themselves entered on a blessedness which was sure and eternal, with what transport did they contemplate that single fact after all their doubts and fears. The thought that they are forever safe, that no changes can cast them down, has in it a weight and sublimity of blessedness which no imagination can conceive. They have leisure to ponder over these glorious thoughts. They may look forward to twenty, thirty, or forty years without thinking that age is coming on to cramp their powers and terminate their enjoyments. They may breathe the airs of paradise and inhale the delights of heaven for a thousand years, without losing the freshness of their youth or approaching any nearer to an end. They may measure over a million of ages of varied delights, and have as much before them as at the first. They may pass as many more millions of ages as there were dusts in the earth, and still they are as young as ever. From that distant period of eternity, when they look back to the few moments that they sojourned on earth, how diminutive will this little space appear; how trifling its joys and sorrows; and how amazing will it seem that they could be so interested in them.

They will eternally grow in capacity, knowledge, holiness, and happiness. This seems to be the natural progress of mind until it is checked by bodily decay. But when no such restraint hangs upon the spirit, it will hold on in its course of advancement without end. As it grew in the vigor of its faculties from infancy to manhood, so it will expand in the regions of life to eternity: insomuch that the least soul will far outstrip the present dimensions of Gabriel; and holding on its way, will be to what the highest angel now is, as a giant to an infant; and still it has an endless progression before

it,- rising higher and higher in intellectual sublimity, and forever approximating towards the infinite dimensions of God. Its knowledge too will forever increase. Perpetually pondering on the wonders of God, studying him in his works, drawing lessons from all worlds among which it makes excursions, and diving deeper and deeper into the unfathomable wonders of redemption, it cannot fail to advance in knowledge without end. The time then must come when the least soul in heaven will know more than all the creation of God now do; and still it has just entered the heavenly school. Imagination cannot keep pace with its flight through the sublime heights of intellectual ascension. What amazing views of God and the Lamb, what amazing views of the mysteries of redemption, what amazing views of the wonders of creation, of the purposes to be answered by the sufferings of the damned, of the boundless reach of mercy, of the whole history of God's administration in all worlds: and still to pursue the high and glorious study without end. And in proportion to its advance in capacity and knowledge must be its holiness. The more God is seen the more he will be loved and delighted in.- What new and unspeakable fervors of affection will be enkindled by those accessions of knowledge which will be hourly coming in. What a flame of love and gratitude will be acquired in the eternal progress of capacity and knowledge. The time will come when the least soul in heaven will contain more love and gratitude than the whole consistory of angels now do: and still to advance to higher and still higher fervors without end. And in proportion to its advance in capacity, knowledge, and holiness, will be its happiness. If to know and love God in one degree makes a heaven, to know and love him in ten degrees will make a tenfold happiness. What unimagined bliss then must the holy soul find in rising up to views and fervors increasing as the ages of eternity go round. The time must come when the feeblest saint in heaven will enjoy more in one hour than all the creation of God have enjoyed to this day; and still he has just begun his eternal progress in blessedness. From those sublime heights of ecstasy he will ascend to heights still more sublime, reaching upwards continually and approximating forever towards the infinite happiness of the Eternal Mind. And now behold that creature!-the feeblest that ever entered heaven; behold him at some imagined point in eternity, with all this increase of capacity, knowledge, holiness, and happiness; and how awfully great and glorious does he appear. As much above the heathen gods as the sun exceeds a glow worm. Could that creature appear on earth he would be worshipped by half the nations. He would pour upon their sight a sublimity and glory a million times greater than they ever ascribed to God himself. And still that creature has just begun his eternal progress. What then will he become? The imagination of Gabriel falters and turns back from the amazing pursuit.

Child of God, bow before thine own majesty.- Debase not thyself by sordid actions. Forget not the glories of thy nature, nor sell thine infinite birthright for such a contemptible mess of pottage as earth can yield. Child of God, cheer up under the trials of life. Let nothing cast you down who are standing on the verge of immortal glory. It is the only opportunity you will ever have to suffer for Christ. Eternity will be long enough for enjoyment. Your toils and selfdenials will all be recompensed a thousand fold by that "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Child of God, why are you cast down? I wonder you are not constantly transported. Our Saviour said to his disciples, "Rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you, but rejoice rather because your names are written in heaven." So say I to you. Rejoice not that your wealth is increased, that your honors flow in upon every gale, that the laurels of science encircle your brow, that you have the sweetest and most affectionate friends; but rejoice rather that an immortality of glory is before you. Child of God, why are you sluggish and sleeping out life in ungrateful inaction? What is the world to you

who are so soon to be transported to the heaven of heavens? How will the world appear to you when it is melting down in the general conflagration? How will the world appear to you a million ages after the judgment, while you are lost among the glories of heaven? And why this ungrateful sloth? Have you nothing to do for him who irrevocably conferred this immortality upon you? Have you nothing to do for him who redeemed you from hell by his own blood, and has gone to prepare a place for you? Have you nothing to do for him on earth at whose feet you will presently lie in such unutterable transports of wonder and gratitude? Have you nothing to do for him on the very ground which was stained by his blood, and while breathing the air that was agitated by his sighs? Have you forgotten that he left on earth a beloved Church, and that he has said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me?" Have you nothing to do for that Church on which his heart is so tenderly fixed? Have you nothing to do for his honor among men, who came out to seek you when you were wandering from the fold of God,-who separated you from your former companions and put a title to heaven in your hands? Ah Sirs, how will this listlessness appear when you are enveloped in the glories of heaven and are filling the celestial arches with your bursting praise?

Up, every redeemed soul, and do what you can for your God and Saviour. Take your harps from the willows and begin the raptured song. Let all the country around be charmed and won by your sacred melody. Go on your way enchanting the ear of a Christless age with your harp and your song; and when you come to the last enemy, enchant the ear of death itself with the same celestial notes; and let your praises die away from mortal ears, only to burst in new and louder tones on the ear of heaven. Amen and Amen.

NOAHS ARK

NOAHS ARK By Edward Griffin

(1770—1837)

"By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith." Hebrews 11:7 The ark is admitted by the apostle to have been a distinguished type of Christ.

"HE wiped out every living thing that was on the surface of the ground, from mankind to livestock, to creatures that crawl, to the birds of the sky, and they were wiped off the earth. Only Noah was left, and those who were with him in the ark!" Genesis 7:23 In that period before the flood, when the age of man was more than 900 years, the temptation to put death out of view was great. A Church there was—but by intermarrying with the wicked world it had become corrupt, and at last almost extinct. This was the first illustration of the fatal consequence of too close a connection between the Church and the world. By these means the Spirit of God was provoked to depart, and general licentiousness ensued. The Church became reduced to a single family, and the rest of the world sunk into infidelity and vice. "The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time." Genesis 6:5

Thus the universal and complete effect of the fall was publicly ascertained. This done, God determined to cast away the world as ruined, and to make a new beginning on the foundation of grace, commencing a new stock in the family which included the whole church. This rejection of the world is expressed in the following strong eastern figure, "The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain! So the LORD said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them." Genesis 6:6-7 For a hundred and twenty years, "God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved." The history leads us to suppose that the whole of this period was taken up in building the ark. In the infancy of the 'building arts' such a vessel must have cost immense labor, and it was so unpopular an undertaking, that few if any besides the family of Noah would be induced to engage in the the work. His sons were born about twenty years after the building commenced, and for a long time they could afford him no assistance. Cheered by the society and counsel of his venerable father and grandfather, he wore out the hundred and twenty years in patiently waiting for the fulfillment of the prediction. When the ark was finished, God brought all the creatures into it and shut Noah and his family inside. The old world is devoted to destruction. The waters are to rise and rage above the highest mountains. No vessel had yet been invented to ride the waves. How can any escape? God only can find out the way. He causes an ark to be constructed, in which his friends find refuge, while the waves of wrath sweep away a wicked world. Who that turns his eye towards this frightful scene, is not reminded of that spiritual ark in which the friends of God are sheltered while the floods of vengeance sweep

away an unbelieving world? This prepares the way for us to meditate on the conduct of Noah while laboring for that refuge, and the conduct of that profligate generation who cast contempt on him. The things most worthy of notice in respect to Noah, are his faith, his obedience, his patience, his self-denial, and his fortitude.

(1.) Noah's FAITH. While he sat at rest in his house, pursuing a life of devotion, and mourning over the abounding wickedness of the times, he heard a voice—a voice declaring that the end of all flesh was at hand—a voice which fixed the event and the manner, but concealed the time. The voice assured him that the wicked would be destroyed, and that the only safety for him was in an ark, which he must at once set about preparing. All this was strange, and different from anything he had experienced. Yet the patriarch believed God. He did not doubt because he had never seen such a thing before, nor because the events predicted might be at a considerable distance. He admitted a realizing belief that the wicked would be destroyed, and that his only safety was in an ark. His faith was sufficient to influence his conduct and to lead him to the labor of 120 years. Not knowing how near the deluge might be, and contemplating so vast a work before him, he saw that he had no time to lose. He felt the urgent call for haste, apprehending that if he delayed, the deluge might come before he was ready; at the same time trusting in God that if he was diligent, that the judgment would be deferred until he was prepared. Here were all the trials of faith which good men experience now. O that they could as fully believe the threats and promises of God; and while they feel the pressing need of haste, could trust in him to connect their diligence with the promised salvation. Let them not doubt because the events foretold differ from their past experience, nor because they are many years distant.

Noah believed God, because his mind was not blinded by sin; but his contemporaries were blinded. This was the difference between them. He believed God's threatenings and promises, and they believed not. Hence he could consume the labor of 120 years in building an ark, and they could spend that solemn time in mocking at his sacred toil. They could not have acted thus, had they really believed that a flood was coming on the world. This is the difficulty with sinners now. Though God has foretold the destruction of the wicked—they do not really believe it. Did they truly believe that the destruction would come, and that there is no safety but in the spiritual ark—they could not thus reject a Savior, and sleep out life in worldliness and vain security!

(2.) Noah's OBEDIENCE. God ordained him to provide for his safety by constructing an ark; he did not hesitate a moment—he entered on the work at once, and consumed 120 years in one unbroken course of obedience. And let us who are commanded to secure the spiritual ark, obey, and devote our whole lives to the attainment of this end.

(3.) Noah's PATIENCE. Consider his patience under labors and sufferings, the length of which he could not foresee. There is no account of his impatience under the hardships of 120 years, nor of his complaining that the time was long, though it probably proved much longer than he had expected. Possibly at no time during the whole period did he look upon the flood as far distant; and yet deliverance continued to fly. But his patience never failed. O that Christians could now as patiently submit to the labors and trials of the spiritual warfare half as long, without complaining that their hardships have no end.

(4.) Noah's SELF-DENIAL. He possessed great wealth, or he could not have built such an immense ark. Before this command came, he was probably engaged in extensive business, and

found his wealth flowing in from every quarter. But at the command of God he gave up all other employments, and consumed his wealth upon that immense building, which could be of no other use than to save him and his family and the animal tribes from the threatened destruction. He forsook all, and was content to wait for his remuneration in the new world—in the world that followed the flood. This was as great a self-denial as for Christians now to abandon all their possessions for Christ, and to wait for the recompense of the eternal world.

(5.) Noah's FORTITUDE. Except for his father and grandfather and the rest of his own family, he stood alone against a frowning world. It is hard for Christians now, with millions on their side, to stem the torrent of angry opposition, especially in places where that opposition triumphs. How hard then for the patriarch, who had all the sensibilities of a man—to encounter, single-handed, a contending and ridiculing world. He submitted to the scoffs of his acquaintances, his superiors in rank and fortune, his inferiors, his relations, and his enemies! He heard, undismayed, their endless charges of bigotry, superstition, intolerance, and the like. He was a preacher of righteousness; but he preached without success, and drew taunts instead of tears. He never seems to have made a single convert in 120 years! The uniform tenor of his address must have been that of warning and condemnation. The case admitted of no other. His daily labor upon the ark carried also the strong language of reprobation, "By his faith he condemned the world." He constantly proclaimed the approaching destruction of the world, for their wickedness.

Such an unheard of enterprise as the construction of an enormous vessel to ride the waves—the construction of it in the midst of the dry land—under the idea that a flood was coming upon the world—was an oddity abounding with apparent folly, and calculated to excite men's scorn as well as their anger; and could not fail to call forth the highest contempt and indignation from the ungodly world. How often was he called a madman and a fool! Those who passed by, would insultingly wag their heads. Others would curse him. The children would mock at him as he walked the streets, and load him with the epithets which they had heard their parents use. All the wit and raillery of the age would be leveled against him! The news of his foolish undertaking would travel to remote nations—and from all quarters derision and reproaches would come in.

All this time he had no man beyond the bounds of his own family to whom he could impart his cares, or on whose bosom he could repose. He could ask no counsel. He could go no where, he could look no where, without meeting the blasting frown of the ungodly world. His character and reputation were totally ruined with every person on earth, except his own family. He was shut out from all society, except what he found at home. The question would often be asked, "Who made YOU wiser and better than all of us?" That question, had he not been supported by faith as well as fortitude, would have crushed him. Losing sight of the divine testimony and commission, and looking only at himself, he would shrink into nothing, and say, "Who am I—to be the reprover of the whole world?" But faith joined to fortitude, supported him. His unconquered mind rose above the opinion of the united ungodly race. He would not think that sterling which all men approved, nor that vile which all men condemned. He rested on a higher decision. The reproaches of the wicked would become more and more triumphant and insufferable, the longer the event was delayed! To see 'the madman', as they would call him, foretelling destruction year after year, without any prospect of a fulfillment; to see him laboring to build an enormous vessel for ten, twenty, forty, eighty, a hundred years, without any sign of a deluge, though he might have expected it long before, and might have intimated that expectation; how great must their contempt

and triumph have arisen! How often would they load him with the titles of 'false prophet', 'impostor', and 'liar'! How often would they tauntingly ask, "Where is the destruction which you have so long foretold? Why, as far back as anyone can remember, everything has remained exactly the same since the world was first created!" But this heroic saint, far from being conquered by reproaches, resolved to believe and obey God, rather than man. With astonishing fortitude, he held fast his integrity for 120 years. At length, the long expected day arrived which was to show that his labors and hopes were not in vain—which was to put an eternal end to the scoffs and exultations of his enemies.

Finally, the frightful morning began! The heavens gathered blackness. Angry tempests conflicted in the skies. The lightnings flashed in the skies! Word was spread, that Noah and his family had entered into the ark. The ungodly then began to fear!

Before long, floods of water poured from the sky. Some now began to turn their eyes towards the ark; others stood doubting; others still dared to scoff! The waters go on to increase. The rivers fill—and start to overflow. The waters begin to rise in the streets. Some flee into their houses; others, more intimidated, hasten to the hills! Others are now convinced, and with dreadful fright, are seen wading towards the ark! The fountains of the great deep are now broken up. The waters rise more rapidly, and begin to rush with impetuous force. With difficulty they stand against the stream. They struggle for their lives to reach the ark! Thousands come—some wading, some swimming, some sinking, some hanging onto the ark with the grasp of death—all screaming for admission! But it is too late! Time was, when the ark was open and they might have entered in—but that time is past! Where are now those tongues which derided the enormous vessel and the man who built it? Now what do you think of him—who for more than a century has borne the character of a fool and madman! They would give a thousand worlds—to be in his condition now!

Those nearest to the ark, cry and plead for admission, but in vain! The waters roar! The ark is lifted up! They sink and are seen no more! By this time, every wretch on earth is thoroughly convinced. Hear their cries from the tops of the houses, which are answered by wails from those on the hills. See the multitudes who have fled to the mountains. How like frightened sheep they crowd together! Now the waters, roaring and foaming, have reached their feet! They flee up to the highest ridge—but the floods pursue them there! Some are able to climb the lofty oaks—and the waves overtake them there! They flee to the highest branches, and for a moment have time to reflect on their former madness: "How could I disbelieve the Lord's prophet? Where is now the ark which I scorned? Where am I going? O eternity! eternity! What a dreadful God have I despised!" On the topmost bough, the impetuous torrent sweeps them. Their hold is broken—and they sink to rise no more! The ark floats by—and sails over the heads of the revilers and persecutors! Only that blessed family in the ark, are safe! The same terrors will seize an unbelieving world when Jesus comes again! "As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and swept them all away! That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man!" Matthew 24:37-39 When we reflect on the wretched antediluvians, we perceive their folly in not believing God, and are ready to say with the Jews, "If we had lived in their days—we would not have done thus!" But sinners repeat the same folly now! God has told them that he will destroy the world—that shortly, all the wicked of the present generation shall be overwhelmed in a flood of

wrath! To convince them that the destruction is coming, he has set forth a spiritual ark. He has sent out preachers of righteousness to warn them. Every circumstance is the same. The destruction is as certain—it is as near—and there is no escape but in the ark! But sinners will not believe. They spend their time perhaps in scoffing at the serious apprehensions of Christians, and in despising the ark. Greater madness never existed before the flood! The time is coming when Christians will not be deemed mad men for their concern to secure a saving interest in Christ; when it will appear that they did not believe and labor and bear reproaches in vain. The time is coming when those who are now as secure, as healthy, as those foolish wretches before the flood, would give ten thousand worlds—for the place of the lowest Christian whom they now despise. When the door of the kingdom shall be shut, and there is no more entering in; when they shall stand outside and say, "Lord, Lord, open to us!" and he shall answer, "I never knew you!" when the sluices of infinite vengeance shall be unstopped; when the heavens shall be on fire above their heads, and the earth shall rock beneath their feet; when the sea shall rage and rise and flood the distant land; when all the elements shall make war on man; when they shall flee from the waves—and the flames shall devour them; when they shall flee from the wonders in the heavens—and the opening earth shall engulf them; when they shall stretch out their hands to God—and find him only a consuming fire; when more piteous shrieks shall be heard from every quarter—than were heard in the days of the flood; when they shall see the Noahs whom they despised riding above their heads—and themselves sinking in an ocean of fire!

Ah, what will be their dread then!

O sinners—believe God's Word! Now is your time to avoid the terrors of that dreadful day. Enter the ark—Jesus Christ! By all the solemnities of that coming scene—I entreat, I beseech you to hasten into the ark! Come, for the floods are rising! Come quickly, or the next hour may be too late!

"As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and swept them all away! That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man!" Matthew 24:37-39

Salvation Taken Into God's Own Hands

Salvation Taken Into God's Own Hands by Edward Griffin

"Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; (which my covenant they broke, although I was a husband unto them, saith the Lord.) But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor and every man his brother, saying, 'Know ye the Lord', for they shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Jeremiah 31:31-34.

It is sometimes useful to contemplate the duties which are transferred to us as agents, and sometimes the hopes which arise from the agency of God. To the latter of these subjects our text naturally directs our attention. The old covenant referred to in this passage was that which was made with the Hebrew nation at Sinai. It was the covenant of grace couched under types; types which had the shadow of good things to come, but not the very image nor the substance of the things, and could never make the comers hereunto perfect. Besides, it was in no sense an absolute, but in every sense a conditional covenant; the agency of God not being pledged for those supplies of the Spirit which would ensure a fulfillment of its conditions. In this respect it resembled the law. It is added as a consequence of all this, "which covenant they broke." Though it was sent forth from among the glories of the burning mount, while Sinai quaked under the weight of the presence of God and the earth trembled beneath his feet, "which covenant they broke." But it pleased God to promise a new dispensation of his covenant in the latter day, not indeed exempt from conditionality as addressed to agents, but accompanied with effectual power. In this new dispensation he brings out to view his own agency upon the heart and takes the salvation of his people into his own hands, and engages to accomplish it himself. The tenor of this covenant is more distinctly stated in the next chapter: "They shall be my people and I will be their God; and I will give them one heart and one way that they may fear me forever; and I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from me." Had only a covenant of works been held out to the world, suspending the salvation of men on their perfect obedience; or had a covenant been proposed which offered pardon, without engaging the spiritual influences necessary to a fulfillment of its conditions, a covenant which offered pardon and yet suspended salvation on the unassisted or unsecured exertions of men, not a child of Adam would ever have reached the kingdom of heaven. Both of these covenants have been tried; the one with sinless man in Eden, the other with sinning men at Sinai: and although the Spirit was granted to the nation of Israel, it was because to Abraham had been made the promise of a holy seed, and "the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after," could not "disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." And blessed be God, the covenant that was made

with Abraham is still in force and is extended to the Christian Church. It will be my object to show:

* I. That according to the plan of grace revealed in the Gospel, God has taken the work of salvation into his own hands;

* II. That this circumstance lays the only foundation of human hope.

I. According to the plan of grace revealed in the Gospel, God has taken the work of salvation into his own hands. The great design originated in the mind of God. In the ages of eternity it arose out of his own self-moving goodness, without the counsel of any creature, without the intercession of any creature, without respect to the merits of any creature. It was his own purpose, his own favorite choice, induced by nothing but a regard to his own glory and compassion for a ruined world. Having conceived the design, it was he that prepared the means of its execution. He organized the whole plan without the counsel or solicitation of any creature. Eternal ages before creatures had existence, the covenant of redemption between the Sacred Persons was formed, in which every circumstance relating to the salvation of the world was settled. From the resources which were found in the ever-blessed Trinity, the means of atonement and redemption were derived. The Second Person stood forth and offered himself to die in a human form to expiate human guilt. The offer was accepted, and in return a numerous seed were promised him, whose names were "written in the book of life." The plan of redemption thus settled, these lower worlds were formed. Man was placed on the earth. He fell. Immediately an intimation of the great purpose was made to him. The design was still further disclosed during the lapse of following ages. It was known on earth that God would redeem his people; but so far from man's being consulted in regard to this design, he knew not the means nor the manner of its accomplishment. In the fullness of time the Son of God appeared on earth "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;" and by once offering himself "to bear the sins of many", he brought in "everlasting righteousness," and "perfected forever them that are sanctified." He arose from the dead for their justification, and in his own release from the sins he had borne, received the seal of their acquittal and salvation. All this was done by God, independently of creatures. And now the charge of applying to the promised seed the benefits of redemption was committed to Christ, who, with the consent of the Father, sent out the Holy Spirit to bring invitations to a universal world, and to subdue as many as the Father had given him. The work of enlightening the world by the preaching of the Gospel was taken into the hands of the blessed Trinity, who employed in the work such human instruments as wisdom saw fit; but it was God and not man who undertook to provide that the Gospel should be preached to every nation under heaven. It was the blessed Trinity who created the Christian Church, and undertook the charge of it, and settled the point that it should be supported and enlarged, until its overflowing glory should fill the world. The management of the Church and all her interests her preservation, advancement, and final triumph the whole has God himself provided for without the counsel of creatures. His purpose is fixed and will not change. She shall live; she shall be enlarged; the gates of hell shall not prevail; her overflowing glory shall fill the earth as the waters fill the sea. In like manner God has taken into his own hands the salvation of every individual of his elect. It belongs to him to awaken the conscience, which never would be done if not done by him. It belongs to him to convince of sin, which never would be done if not done by him. It belongs to him to subdue the resistance which the heart is sure to make to the calls of the Spirit, resistance which, if he did not subdue it, would forever prevail. And after he has overcome the sinner by superior strength and changed the heart of stone to flesh, it belongs to him

to carry on the work of sanctification. This also he has taken into his own hands. It is his province to subdue the remaining corruption, to deliver from the wiles of Satan and the snares of the world, to clear all obstacles from the Christian's path and to bear him in his arms all the way to heaven. The work is all the Lord's, undertaken for his own glory, undertaken from love inexhaustible and invincible, and as the Lord liveth it will be accomplished.

II. That God has taken the work of delivering his people into his own hands, is the only foundation of human hope. This doctrine of divine agency and anti-human dependence, though it is opposed by all that is proud in man, by all his love of independence, by all his hatred of divine government, is yet one of the sweetest doctrines of the Christian system. While the world complains that their salvation is dependent on the will of God, they may be very sincere, but really they know not what they do: for they murmur against that which is the only foundation of human hope. Had not God taken the salvation of men into his own hands, to begin, to carry on, and to perfect it according to his sovereign pleasure, not a fallen creature would ever have reached the kingdom of heaven. There is not a Christian on earth who could have atoned for his own sins, or conceived the wonderful plan of atonement by the death of an incarnate God. Had not God contrived and executed this plan, no provision could have been made for the salvation of men. There is not a Christian on earth who could have secured the privilege of being born and brought up under the light of the Gospel, had not God ordered his lot in this manner. Not a Christian on earth would ever have awakened himself from the slumbers of sinful repose, would have poured upon his own conscience the convincing light of truth, would have subdued his own resistance and translated himself from darkness into marvelous light. The best Christian on earth, with all his attainments, would never overcome another sin, would never gain another triumph over the world, would never demolish another idol, would never escape another snare of Satan, but for the power of God. Sustaining the combined assaults of earth and hell, what can he do? An infant whining in its mother's arms, might as well attempt to hurl the sun from his orbit and turn all the angels out of heaven, as a poor feeble creature, in his own strength, try to overcome two worlds with his own house divided against itself. His only hope is in God. At what time he is afraid he can only trust in his eternal Rock. Surrounded by armies stronger than he, with all their weapons pointed at his heart, like Jehosaphat he cries out to God for aid. Enclosing in his own bosom a host of rebels, constantly disposed to mutiny and to tumult, with no check upon them but guards which are furnished from heaven, what could he do if the heavenly aid were withdrawn? Beset from without and from within, he must soon be swallowed up if the God of his salvation did not appear for him. Finding every inch of ground disputed by the enemy, and his own mind revolting from the contest, what hope can he have but in the God of the armies of Israel? Well, let the heavenly powers aid him to prostrate long ranks of the foe;-let him a thousand times shout victory in his passage, until he arrives on the very confines of heaven;-let heaven with all the splendor of its glory be disclosed to his aged eyes, and the songs of seraphs fall upon his withered ear;-let then the heavenly aid desert him,-and from the threshold of glory,-from the vision of the Lamb he would retreat, and, urged by the malignity of his own heart, would plunge into eternal darkness and blasphemy. The Christian who feels his own weakness, and discerns the number and power of the enemy, will resort to this delightful truth as the only ground of hope, "The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord;" and a thousand times will he say, with an eye lifted to heaven and fixed as marble, "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him." Knowing that his case is desperate unless God plucks him from the midst of a thousand deaths; perceiving that an attempt in his own

strength to break through all the difficulties between him and heaven is altogether hopeless; sensible that he cannot take a single step alone,-that without Christ he can do nothing; he finds it sweet to lay his soul over on God,-by a distinct and deliberate act to deliver into the hands of Christ all that he holds dear for time and eternity, and to commit to him every part of his salvation. Sweet is the act of taking the glorious perfections of God for the pledges and agents of his salvation,-to reach out and take hold of omnipotence,-to feel a sense which it is not easy to express, but which may be indistinctly signified by saying, he feels imbosomed in God, and sheltered there from every danger and enemy. That God has taken the salvation of individuals into his own hands, will excite no uneasiness except in those who would rather trust themselves than God, who would rather reign themselves than that God should reign. But remove from real Christians this foundation, and all their hopes and efforts will sink into motionless despair. The only encouragement they have to "work out" their "own salvation," is that "God-worketh in" them. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." From this doctrine is also drawn all our encouragement in relation to the interests of the general Church. Who shall protect her from all her enemies? Every pious minister and every Christian yields the point, and concludes that if God does not support his own cause in the world, he must sit down in tears and give up all for lost. When we look abroad into the streets and see them filled with pollution, with reeling animals that spew the name of God from their drunken lips; when we see the mixed multitude driving furiously after the world, without a care for God or their souls; the most affecting events, the most solemn judgments unable to rouse them to a serious thought, when we behold those who profess the name of Christ buried deep in the world as those who have been long dead, with no seeming care for the kingdom of him who purchased them with his blood; when we behold the ministration of the word producing no effects, and not a soul under all the pleadings of divine love moved to inquire the way to heaven; the eye of benevolence, filled with tears, looks round and inquires, Is there no redress? The heart of benevolence, bleeding at every pore and trembling for the ark of God, can seize on nothing to sustain its hopes but the blessed truth held out in the text. The work of saving men is God's own work. The cause of religion is God's own cause. I know that not another soul will ever be converted in this congregation unless it be accomplished by the power of God. After human efforts have spent themselves to no purpose, this one consolation is left: the work of saving these poor perishing souls who are going down to destruction from our land by millions, the work of preserving religion in this congregation, is taken into God's own hands. There we leave it; easing our bosoms with a long sigh, there we leave it.

Come hither ye pious parents, who anxiously look on the children of your love, whom you have brought into a state of depravity and condemnation, but whom you know that you cannot restore: come, bring them and leave them here. After all your tender concern what will become of them after death, after all your prayers and tears and discouragement? Bring them in your arms and leave them here. You and your whole families may here find repose. Will that darling child be saved? You cannot tell. You exceedingly desire its salvation, but you know that you cannot save it. Will that child be saved? your beating heart again inquires. The decision of this question is reserved for infinite wisdom and love. You have confidence in God that he will do right. You love him better than you do your child. You put the work of saving your children over upon him and calmly resign them into his hands. Do you not now feel a substantial peace in reflecting that God has taken the whole work of saving men into his own hands? While your children are clustering

around you, and you are regarding them with a tender tear, say, Christian parent, would you for a thousand worlds change this blessed truth?

Come hither ye pious ministers, who seem to labor in vain and spend your strength for naught, who often look around on the people of your charge and of your heart, and know that you shall soon meet them at the bar of God, and yet see most of them buried in the world and sin: come hither, after all your distresses and discouragement, after your anxious days and restless nights; come, for here a little light begins to dawn; it brightens, it breaks upon the soul with glorious effulgence. The work of succeeding in your ministry and saving the people committed to your care is taken into God's own hands. It is his own work; it is his own cause: with him you may safely leave it.

Come hither ye pious and expanded souls who bear upon your hearts the general interests of the Church, who have been long praying for the kingdom of Christ to come: here you may settle and rest. The work of preserving and enlarging the Church and consummating her glory is taken into God's own hands. He who set up this object without consulting the wishes or opinions of men, who has placed his heart upon it as his own favorite interest, as the chosen means of spreading his glory before the inhabitants of all worlds, who for this purpose created and redeemed, who preserves and governs the earth, he will take care of the Church, and as sure as he is possessed of omnipotence, will bring to its aid sufficient strength to advance it to perfection and glory.

Come hither ye doubting Christians, who are overwhelmed with fear for your own safety, who tremble before your spiritual enemies, and often anticipate an eternal train of evils: come and rest your anxieties on the covenant of God, the only, the all sufficient ground of hope. God has taken into his own hands the salvation of his people. "This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: I will put my law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people; for I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more." When I contemplate this promise, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people," I am prepared to say, There lies enclosed the last hope of an expiring world. I approach nearer to it; I gaze upon it; I hear it say again, "I will be their God and they shall be my people;" my mind whispers to itself, In that promise is embosomed the only hope on which my trembling soul relies. It may be that God will look upon me. I fix my eyes on the heavens: Will God be pleased to undertake for me? I read the text again: I put my life in my hands and cast myself at his feet, pouring out this sum of all my hopes, "Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean." Here also is the only hope of unrenewed sinners. Come hither ye mixed multitude of impenitent men, and contemplate the only chance which remains for your salvation. Unless that God whom you have made your enemy by wicked works undertakes for you, all heaven and earth cannot save you. Unless that God whom you daily disobey, to whom you refuse to cry for relief, unless he in mercy to your poor perishing souls begins and carries on and completes your salvation, you are undone for eternity. Will you any longer treat your only helper with so much neglect and abuse? Remember that you are in his hands. One frown from him and you are plunged into eternal woe; one smile from him and you live forever. O realize your condition. Hasten to cast yourselves at his feet. "Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Amen.

Sharp Arrows in the Heart of Enemies

Sharp Arrows in the Heart of Enemies by Edward Griffin "Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies; the peoples fall under you." Psalms 45:5

While tyrants are wading to power through the blood of slaughtered armies, and marching to the music of a nation's groans—there is a Conqueror of a far different sort. He too has his arrows and his two-edged sword, and "goes forth conquering and to conquer"; but his track is not marked with desolation and woe. His coming is not proclaimed by the cries of widows and orphans. Mercy is his banner, and with him marches salvation. He wounds—only to heal, and kills—only to make alive. "On his head" are "many crowns," and his name is called, "The Word of God." When the Gospel was sent forth, then this glorious Conqueror girded his sword upon his side, according to the prayer in verses 3 and 4 of this Psalm: "Mighty warrior, strap your sword at your side. In your majesty and splendor—in your splendor ride triumphantly in the cause of truth, humility, and justice. May your right hand show your awe-inspiring deeds." This is a devout prayer for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom in all the fullness of its blessings. Although the idea of severity to enemies may be included, and a full view of the Conqueror as here arrayed may show us a Monarch marching into a rebellious province, reducing some to obedience and destroying others, yet the idea of mercy is much stronger. Although the Gospel, which is the grand weapon employed, may be "set for the fall" as well as "rising of many," and may prove a "savor of death unto death," yet who does not know that its leading feature is mercy? To this second view of the subject I shall confine my attention, and do my best to celebrate the gracious triumphs of our King. In order to show this, I will:

I. Examine the process of his individual conquests.

II. Contemplate the general march of the Conqueror.

I. I shall examine the process of his individual conquests.

"Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies," (that is, the enemies of your kingdom,) whereby "The peoples fall under You." That is, they fall prostrate at your feet after the manner of vanquished foes. Several ideas are included in these words, which, followed out in their proper order, will lead to a right understanding of these individual conquests.

1. It is plainly implied that the King marches against none but enemies. This clearly shows us the earlier character of all who are subdued, and of course the natural character of all mankind. The text does not limit its view to the conquest of thieves and robbers: it looks at the general extension of the Redeemer's kingdom. It does not limit its view to the reduction of pagans, unless all besides pagans are real subjects of his kingdom and heartily obedient to his laws. If you can find any in Christendom, any even among the baptized, who do not submit to his laws in heart as well as in practice, (for the heart is included in his requirements,) you find those who, as really as pagans, have yet to be reduced to subjection to his empire. And all who need to be thus reduced, are his enemies according to the text. If then you can find any with the Bible in their hands, who have not

truly repented and forsaken their sins, who have not exercised a saving faith in Christ, who do not live a life of prayer, who have not heartily renounced the world, who do not love God supremely, who do not possess the spirit of martyrs, (for all these are essentially characteristic of his subjects,) you find those who still remain the enemies of Christ. "You are My friends—if you do whatever I command you." But, "he who is not with me is against me." In a word, all who are yet to be brought into the kingdom of Christ—that is, all the world except real Christians, are his enemies.

2. The conquering of these enemies is the work of Christ. The history of all genuine conversions is written in these words: "Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies. The peoples fall under you." Every new subject brought into his kingdom is a trophy of his conquering power. His empire is extended only by conquest. Allow that the text has reference to the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, and all this follows with irresistible certainty.

3. We are now prepared to examine the process by which these conquests are made. The first question is, What are these arrows by which the enemies are shot through? Doubtless they are the same with the sword mentioned in a preceding verse. Now the sword of Christ is represented as proceeding out of his mouth; and long ago he said by a prophet, "He has made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand he has hidden me, and made me a polished shaft." "The sword of the Spirit" is expressly said to be "the Word of God"; and we are told that "The Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." No doubt then that the arrows which he pierces us—are the truths of his Word. This piercing is accomplished by the working of his Spirit, whose special work is to "convict the world of sin and righteousness and of judgment." In an hour when the mind is thoughtless and wandering upon the world—it is made to feel one of these truths, and then another, and another still, with increasing and decreasing power. The precise order is not the same in every case; but sooner or later the same truths get into every mind thus affected. The sinner is made to feel, to a degree unknown before, that there is a God "who is angry with the wicked every day"; that he himself is the creation of God sent into the world to serve that God; that he has wickedly neglected the work; that he has violated the laws of God in numberless instances, in thought, word, and deed; that for his sins he is justly condemned to eternal death. After seeing these things—he cannot but be deeply affected and dismayed. The careless world may well pronounce him mad—but is he really insane? Is it madness to believe the truths of God? The things which he sees and feels are everlasting truths; and the only difference between his present and former state is, that then he did not realize the truth, now he does. Formerly he lived in unbelief, like the rest of a careless world, heedless of the things which God has spoken—but now he believes them. Which is the real madman—one who can refuse to believe infinite truths, and rush on to eternity unmindful of the terrible declarations of God respecting the world he lives in—or he who views things as they really are?

It is a fashionable opinion among the heedless, that men submit to the empire of Christ in a calm manner, without any soul-distress; that as religion is a pleasant service, all gloom at the entrance upon it must indicate a morbid state of the imagination. But this does not agree with the statement of the text. The heart of a rebel will be transfixed with arrows—and if arrows enter a heart, there must be pain. And to look at the thing in its own light, how can a man wake up and find himself an

enemy to God and under condemnation, and not be distressed? How can the sins of his life be laid open to his sight without filling him with confusion and anguish? How can "the wrath of God," which "is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness," be applied to him, without producing trembling and dread?

You say, he ought to trust in the mercies of God in Christ—and so he will as soon as he has fully seen his need and humbled himself for his sins. But are there no pains of sickness to be felt, before he will apply to the physician? Is there no view of ruin, before he will prize the grace which came "to save that which was lost?"—before he will flee to the refuge provided? Are there no bitter tears of repentance, before he can be pardoned? And is it necessary to suppose that all these realizations occur in a single moment? Is it not more consistent with the nature of the human mind, with facts recorded in Scripture, and with the testimony of daily experience, to suppose that these new understandings must pass in succession, and often in slow succession? And that the mind, hard and obstinate as it is—must ordinarily linger for a considerable time under a sense of guilt and ruin before it will embrace a Savior? And is it not reasonable to suppose that one who has been so deep in guilt, will be held off a while, (like Miriam who was left to "be ashamed seven days,") before he is admitted to the embraces of pardoning love? It is perfectly reasonable and Scriptural and agrees with personal experience, that a sinner should remain a while in darkness and distress before he tastes the sweetness of forgiving mercy. And there are too many reasons to fear that those who condemn these temporary glooms, and find no difficulty in trusting at once on divine mercy without a conflict or a pain, have never seen their need of mercy and do in fact rely rather on the general clemency of God to which they feel themselves justly entitled. But our text carries the idea farther. I have said, if arrows enter a heart there must be pain; I now add, there must be death; and if life follows, it must be by a resurrection. By these arrows the heart of Paul was pierced on the plains of Damascus; and he himself tells us the effect: "When the commandment came, sin revived and I died." The majesty and purity of God opened to his sight; the strictness and extent of the divine law stood before him; his own sins rolled upon him like a dark cloud of thunder; he saw himself to be utterly condemned, utterly unable to atone for one sin, utterly ruined, helpless, and hopeless. Then it was that he died to all hope of justification by the law—all hope of helping himself—and pronounced himself a dead man. Then, and not until then, he lifted an eye to the Savior—lifted it from the bottom of the grave, and rose to a new life of hope—rose to eternal life in Jesus Christ. The work which the Savior came to accomplish was nothing less than to raise the dead. He did not come to remodel an old life, but to raise men from their graves. He came to be, in every sense, "the resurrection and the life." His purpose was to raise to spiritual life the "dead in trespasses and sins," to raise to the life of hope and to eternal life—those who had seen themselves to be dead in the sentence of the law, and had died to all hope of helping themselves. Finally he will raise the body from the grave. Every part of his work is a resurrection.

How wonderful is the literal truth behind the figurative language of our text! This glorious King and Conqueror, finding a rebel in arms against him, thrusts him through with the arrows of truth, fills him with the anguish of conviction, lays him dead at his feet—and then raises him to the life of hope and to life eternal in himself! This single figure presents the whole process of supernatural conviction and conversion, and proves the reality of such a work.

Here I pause, and ask my hearers whether they have ever experienced such a change. If you have not, you have no part in Christ. This is precisely the change intended by the Savior himself when he said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." If you have not felt the arrows of truth penetrating your hearts, filling you with remorse and anguish and repentance, showing you the justice of your condemnation, causing you to die to all hope of thinking good of yourselves before God, leading you to look up from your graves to the Savior of sinners, and raising you to a new life in him—you may be moral and charitable to the poor, but you have no part in Christ. You still lie under condemnation, and dying thus, must sink into eternal woe! Have you then, my dear hearers, ever felt those arrows penetrating your souls, and felt them extracted by him who applied the balm of Gilead?

II. Let us now contemplate the general march of this divine Conqueror. The great work of subduing a rebellious race is taken into his own hands—a glorious truth, which, though offensive to wicked men, lays the only foundation of human hope. He made a promise to undertake this wonderful campaign when there was nothing to require him, no one to speak of our miseries, no one to plead in our behalf. He undertook it from no desire of fame, with no desire for reward but the pleasure of relieving the wretched and bestowing on prostrate rebels freedom and life. He undertook it knowing full well the perils of the war and the many pains and scars it would cost him. The scene of the battle was not to be a single district or kingdom, but a world. The interest at stake was the dearest interest of God and his creation. The warring sides were the strongest powers in the universe. The army collected to oppose this mighty King made up of all the inhabitants of two worlds, was the greatest host that ever was marshaled since time began. The great army of Xerxes was but a platoon compared to this. Against such an immeasurable host, who for ages had been entrenching themselves throughout the world, in every temple, in every school, behind every throne, in every heart—Jesus went forth single-handed. He girded his sword upon his thigh, he mounted the chariot of his Gospel, and marched directly into the heart of Satan's empire. Wherever he came—he conquered. At his approach devils fled, and their temples and altars fell. The Roman empire, the chief seat of Satan's visible kingdom, shook to its center, and afterwards opened to the Conqueror and fell prostrate at his feet.

He sustained wounds, but the very blood he shed dissolved the strongest hold of Satan, the heart of man. He sent forth his arrows and three thousand were pricked in the heart at once. He marched through the nations, breaking down the prisons which Satan had reared to confine his wretched captives. Hundreds of millions who had been confined in dungeons from their birth, were released from their chains and brought forth to joyous light! Wherever he came, freedom and joy sprung up around him. He marched down the ages, scattering his arrows from his quiver and bringing his enemies to his feet.

He still rides today through the nations, "conquering and to conquer." His arrows never miss their mark. No trumpet is sounded before him—his march is silent and unobserved by the world, but it is uninterrupted still. While the world dreams that he has retired from the earth, he is extending his conquests every hour. It is the chief employment for which he lives. All the piety of the present generation in the four quarters of the globe, is the fruit of his recent conquests. Every saint on earth is a vanquished rebel, whose heart was once pierced by the shafts of his quiver. God speed you, O glorious Conqueror! Go on and prosper. "And in Your majesty ride prosperously because of truth, humility, and righteousness" and may the praises of millions ready to perish, come before

you. His signs of victory are not desolated countries—but prisoners set free, souls delivered from the destroyer, sighs and groans comforted, and the sting of death removed! These are his trophies; these are his spoils. The high minded spirit of medieval legend celebrated the feats of knights uninterested in their own gain, who roamed the kingdoms, supposedly to deliver oppressed females from enchanted castles or from the grasp of giants and monsters. But how much more generous and kind a Deliverer is here—marching through the nations and rescuing the oppressed and those that have no helper, from the tyranny of Satan!

"Who can snatch the plunder of war from the hands of a warrior? Who can demand that a tyrant let his captives go? But the Lord says, "The captives of warriors will be released, and the plunder of tyrants will be retrieved." O the divine compassion of this Godlike advance! Again we say, may the Almighty God speed you, O glorious Conqueror! We will follow the wheels of his triumphal chariot, and shout as we go, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" to redeem a wretched race! "Hosanna in the highest."

How many millions has this high-minded King subdued, from Abel to the present day? How many even of us? How many of our dear children and friends? Have not some of us seen a parent or a brother delivered from eternal slavery and ruin? Has a parent among us seen a child set free from bondage and restored to his right mind? In the hour when that parent stood with his child to thank his Deliverer, did he not say again, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes" to save our children from eternal death! But the most glorious triumphs of this divine Conqueror are reserved for ages yet to come, which the voice of prophecy and the signs of the times declare to be now at the door. His hand is brushing away the kingdom of religious authority and dropping spiritual Babylon like a millstone into the mighty deep. His hand will break the Muslim powers, and will thus put a final end to that delusion which has long enchained that part of the human race. His bow will bring down many nations which are now kneeling to gods of wood and stone. His arrows will pierce the priests of Hinduism and Buddhism, and lay the dervishes of Turkey at his feet. They will sing his triumphs on the banks of the Ganges and in the deserts of Sahara. They will celebrate his victories on the frozen beach of Russia and in the sultry regions of Congo and Peru. The mosques of Mecca and the pagodas of Hindustan shall be converted into temples of the living God. And the enemy who deceived the whole world, ejected from all his dominions on earth, shall be confined to his prison; and then, as the last act of his dominion on earth, will judge the world. And when he shall have committed all his enemies to prison, and shall be returning, at the head of his redeemed Church, towards heaven's gate—going home from all his wars and victories, covered with scars and honors—how will they shout his triumphs as they ascend: "Open up, ancient gates! Open up, ancient doors, and let the King of glory enter. Who is the King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, invincible in battle. Open up, ancient gates! Open up, ancient doors, and let the King of glory enter. Who is the King of glory? The LORD Almighty— he is the King of glory!" And when they have conducted him to his throne, they will sing out the eternal strain 'like the sound of many waters': "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!" And the whole sanctified creation will send forth the loud response: "Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!" My dear hearers, fall down at the feet of this divine Conqueror, and submit to his empire, and risk your eternal all upon his mediation. If you refuse, know you that he has other arrows with which to reach your heart. "God shall shoot at you

with an arrow; suddenly shall you be wounded." Those who will not have this King to reign over them, shall be brought forth and slain before him. He will reign until all his enemies are made his footstool. His first advent, with all the kindness which attended it, was foretold in terms terrible to the wicked. "Then the Lord you are seeking will suddenly come to his Temple. The messenger of the covenant, whom you look for so eagerly, is surely coming," says the LORD Almighty. "But who will be able to endure it when he comes? Who will be able to stand and face him when he appears? For he will be like a blazing fire." And that coming in his kingdom which is yet future, is predicted in language equally alarming. "Who is this who comes from Edom, from the city of Bozrah, with his clothing stained red? Who is this in royal robes, marching in the greatness of his strength? "It is I, the LORD, announcing your salvation! It is I, the LORD, who is mighty to save!" Why are your clothes so red, as if you have been treading out grapes? "I have trodden the winepress alone; no one was there to help me. In my anger I have trampled my enemies as if they were grapes. In my fury I have trampled my foes. It is their blood that has stained my clothes. For the time has come for me to avenge my people, to ransom them from their oppressors."

Terrible things are to be accomplished upon the wicked, which will cause men's hearts to fail for fear. "Then the kings of the earth, the rulers, the generals, the wealthy people, the people with great power, and every slave and every free person—all hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains. And they cried to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of the one who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of their wrath has come, and who will be able to survive?" Revelation 6:15-17

Therefore my friends, seek the arrows of his love before the time comes for the arrows of his wrath. Run to the shelter of the Savior—before you wish for the shelter of the rocks. May you be a trophy of his grace and rejoice in the day of his coming. Amen.

The Tender Mercies Of God

The Tender Mercies Of God by Edward Griffin

"I will mention the loving kindnesses of the Lord and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness towards the house of Israel which he hath bestowed on them, according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his loving kindnesses." Isaiah 63:7. The prophet, when he uttered these words, appeared to labor under an ineffable sense of the tender mercies and loving kindnesses of his God. He had been contemplating the wrath with which God would one day visit Edom when he should come to deliver his people from her oppressions. Immediately he raises an interesting contrast and sets before his eyes God's "great goodness towards the house of Israel" in loosing their Egyptian bonds and conducting them through the wilderness. In this type as through a glass, he discovered the wondrous love which redeems the Church from more oppressive chains, and supports her in her journey to the heavenly rest. Under this view he seemed transported, and in his rapture exclaimed, "I will mention the loving kindnesses of the Lord and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness towards the house of Israel which he hath bestowed on them, according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his loving kindnesses."

Though we should not raise our eyes to the exalted love which shines in the Gospel, still we should have abundant reason to mention the loving kindnesses of the Lord. Without any adviser or helper he introduced us to rational existence, and raised us to intellectual enjoyment. By his unceasing care, that existence is hourly supported. Our table is furnished and our raiment supplied by his benign hand. We are blest with pleasant habitations and possessions; we enjoy the delights of refined society, the blessings of friendship, and the life and happiness of our friends. Our health is sustained by a thousand minute and constantly repeated touches of his hand to the various parts of our complicated machine. All the pleasures of imagination, of memory, of hope, of sympathy, and of sense; all the magic charms which play on nature's face, are the gifts of his bounteous hand. By his watchful care we are protected from countless visible and unseen dangers. By innumerable impressions made on our animal spirits by his careful touch, we are put in tone to enjoy the objects around us. More numerous are his mercies than the stars which look out of heaven. On no section of our life,—on no point of nature's works,—scarcely on a circumstance in our relations to society, can we fix our eyes, without seeing "the loving kindnesses of the Lord." But when we lift our thoughts to his "great goodness towards the house of Israel," our souls faint under the labor of expressing the praise we owe. Redeeming grace most fully displays the richness and extent of his loving kindnesses; redeeming grace was the theme which transported the author of our text; and redeeming grace shall be the subject of this discourse. To discover the heights or to fathom the depths of this grace, exceeds the power of men or angels; yet the view perhaps may be enlightened by some of the following reflections. In purposing and planning the great work of redemption, the Eternal Mind was self-moved, uncounselled, unsolicited. No angel interceded or advised; no man by his prayers or tears excited pity. Before

men or angels had existence, the purpose was fixed and the plan was formed by boundless love, unmoved, unasked, untempted by any thing without but the foreseen miseries of a perishing world. This love was wholly disinterested, having no reward in view but the pleasure of doing good. What other recompense could God expect from creatures who have nothing to give but what they receive? What other reward could eternal self-sufficiency need? This love is still more sublime considered as acting towards inferiors. When love is not the most pure, we daily see, it will overlook those who have no eminence to engage respect. On this account the condescending regard which some benevolent prince may pay to the poor and forsaken, is peculiarly affecting. What then shall we say when we behold Infinite Majesty descending to such tender concern for dust and ashes?

Redeeming love is still more wonderful as exercised towards enemies; towards those who could reject the offered salvation,—who were not to be moved by all the entreaties of heaven,—and who had malice enough to murder the Author of life in the very act of bringing it to them. This love appears altogether astonishing when we consider the greatness of the sacrifice it made. That God himself, (infinite, eternal, and self-sufficient as he was,) should bring himself down to a mortal form; that he who made the heavens should descend from among the adorations of angels to assume the form of a servant and to receive the spittings of Roman soldiers; that he should exchange the quiet of eternal repose for a laborious life, the abodes of inaccessible light for the degrading manger,—the society of the Father and Spirit for that of illiterate fishermen,—the heights of infinite bliss for the agonies of Gethsemane and Golgotha;—and all to atone for abuses which he himself had received from men; fixes angels in astonishment and rivets their eyes to him who still bears the prints of the nails and the spear. That this divine Sufferer did not recede, but remained immovable in his purpose in a near view of his agonies; that he did not strike and rivet his insulting murderers to the centre, but spent his expiring breath in prayer for their life; evinces, not love only, but love unconquerable. The extent of redeeming love further appears in the magnitude of the blessings which it intended for a ruined race. It stooped to catch a falling world; to snatch them from eternal flames to the transports of immortal life,—from everlasting contempt to be "kings and priests" forever "unto God" —to raise them from the depravity of sin to the purity of the divine image,—from a dungeon to the radiance of heaven,—from the society of devils to communion with angels,—from the blasphemies of hell to the songs of paradise,—from universal destitution to inherit all riches,—to be sons and heirs of God, members of the Redeemer's body,—to live in his family and heart, and forever to expand in the regions of light and life. This mercy is heightened by the fact that the Saviour is so necessary, reasonable, and all-sufficient. Intrusted with all the offices needful for man's redemption, he possesses powers fully adequate to the infinite work, and exerts them when and where they are most needed. It is his stated business to strike off the chains from wretched prisoners,—to administer balm to those who are wounded to death, food to those who are perishing with hunger,—eyes and light to the blind and benighted. He is the "shadow of a great rock in a weary land," — "a hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest." In his prophetic office he brings out to view the secrets of the Eternal Mind: as a Priest he pacifies divine wrath by atonement and intercession: as a King he subdues the stubborn will, marks out the road to life by salutary precepts, defends from spiritual enemies, and renders all events subservient to the good of his people. As Captain of the Lord's host he will carry them through their warfare and bring them off victorious. As Physician of souls he will heal all their spiritual maladies and confirm them in immortal health. He is a most pleasant resting place from

the perturbations of guilt, the vexations of care, and the anguish of affliction. Possessing inexhaustible life in himself, he is the source of unfailing life to his members, who before were "dead in trespasses and sins." As "Heir of all things" and Distributer of the whole estate, he has every necessary good to impart in this world and infinite riches in the world to come. This mercy is still further heightened by the patience and condescending tenderness which he exercises towards his people. He calls them his friends, his brethren, his children, his spouse, the members of his body, the apple of his eye. In the character of a near and tender relation, he has become a mild medium through which they may look up into the insufferable splendors of the Godhead without dazzling or paining their sight. Although the awful God of majesty, he is not ashamed to own and befriend a poor race of unsightly outcasts and to take them into union with himself. With unconquerable patience he bears with all their provocations, and with unfailing faithfulness remains their friend during all their perverseness and ingratitude. Though their returns are such as would weary any other love, he is still engaged in pardoning their sins, subduing their corruptions, and conducting them to glory. As a tender shepherd he gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them in his bosom. And O with what overpowering kindness does he speak to them when he holds communion with them, when he meets them in a happy hour as they are walking out like Isaac to meditate at the evening tide, and drawing aside the veil, shows the sweetest countenance dressed in celestial smiles; or when finding them bowed to the earth and drenched in tears, he gently raises them in his arms, and with more than a mother's tenderness wipes the sorrows from their cheeks and breathes ineffable consolation into their spirits. Ye who have known his love, can witness the ineffable sweetness with which he manifests himself at such seasons. In his providence he takes care to suffer no real evil to befall his people, to withhold from them no real good, and to make them the happier for every event. And when this trying life is past, he will receive them to his own presence, to a near and ever increasing union to himself, where love perfect and reciprocal shall hold immortal reign. This wondrous mercy is further expressed in the gift of sabbaths and sacraments, and especially the written word. When we perceive the breathings of divine love in those precious Scriptures which were inspired by the Holy Ghost; when the soul lies at some divine promise, drinking in immortal refreshment, and filling itself as from some celestial spring, O how rich and vast does the love of God appear.

Fresh evidences of this love spring up at every review of his past providence towards the Church. "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bore them and carried them all the days of old." The preservation of Noah in the ark, the call and protection of Abraham, the deliverance of the Church from Egypt, its support in the wilderness and establishment in Canaan, the numerous deliverances wrought for Israel, their restoration from Babylon, the establishment and astonishing growth of the Christian Church, its protection during the successive persecutions, and the continued efforts of the Spirit to preserve and enlarge it, are all monuments of amazing love and faithfulness. And when we cast our eyes down the slope of ages and behold the glory of Zion filling all the earth, how do we dance as in fancied visions and think the bliss too great to be real. And then, when we open the Scriptures and behold a "Thus saith the Lord" expressly to confirm our hopes, with what rapturous gratitude do we make our boast of him; "Lo this is our God, we have waited for him and he will save us: this is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

All these are the more affecting as being marks of distinguishing love. Redeeming grace passed by the fallen angels to bring salvation to men. The privileges of Gospel light and ordinances were taken from the heathen to be given to us. The blessings of personal holiness and divine communion are conferred on the people of God while withheld from the rest of the world. Our lives are continued in a world of hope while millions are called to their last account. While God was preserving the Hebrew Church and nourishing it with a Father's care, Edom, Moab, and Ammon were given to the sword. And while angels sing only of the goodness of the Lord, the redeemed will shout "grace, grace," and with higher notes and ecstasies chant the praises of redeeming love. The grace of God appears still greater as being abundant and free for all. The language of divine compassion is, "Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

Having drawn this outline of the mercies of God, I shall now present them as motives to holy feelings and practical godliness.

What admiration should possess our minds as we contemplate this wonderful love of God. Nothing in the universe is so amazing. Not an angel in heaven but lives in astonishment continually. And yet it is infinitely greater than ever Gabriel imagined. As the sublime intellects of the upper world expand, it will appear more and more amazing to eternity. And while we wonder let gratitude fill our hearts. Of what avail is our admiration without our thanks? It would only bring us to the condition of those who gaze "and wonder and perish." What are our hearts made of if they can lie under the weight of all these obligations and be unthankful still? Let us retain a sense of divine mercies always upon our heart, and not suffer them, after a transient impression, to pass off into oblivion. Let not the blessings of former years be forgotten, but let them frequently be brought in review before us, that we may never cease to remember how much we owe to our Lord. To lasting gratitude let lasting love be added. What infinite beauty and worth belong to Israel's God. And shall we be thankful for personal favors and not love the benevolence which embraces the universe? This would be only the contracted gratitude of a heart that can be engaged by nothing but the loaves and fishes.

Let it be our daily joy that the universe contains such a God,—a God whose happiness consists in doing good, and who is executing so vast a plan for the promotion of creature happiness, that he already realizes infinite blessedness in gratified benevolence. Let universal joy catch from heart to heart and circulate through heaven and earth that such a God lives, reigns, and is happy. Let this be our morning and our evening song. Let it break in like the dawn of day upon our gloomy hours; and like the sinking but recovered David, let us be transported with the thought, "But thou, O Lord, shalt endure forever, and thy remembrance unto all generations." To such a God our highest praise belongs. He is the object of the incessant and rapturous praise of all the choirs of paradise, and shall men neglect their harps? In the warm transports of David's heavenly muse, let us invoke the sun and all the orbs of light, the earth and all the things thereon, the heavens and all their happy spirits, to praise the Lord,—to praise him in the heights and in the depths,—to praise him with the voice of song, and with all the varieties of instrumental harmony.

Let such a God be the supreme object of our faith, our hope, our confidence. On him let us place our dependance for every thing we need for time and eternity. Renouncing this delusive world and every idol which would rival him in our hearts, let us make him our only point of rest, our only

portion. Let him be the object of our daily and cheerful worship. Let hypocrisy be banished from our religion, and let sincerity mark our worship of him whose friendship for man has been so sincere. Disclaiming all self-seeking, after his disinterested love to us, let us live only for him; and in duty to one who so greatly denied himself for us, let us largely practise self-denial. Henceforth let us consecrate ourselves to the service of him who served us in death; and by our obedience to all his commands attest the sincerity of our love and gratitude.

God forbid that we should be ashamed to confess him before men who was not ashamed to own and befriend us before his Father and the holy angels; or that we should fail to speak to a listening world of his excellent greatness and his excellent loving kindness. It becomes us to imitate his devotedness to the glory of God and the happiness of men; to put on sincere mercy and kindness, forbearing one another in love, doing good to all as we have opportunity, especially to the household of faith; condescending to men of low degree, meek and gentle to all, affable, courteous, and obliging, ready to forgive injuries, given to hospitality, and generous in distributing to the poor the gifts of a generous God. To the dominion of enthroned love it becomes us to submit; resigning all our interests to the divine disposal, and enduring with patience and not with petulance whatever such a God is pleased to impose.

Against such a God it is that we have been found in arms. O "tell it not in Gath." Under the weight of all these obligations we have risen up to oppose unbounded love. Alas we knew not what we did. In vain might our tears and blood be applied to efface stains so ignominious and deep. Well may we go softly all our years in the bitterness of our soul. Let pride never again appear in natures capable of this. Let humility and brokenness of heart mark our future lives; and in sympathy with the publican let us smite on our guilty breasts and cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner." And since our crimes are of so deep a die that nothing but atoning blood can wash them out, and since such infinite pains have been taken to provide a Saviour for us,—a Saviour every way suited to our wants; let us gratefully seize the offered salvation and cast ourselves on him as the only ground of hope. And then, "though" our "sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool."

Ah sinners, how long will you slight such endearing love and reject such heaven-astonishing mercy? How long shall infinite tenderness be grieved at your ingratitude? Why will you treat with abuse that excellence which angels adore? Why will you tread under foot that love which dissolves all heaven? When will you at length be wise, and for once, after so long a time, act like ingenuous creatures? Let the goodness of God lead us all to repentance, and let us spend our days in making mention of the loving kindnesses of the Lord, and in preparing to unite with the redeemed in singing, "Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing."

"Now ,unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

When I was a Child I Thought as a Child

When I was a Child I Thought as a Child by Edward D. Griffin

"When I was a child I spoke as a child I understood as a child I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things." 1 Corinthians 13:11. In childhood the mind, pleased with every trifle and void of care, vacantly pursues its little pleasures, and, blessed with ignorance of the ills and disappointments of life, looks forward with sanguine hopes to fairy scenes of happiness; while the bright and tearless eye, resting on the outside of things, sees a paradise in every lawn and grove. A recollection of these childish delights is often cherished with rapture in future years, while the man, forgetful of the frettings and whining of childhood, indulgently inquires, Why were the former days better than these? But he does not ask wisely concerning this. A virtuous manhood is much more to be desired than the state of children. It is capable of far nobler pursuits, of knowledge, enjoyment, and action more congenial with the ends of our being. The child has no high and manly aim, no cares for great and dignified things, little thought for his future well being either in this life or the life to come. His understanding is feeble, his knowledge is small, his pursuits and pleasures are useless to the world, his years are trifled away in pursuing airy visions, and he is a stranger to elevated and substantial happiness. He speaks as a child, prattling unconnectedly of his little concerns; he understands as a child, superficially and contractedly; he thinks as a child, incorrectly and inconsistently; but when he becomes a man he puts away childish things. His taste relishes nobler objects; his conversation is more dignified; his conduct and pursuits are manly; his views and knowledge are enlarged. Spurning the shackles and toys of babyhood, he becomes perhaps a philosopher, and explores with astonished gaze the works of his Creator. His unrestricted fancy, not confined to the policies and interests of kingdoms, wanders among the stars, and delights itself with the numberless worlds which revolve above his head, while his faith and knowledge are employed on the great affairs of the kingdom of God.

Such is the contrast by which the apostle represents the present and future existence of Christians. He was speaking of their imperfect knowledge and attainments in this life and the perfection of their state in the life to come; which he illustrates by the words of our text: "When I was a child I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things;" to which he adds, "For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known."

If the most eminent saints, while here, are in a state of childhood, how much more the rest of mankind? It is then the obvious doctrine of the text that the present life is only the infant state of man. In illustrating this position I shall show its truth, I. In regard to mankind in general;

II. In regard to worldly men in particular;

III. In regard even to Christians themselves.

I. The position is true in regard to mankind in general. Man is a more noble being than he appears in this world, and was designed for nobler ends than he attains, or than his Maker accomplishes by

him, in the present state. The all wise God would not have formed so dignified a race, and placed them in a world fitted up with such exquisite art, for no other end than that they should enjoy the little transitory distinctions and pleasures of this life,-that they should sustain such a mode of existence and intercourse for a few years, in sin and misery, and then drop into nothing, without either gratifying his benevolence in making them happy, or exercising his justice in punishing their sins. If he expended so much labor in creating them and the world they live in that they might be happy, this end is miserably defeated if there be no future state. If he created them for his own glory, their present existence, unconnected with a future state, illustrates neither his wisdom, goodness, nor justice, but casts obscurity over them all. Men do not here receive the punishment due to their sins, nor arrive at the perfection either of their powers or of the happiness which they are capable of enjoying. Dismal are the prospects of that man who looks forward to no future state; who after sinning and sighing a few times more, expects to be swallowed up in the gulf of annihilation. For other purposes had Infinite Wisdom in creating an intelligent race. The Author of their being, who designed them for immortality, placed them in this infant state, not for the good they could enjoy here, but to ripen for a glorious and eternal manhood. Their greatest growth here, compared with their future dimensions, does not transcend the size of children.- This life, instead of being the termination, is only the threshold of their existence. This world is only their nursery, or if you please, the cradle in which souls yet in swaddling bands are rocked for immortality. Could you see them launched into eternity, -could you trace their dimensions a few centuries hence,-you would behold these puny beings swelled to a stature which your present powers could not measure. How miserably do they overlook the dignity of man who contemplate him only in the present life. What wretched miscalculation to consume all their cares in making provisions for this infant state,-this mere birth of being,-this embryo of existence,-and neglect to provide for the happiness of a vigorous and eternal manhood.

II. It is particularly true of worldly men that this is their childish state. Their views, their tastes, their knowledge, their pleasures, their pursuits, all bespeak them children. Compared with the high and noble ends for which they were made, what trifles they are pleased with, what childish objects they pursue. While I stand contemplating the dimensions and dignity of a glorified saint, I pronounce the wealth of the wealthiest king and the honors of the greatest emperor to be mere play-things for children, and all the strife and hurry and noise of the world to be but the unmeaning motions and sounds of an infant. Are they not children? Mark with what vacancy of mind they pursue their little pleasures, without any dignified and manly aim,-what want of foresight and care for their future well-being,-how caught with the outside of things and puffed with airy hopes,-how dark their understandings,-how small their knowledge of what they were created to know,-how useless their lives. They have none of that sublime happiness of which rational minds are capable. Subject to disappointments and sorrows, the children often fret and cry. They speak as a child, they understand as a child, they think as a child. Ah when will they become men and put away childish things? Cast aside your toys and raise your thoughts to objects worthy of men, -to the kingdom and glory of God,-to infinite interests and immortal concerns. To pursue objects for which men were sent into the world, to employ the mind on subjects most noble within the reach of its present powers, is certainly to lay the best claims to the honor of manhood. Many who pride themselves on being men of honor, deem it manly to neglect religion, and account it weak and womanish to yield to the tendernesses and softnesses of piety. But they turn the tables. With powers capable of manly aims but devoted to childish play, they appear to angels as one would appear to us who at

the age of fifty should busy himself in making houses in the sand. If they will not ascend to high and manly objects, it would have been better for them always to have remained children. A child is satisfied with his baubles: but they, possessed of capacities which nothing but God can fill,-which were made to be employed about the kingdom of Christ,-remain restless and uneasy with all their toys about them. If I were always to live on earth, and must be confined to its trifling objects, I solemnly declare that I would rather eternally remain a child.

III. It is true even of Christians themselves, and of the most eminent of them all, that they are only children in the present life. This is precisely the sentiment contained in the text. They speak as a child, they think as a child, and they understand as a child. They speak of divine things as a child, using expressions which no more reach the extent of the subject, than the prattling of children about the moon conveys a full idea of that luminary. They have no other language for these subjects than that of Scripture, which, being adapted to the weakness of our apprehensions, is little more than an association of images borrowed from sensible objects. In this highly figurative language, which is necessarily imperfect because our imperfect minds could understand no other, they speak of God's eyes and hands and feet,-of his repenting, -of his coming down to see what is taking place on earth,-of his fury's coming up in his face. They speak of the worship of heaven in language principally taken from the temple worship of the Jews. But when they arrive at manhood, they will use a language expressive of things as they are,- a language no longer darkened with the shadow of figures, but taken from the very light of the subjects themselves, and as luminous as truth. No childish topics will then employ their tongues. They will converse only on noble subjects with noble personages.

They will think as men. Here their conceptions are extremely crude. They conceive of God as having the figure and features of a man,-as existing in a particular place,-as growing older as ages revolve. They conceive of the intercourse of spirits as being similar to that of incarnate beings. All their conceptions of heavenly things are largely mingled with ideas borrowed from sensible objects. But when they arrive at manhood, their conceptions will be correct. They will never indeed cease to be conversant with material objects. After the resurrection they will still possess material bodies. There will be a local heaven for the accommodation of those bodies. The glorified body of Christ will be the centre of this heaven, and the point to which their finite thoughts and worship will be more particularly directed. But though limited by the finitude of their nature, their conceptions will be far more matured and perfect.

They will understand as men. In this life their understandings are feeble and contracted,-are darkened by ignorance,-are perverted by prejudice,-are liable to errors and misconstructions of the word of God. Christians here cannot agree on the plainest doctrines of divine revelation, and are split into contending sects. But in heaven their knowledge will be perfect, their prejudices and mistakes will cease, and party distinctions will be known no more. They will all see eye to eye, and be united in the most sublime and delightful views of divine truth. Here they are limited to a very imperfect knowledge of God's will, and are often pressed with doubts respecting their duty; but there all duty will be made plain. Here their views are confined to a small circle; there they will take in the universe. Here, with all the helps they enjoy, they know but little of God; there they will see as they are seen and know as they are known. If the little knowledge of God which they here possess fills them with so much delight, who can conceive the ecstasy which will arise from the clear discovery, the enlarged views, the vast knowledge of him which they will then

enjoy;-beholding the face of that glorious sun without an interposing cloud,-stretching their eyes far and wide into the substance of his uncreated light,-with visual organs undazzled by his splendor,-with souls set on fire by the blaze of his glory. In this life their minds can take in but little of the wonders of redemption, and small is their acquaintance with him who purchased them with his blood; but in heaven they will behold the Lamb in the midst of his Father's throne; their delighted eyes will wander over his glories; they will approach him and lay their crowns at his feet; they will be united to him in the tenderest communion; they will have a much clearer view of the unfathomable wonders of redemption, and with amazement and transport will trace the heights and depths of this stupendous plan. No longer limited to the hopes and anticipations of childhood, they will have arrived at the full attainment of their supreme good. No longer confined to the company of children, they will enjoy the society of the glorious army of patriarchs, prophets, apostles and martyrs. They will be united in the strictest friendship with seraphim and cherubim, and be ennobled by intercourse with these highest orders of angels. No longer limited to the low pursuits of this infant state, all their faculties will be employed in the most noble parts of the divine service. Their understanding will be occupied in searching into the character and works of God; their affections will be exercised in ardent love and gratitude; their voices will be strung to elevated praise; their wills will be exerted in choosing God and his ways; their memory will be employed in looking back to this life and collecting materials with which to erect everlasting monuments to his glory. All their powers, which were imperfect in this state of minority, will have attained their perfection: not that perfection which will exclude progress, but that which indicates a state of manhood. How vastly their powers will be enlarged, cannot now be told. Was Newton a child? Was Solomon a child? What then is a man? Could we approach the glorified spirit of the meanest saint that ever left these abodes of weakness and sin, we should be amazed at the magnitude of his powers. Perhaps we might see him-to be greater than a nation combined. And these astonishing dimensions are probably but the beginning of his growth. I stand amazed as I trace that spirit through the ascending degrees of its eternal progression. I am lost in wonder and delight as I pursue its august destinies through immortal ages, and see it stretching towards God, widening, extending, rising,- until a spirit with the present ken of Gabriel could scarcely discern it in its glorious altitude,-until a spirit with the present dimensions of Gabriel would only be as an infant to a giant doubled a thousand times;-and still it is stretching away. From the summit of that elevation suppose it to look down upon this mortal life; how contemptible, how much like the toys of childhood would all its little glories appear. While it reviews its former attachment to earth and dust, its former childish pursuits, yea its most fervent devotions, I hear it sing, "high in salvation and the realms of bliss," "When I was a child I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things."

O my brethren, destined for Immortality, raise your minds from earth and fix them on the heaven of heavens. As you march towards the New Jerusalem, let your eye be filled with the approaching glories of the place. Keep your thoughts above, where you are to spend a never ending eternity. Often contemplate the amazing destinies before you. Why those sighs and tears and low contracted griefs? Is it for the children of a king to be sad? You have reason to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. I wonder you are not constantly transported. Consider what you will be a century hence. Consider what you will be a million ages hence. I am rapt as I follow you through the ascending glories of eternity. And are you born to this? to dignity so august? to glories so unbounded? O debase not yourselves by sordid actions. Stoop not to grovelling pursuits.

Remember what you are and respect yourselves. Do nothing that you will disapprove when you review your life from the high abodes of salvation. Awaken every sleeping faculty and press towards the glorious mark. You are acting for eternity, and immortality is the prize. Drive on your lagging powers; quicken your tardy progress; "till you all come, in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Amen.

Whom Have I in Heaven but Thee?

Whom Have I in Heaven but Thee? by Edward Griffin "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." Psalms 73:25. This Psalm was composed by Asaph, one of the three chief singers whom David had appointed in the house of God. The good man had experienced a severe trial from the infirmities of his own heart; which trial, together with the manner in which he was relieved, is described in this beautiful Psalm. He had been "envious at the foolish when" he "saw the prosperity of the wicked," and had indulged in unworthy complaints against divine providence. "They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men. Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than heart could wish.-Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain and washed my hands in innocency; for all the day long have I been plagued and chastened every morning." This temper of uneasiness and distrust arose so high, that in a retrospect upon it he acknowledges, "My feet were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipped.-So foolish was I and ignorant; I was as a beast before thee." The manner in which he obtained relief from this agitation, was by repairing to the sanctuary of God, where the light of divine revelation shone. Here he discovered, as through a window which opened into eternity, the awful end to which the wicked with all their prosperity were hastening. Here also he learned the final rewards of the righteous, and saw the mysterious inequalities of divine providence cleared up. The glory of God's faithfulness and truth so opened on his soul, and the comparative emptiness of all earthly things, that with more than recovered spirits he exclaimed, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." My object will be, in the first place, to explain more fully how we are taught to feel by this example of Asaph,-how such a temper will operate and what effects it will produce; and in the second place, to suggest some reasons which urge to such a temper.

I. I am to explain more fully how we are taught to feel by this example of Asaph,-how such a temper will operate and what effects it will produce. The Psalmist in these words expressed supreme delight in God as his all sufficient and only portion. "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" The only heaven I wish above is but to see thy face. Let others form confused ideas of the upper world, and desire it as a place where something is to be enjoyed, they know not what: but I know what a heaven I desire. Could I ascend to the highest heavens and find the presence of my God withdrawn, it would be no heaven for me. The only reason I pant to ascend above the sun and all these ruinable worlds, is that I may bask in the sunshine of his smiles, and forever behold the source of light without one envious cloud between. Let me but sit at his feet and gaze upon his lovely face, and cry, with unutterable wonder and gratitude, "My Lord and my God," and I ask no more. Let me but take some humble station in his glorious kingdom, where I may sit and read his name, where I may view his infinite happiness and glory and see his beloved kingdom blest, and my soul will be filled.

" And there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." How is this? Was it then a matter of indifference to Asaph whether his friends lived or died,-whether he enjoyed the comforts of life or

perished with hunger? This was not literally and precisely his meaning. But what he intended may, I conclude, be summed up in the following ideas. First, that there was nothing among all the charms of earth which could prevent him from wishing to depart and be with the Lord. Secondly, while continuing on earth, he desired nothing besides God in a comparative sense. His soul was at that moment so filled with the supreme excellence and glory of Jehovah, that all earthly things were put out of view. Thirdly, he desired nothing besides God in that he coveted nothing which he considered distinct from the emanations of God. Did he desire food and raiment and friends? He desired them chiefly as divine goodness expressed, as God existing in his outward bounty.

Such a temper of supreme delight in God will operate in unreserved and universal submission to divine providence. While God is more beloved than all other objects, the withholding or removal of every thing besides him will not awaken a spirit of unsubmission and rebellion.

While the Christian has such supreme delight in God, he will not be inordinately leaning on friends or wealth or any worldly object for enjoyment. No high expectations will be formed except those which centre in the supreme good. Lightly valuing the things of time and sense, he will scorn the restless pursuits and unsatisfied desires of the covetous; and holding the commands of God in supreme veneration, he will practice deeds of liberal charity.

Sensible that prosperity gives and adversity takes away only those things which are least desirable, neither by prosperity nor adversity will he be greatly moved. Ever assured that God, the supreme good, is safe, he will dismiss all anxieties respecting future changes, and come what will, he will "rejoice evermore." Calmly resigning the management of all affairs into hands dearer than his own, he passes his days in unruffled serenity, and knows not the distrusts of jealousy nor the uneasiness of unbelief. Having a greater regard for the divine will than for any earthly comfort which that will can bestow, he has learned "both how to abound and to suffer need," and "in whatsoever state" he is, "therewith to be content." The result of this supreme love to God will be faith, trust, self-denial, obedience, and an unreserved consecration of all that we are and have to him, to be disposed of according to his pleasure, and to be employed in his service, how and when and where he is pleased to appoint.

II. I am to suggest some reasons which urge to such a temper. The infinitely wise and benevolent God is worthy to be the object of our supreme delight. There is more in him to be desired and to be rejoiced in than in all created beings and things. The whole creation has drawn all its glories from him. And can it be supposed that he has imparted more beauty and excellence than he possesses? When our eyes rove abroad over the charming scenes of nature, and traverse the wonders which shine in the heavenly orbs, we may well exclaim with the half-inspired Milton, "How wondrous fair! Thyself how wondrous then!" In God there is every thing which can satisfy and transport the immortal mind. What is the world to him; its pomp, its splendors, "and its nonsense all?" What are the treasures of India and all the glories of Greece and Rome, compared with the fruition of that God whose smiles fill heaven and earth with gladness? Possessed of him, the imprisoned beggar, with all his griefs, is rich and happy; devoid of him, kings and emperors are poor and wretched. Let every earthly comfort depart, yet while we can enjoy the immortal source of blessedness, we are blessed still, we are blest indeed. While walking out with Isaac to meditate at the evening tide,-while beholding that glory which Moses saw on Horeb and on Pisgah,- while worshipping him whose faithfulness and truth were seen by Abraham on Moriah, and whose

glories appeared to John in Patmos,-while overcome with the magnificent majesty which rushed on the view of Habakkuk,-while melting away in the sweet ecstasies of David in sight of the mercy and faithfulness of his heavenly Father,-while triumphing in him who was announced by the songs of Bethlehem and by the joys of Simeon's bursting heart,-while from our streaming eyes we pour forth gratitude to the Sufferer of Gethsemane and Golgotha, and ascend to heaven with him who ascended from Olivet,-O how poor and worthless do all mortal things appear. The claims of God to our supreme affection are further supported by his exceeding great and unnumbered mercies. He is the God of all our revivals, of all our deliverances, and of all our comforts; the God of our fathers and the God of our children. Innumerable mercies, distinguishing us from most of our fellow men, mercies affecting to angels,-have filled our lives. He supported us in our infancy, he led us through all the windings of our youth; his watchful eye has continually been upon us in riper years. Through all our days he has nourished and brought us up as children. He has been with us in six yea and in seven troubles, and brought relief to our distresses when every other helper failed. From countless dangers has he delivered us. He sent his Son from his bosom to bear our sins in his own body on the tree. From what an abyss of pollution and wretchedness have some of us been raised by his pardoning love. He has bestowed upon us the invaluable gifts of his word and ordinances. By his unspeakable grace we have enjoyed the sight of his word revived,-sinners plucked as brands from the burning, and brought to unite their young hosannas with the praises and joys of their fathers. Where shall we end the enumeration? More numerous are his mercies than the stars which look out of heaven. Has the world, have any of our friends, has all creation done for us what our God has done? Surely if kindness and mercy can engage our hearts, we lie under the most pressing obligations to say from our very souls! "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." From the truth and faithfulness of our divine Benefactor, we have full assurance that if we get divorced from all our idols and wed ourselves to him alone in holy trust and service, he will make ample provision for our support and comfort,-he will abundantly recompense our fidelity and renunciation of the world. We have no occasion to apply to any other comforter, to any other protector, to any other guide, to any other portion. He will be to us such a portion as will fill and satisfy our souls.

He will be all that we need and all we desire. We shall be blest beyond all previous conception. We shall be full; can need no more and can hold no more.

It is one of the lamentable marks of human weakness that men are so habituated to recede from the eternal centre of rest and to wander abroad in quest of enjoyment. Dependence is withdrawn from God and placed on other objects, which may not be obtained, or if obtained are ever liable to be lost again. The mind, thus torn from its centre and following deceitful meteors, rambles, it knows not whither,-is ever pained with uncertainty and trembling with dubious fears lest the objects in which centre all its desires should be lost. In proportion as men thus place their hopes in the creature, they find themselves the prey of restlessness and misery. To forsake the fountain of living waters for broken cisterns, is a sure prelude to disappointment and vexation. Ah when will we be wise? When will we dismiss all our vain dependencies and make God our only rest and portion? When will we thus obtain that happiness which we have long sought in vain? Could we look with indifference on all the shifting scenes beneath the sun, on prosperity and adversity, on loss and gain, and make the sincere appeal, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee," how happy might we be even in this vale of tears.

Knowing the claims which he had to our supreme affection, God has asserted those claims in his holy word, and strictly commanded us to love him with all the heart, and in comparison with him to hate father and mother, wife and children, and even life itself. And as he is infinitely the greatest and best of beings, this supreme regard to him is his due. It is perfectly right and fit, and what we owe to him, to make him the object of our supreme delight to rejoice that he holds the throne, to resign ourselves with all our interests to his disposal, to feel that we have enough and abound while possessing him, even though every thing else be taken away, and under all our trials and disappointments, to be quiet as a child that is weaned of its mother. It is infinitely unreasonable to set up any private interest in opposition to the interest of the universe,-the interest and wishes of God and his kingdom. Of what consequence is it for infinite wisdom and love to sit upon the throne if they may not govern the world? What does it signify for us to proclaim our joy that the world is under divine direction, if we will not submit and consent to be governed?

Such supreme delight in God and his government had Enoch and Noah, and Abraham and Moses, and David and Daniel and Paul. Not one of them could receive the divine approbation and enter into rest on easier terms. And on no easier terms can we enjoy the friendship and protection of Asaph's God in the present life; on no easier terms can we enter the portals of the heavenly city. But the sure reward of thus choosing him for our portion, will be the unfailing friendship and enjoyment of him in the present life, and when all these perishable worlds shall be blended in one common grave. Then shall they who have chosen him in preference to all others be everlastingly united to their glorious centre, and shall plunge into that ocean of glory which they have chosen for their all, and lose themselves in him. Then shall they know how wise their choice who prefer the immortal God to the husks that were made for the flames. Then with what hearty sincerity and bursting joy will these eternal notes go round, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee."

Let this assembly pause for a moment, while each one solemnly inquires with himself whether he has chosen the God of Asaph for his only portion and supreme delight, or whether his affections and hopes still linger among the vanities of this lower world. Do our souls stand ready, at the word of God, to break away from every scene of this enchanted ground, and leaving the world behind, to soar to regions from which all worldly things are forever excluded? Do we, like Simeon and Paul, pant to ascend to the full possession of the supreme good? Why do we wish for heaven? Is it that we may live forever at home with our God, and after a long and tedious separation, be forever united to the centre of our souls? Is it this, or is it some other heaven which is the object of our imagination and desire? And can we sincerely appeal to the Searcher of hearts, "There is none upon earth that I desire besides thee?" Have we a solemn conviction that we have chosen him for our supreme good and portion? Or do we still remain miserably encumbered with the lumber of earthly objects,-wretchedly ignorant of the Source of our being, -encompassed with darkness which has known no morning,-wickedly and fatally straying from the only source of happiness,-vagrants in the region of confusion, night, and misery? Ah wretched souls, whither do ye wander? Why prefer the night of chaos to the glories of the uncreated sun? Why flee from the fountain of happiness and love in pursuit of wretchedness and eternal war? Where can such bliss be found as you have left behind? Wherefore do you speed your course from the Author of your being as though all misery lived with him? Whither would you hurry in the wildness of your distraction? O return, return. Seek no longer for happiness in shunning its only source. O return,

return. Let planets break loose from the attractions of the sun, and wander wildly and without order into the regions of night; but let not immortal souls break away from the attractions of the eternal Sun, to wander in wild and dark vagaries, in wretched confusion and ruinous disorder to all eternity. O return, while return is possible, to the substance and fountain of light and blessedness. Let the attractions of divine love draw you nearer and nearer, until you shall fall into the glorious Sun, and lose yourselves to all eternity in this beatific union. Renounce your alliance with worms and dust, sustain a glorious resurrection from the dead, and learn to say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." The subject will apply itself to backsliding Christians. Ah why should they who have seen his glory and known his love, and seen the world eclipsed by his charms, so often forsake the fountain of living waters for broken cisterns? Why should that which they have known to be the supreme good, be left for things which they know cannot profit? In better hours you have avouched the Lord Jehovah to be your God and portion: you have vowed eternal fealty and subjection to him. Your oath is recorded in the rolls of heaven. Why then violate your promises thus attested, and forsake the source of happiness for comfort which you know is no where else to be found? Awake from these enchanted slumbers. Pursue no longer the unnatural course which carries you from your life and from the centre of yourselves. And what can you find abroad to allure you from home? Precisely what the dove found on leaving the ark,-no place on which to rest the sole of her foot. May you, like her, soon grow weary of the damp and cheerless regions with out, and return on lagging pinions, and with mourning notes plead for an extended arm to take you in. Consider also from what mercies you have fled, and through what obligations you have broken away: and then, with the melting griefs of the Psalmist, give it in charge to yourselves, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." In the last place, the subject addresses itself to those who have deliberately and heartily made choice of the supreme good, and who have never, by the mists of earth or hell, lost sight of the good they have chosen. Hail, happy souls! All hail, ye unrivaled few! From my heart I give you joy. Ye have found the pearl of great price. Ye have found that treasure which worlds might be sold in vain to purchase. Accept our congratulations.- Accept the congratulations of angels. Let your souls arise and shout for joy; for all the treasures of the universe are yours. The infinite God, with all that he possesses, is made over to you by a covenant well "ordered in all things and sure." Let your pious hearts be comforted under the loss of all terrestrial vanities. Let them shout for joy under all trials and crosses. For under the loss of all things, you possess all things still. The immortal God is yours; and in him you have all and need no more. Be not disheartened at the trials and conflicts in which you may be involved. Soon will you emerge from them all, and like the sun breaking from a cloud, forever shine forth in the kingdom of your Father. It is in our heart to bid you God speed, and encourage you to go on and renew your wise and virtuous choice of the God of all benignity and blessedness. Be emboldened to take a larger and still larger portion of the supreme good. God has said "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it." Be satisfied with this portion, and murmur not though sinners take the rest. Never indulge vain regrets for the objects you have left behind. "Delight" yourselves more and more "in the Lord," and "He will (more and more) give you the desires of your heart." And whatever allurements try to draw you away, whatever terrors arise in your course, whatever crosses you may have to encounter, never suffer yourselves to be unsettled from the habit of hourly saying, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." Amen.

Your Heart His Target

Your Heart His Target by Edward Griffin (original title: Arrows Sharp in the Heart of Enemies)
"Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies; the peoples fall under you." Psalms 45:5

While tyrants are wading to power through the blood of slaughtered armies, and marching to the music of a nation's groans, there is a Conqueror of a far different sort. He too has his arrows and his two-edged sword, and "goes forth conquering and to conquer"; but his track is not marked with desolation and woe. His coming is not proclaimed by the cries of widows and orphans. Mercy is his banner, and with him marches salvation. He wounds only to heal, and kills only to make alive. "On his head" are "many crowns," and his name is called, "The Word of God." When the Gospel was sent forth, then this glorious Conqueror girded his sword upon his thigh, according to the prayer in verses 3 and 4 of this Psalm: "Gird Your sword upon your thigh, O Mighty One, with your glory and your majesty. And in your majesty ride prosperously because of truth, humility, and righteousness; and your right hand shall teach you awesome things." This is a devout prayer for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom in all the fullness of its blessings. Although the idea of severity to enemies may be included, and a full view of the Conqueror as here arrayed may show us a Monarch marching into a rebellious province, reducing some to obedience and destroying others, yet the idea of mercy is much stronger. Although the Gospel, which is the grand weapon employed, may be "set for the fall" as well as "rising of many," and may prove a "savor of death unto death," yet who does not know that its leading feature is mercy? To this second view of the subject I shall confine my attention, and do my best to celebrate the gracious triumphs of our King. In order to show this, I will:

I. Examine the process of his individual conquests.

II. Contemplate the general march of the Conqueror.

I. I shall examine the process of his individual conquests.

"Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies," (that is, the enemies of your kingdom,) whereby "The peoples fall under You."—fall prostrate at your feet after the manner of vanquished foes. Several ideas are included in these words. which, followed out in their proper order, will lead to a right understanding of these individual conquests.

1. It is plainly implied that the King marches against none but enemies. This clearly shows us the earlier character of all who are subdued, and of course the natural character of all mankind. The text does not limit its view to the conquest of thieves and robbers: it looks at the general extension of the Redeemer's kingdom. It does not limit its view to the reduction of pagans, unless all besides pagans are real subjects of his kingdom and heartily obedient to his laws. If you can find any in Christendom, any even among the baptized, who do not submit to his laws in heart as well as in practice, (for the heart is included in his requirements,) you find those who, as really as pagans, have yet to be reduced to subjection to his empire. And all who need to be thus reduced, are his

enemies according to the text. If then you can find any with the Bible in their hands, who have not truly repented and forsaken their sins, who have not exercised a saving faith in Christ, who do not live a life of prayer, who have not heartily renounced the world, who do not love God supremely, who do not possess the spirit of martyrs, (for all these are essentially characteristic of his subjects,) you find those who still remain the enemies of Christ. "You are My friends if you do whatever I command you." But: "he who is not with me is against me." In a word, all who are yet to be brought into the kingdom of Christ, that is, all the world except real Christians, are his enemies.

2. The conquering of these enemies is the work of Christ. The history of all genuine conversions is written in these words: "Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies; The peoples fall under you." Every new subject brought into his kingdom is a trophy of his conquering power. His empire is extended only by conquest. Allow that the text has reference to the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, and all this follows with irresistible certainty.

3. We are now prepared to examine the process by which these conquests are made. The first question is, What are these arrows by which the enemies are shot through? Doubtless they are the same with the sword mentioned in a preceding verse. Now the sword of Christ is represented as proceeding out of his mouth; and long ago he said by a prophet, "He has made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand he has hidden me, and made me a polished shaft" "The sword of the Spirit" is expressly said to be "the word of God"; and we are told that "The word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." No doubt then that the arrows which he pierces us are the truths of his word. This piercing is accomplished by the working of his Spirit, whose special work is to "convict the world of sin and righteousness and of judgment." In an hour when the mind is thoughtless and wandering upon the world, it is made to feel one of these truths, and then another, and another still, with increasing and decreasing power. The precise order is not the same in every case; but sooner or later the same truths get into every mind thus affected. The sinner is made to feel, to a degree unknown before, that there is a God "who is angry with the wicked every day"; that he himself is the creation of God sent into the world to serve that God; that he has wickedly neglected the work; that he has violated the laws of God in numberless instances, in thought, word, and deed; that for his sins he is justly condemned to eternal death. After seeing these things he cannot but be deeply affected and dismayed. The careless world may well pronounce him mad: but is he really insane? Is it madness to believe the truths of God? The things which he sees and feels are everlasting truths; and the only difference between his present and former state is, that then he did not realise the truth, now he does. Formerly he lived in unbelief, like the rest of a careless world, heedless of the things which God has spoken; now he believes them. Which is the real madman, one who can refuse to believe infinite truths, and rush on to eternity unmindful of the terrible declarations of God respecting the world he lives in, or he who views things as they are?

It is a fashionable opinion among the heedless, that men submit to the empire of Christ in a calm manner, without any distress or ferment; that as religion is a pleasant service, all gloom at the entrance upon it must indicate a morbid state of the imagination. But this does not agree with the statement of the text. The heart of a rebel will be transfixed with arrows: and if arrows enter a heart there must be pain. And to look at the thing in its own light, how can a man wake up and find himself an enemy to God and under condemnation, and not be distressed? How can the sins of

his life be laid open to his sight without filling him with confusion and anguish? How can "the wrath of God," which "is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness," be applied to him without producing trembling and dread? You say, he ought to trust in the mercies of God in Christ: and so he will as soon as he has fully seen his need and humbled himself for his sins. But are there no pains of sickness to be felt before he will apply to the physician? Is there no view of ruin before he will prize the grace which came "to save that which was lost?" —before he will flee to the refuge provided? Are there no bitter tears of repentance before he can be pardoned? And is it necessary to suppose that all these realizations occur in a single moment? Is it not more consistent with the nature of the human mind, with facts recorded in Scripture, and with the testimony of daily experience, to suppose that these new understandings must pass in succession, and often in slow succession? And that the mind, hard and obstinate as it is, must ordinarily linger for a considerable time under a sense of guilt and ruin before it will embrace a Saviour? And is it not reasonable to suppose that one who has been so deep in guilt, will be held off a while, (like Miriam who was left to "be ashamed seven days,") before he is admitted to the embraces of pardoning love? It is perfectly reasonable and Scriptural and agrees with personal experience, that a sinner should remain a while in darkness and distress before he tastes the sweetness of forgiving mercy. And there are too many reasons to fear that those who condemn these temporary glooms, and find no difficulty in trusting at once on divine mercy without a conflict or a pain, have never seen their need of mercy and do in fact rely rather on the general clemency of God to which they feel themselves justly entitled. But our text carries the idea farther. I have said, if arrows enter a heart there must be pain; I now add, there must be death; and if life succeeds, it must be by a resurrection. By these arrows the heart of Paul was pierced on the plains of Damascus; and he himself tells us the effect: "When the commandment came, sin revived and I died." The majesty and purity of God opened to his sight; the strictness and extent of the divine law stood before him; his own sins rolled upon him like a dark cloud of thunder; he saw himself to be utterly condemned, utterly unable to atone for one sin, utterly ruined, helpless, and hopeless. Then it was that he died to all hope of justification by the law,—all hope of helping himself,—and pronounced himself a dead man. Then, and not till then, he lifted an eye to the Saviour,—lifted it from the bottom of the grave, and rose to a new life of hope,—rose to eternal life in Jesus Christ. The work which the Saviour came to accomplish was nothing less than to raise the dead. He did not come to remodel an old life, but to raise men from their graves. He came to be, in every sense, "the resurrection and the life." His purpose was to raise to spiritual life the "dead in trespasses and sins," to raise to the life of hope and to eternal life those who had seen themselves to be dead in the sentence of the law, and had died to all hope of helping themselves. Finally he will raise the body from the grave. Every part of his work is a resurrection.

How wonderful is the literal truth behind the figurative language of our text! This glorious King and Conqueror, finding a rebel in arms against him, thrusts him through with the arrows of truth, fills him with the anguish of conviction, lays him dead at his feet, and then raises him to the life of hope and to life eternal in himself. This single figure presents the whole process of supernatural conviction and conversion, and proves the reality of such a work.

Here I pause, and ask my hearers whether they have ever experienced such a change. If you have not, you have no part in Christ. This is precisely the change intended by the Saviour himself when he said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom

of God." If you have not felt the arrows of truth penetrating your hearts, filling you with remorse and anguish and repentance, showing you the justice of your condemnation, causing you to die to all hope of thinking good of yourselves before God, leading you to look up from your graves to the Saviour of sinners, and raising you to a new life in him; you may be moral and charitable to the poor, but you have no part in Christ. You still lie under condemnation, and dying thus, must sink into eternal woe. Have you then, my dear hearers, ever felt those arrows penetrating your souls, and felt them extracted by him who applied the balm of Gilead? How beautifully is this process described by the tender poet Cowper!

"I was a stricken deer that left the herd long since: with many an arrow deeply pierced my panting side was charged, when I withdrew to seek a tranquil death in distant shades.

There was I found by One who had himself been hurt by the archers. In his side he bore, and in his hands and feet the cruel scars, With gentle force extracting the darts, he drew them forth, and healed and bade me live."

II. Let us now contemplate the general march of this divine Conqueror. The great work of subduing a rebellious race is taken into his own hands;—a glorious truth, which, though offensive to wicked men, lays the only foundation of human hope. He made a promise to undertake this wonderful campaign when there was nothing to require him, no one to speak of our miseries, no one to plead in our behalf. He undertook it from no desire of fame, with no desire for reward but the pleasure of relieving the wretched and bestowing on prostrate rebels freedom and life. He undertook it knowing full well the perils of the war and the many pains and scars it would cost him. The scene of the battle was not to be a single district or kingdom, but a world. The interest at stake was the dearest interest of God and his creation. The warring sides were the strongest powers in the universe. The army collected to oppose this mighty King made up of all the inhabitants of two worlds was the greatest host that ever was marshaled since time began. The great army of Xerxes was a platoon compared to this. Against such an immeasurable host, who for ages had been entrenching themselves throughout the world, in every temple, in every school, behind every throne, in every heart, he went forth single-handed. He girded his sword upon his thigh, he mounted the chariot of his Gospel, and marched directly into the heart of Satan's empire. Wherever he came he conquered. At his approach devils fled, their temples and altars fell, their oracles grew dumb. The Roman empire, the chief seat of Satan's visible kingdom, shook to its center, and afterwards opened to the Conqueror and fell prostrate at his feet. Wounds he carried, but the very blood he shed dissolved the strongest hold of Satan, the heart of man. He sent forth his arrows and three thousand wore pricked in the heart at once. He marched through the nations, breaking down the prisons which Satan had reared to confine his wretched captives. Hundreds of millions who had been confined in dungeons from their birth, were released from their chains and brought forth to joyous light. Wherever he came freedom and joy sprung up around him. He marched down the ages, scattering his arrows from his quiver and bringing his enemies to his feet.

He still rides today through the nations "conquering and to conquer." His arrows never miss their mark. No trumpet is sounded before him: his march is silent and unobserved by the world, but it is uninterrupted still. While the world dream that he has retired from the earth, he is extending his conquests every hour. It is the chief employment for which he lives. All the piety of the present generation in the four quarters of the globe, is the fruit of his recent conquests. Every saint on

earth is a vanquished rebel, whose heart was once pierced by the shafts of his quiver. God speed thee, thou glorious Conqueror! Go on and prosper. "And in Your majesty ride prosperously because of truth, humility, and righteousness" and may the praises of millions ready to perish come before you. His signs of victory are not desolated countries, but prisoners set free, souls delivered from the destroyer, sighs and groans comforted, and the sting of death removed. These are his trophies; these are his spoils. The high minded spirit of medieval legend celebrated the feats of knights uninterested in their own gain, who roamed the kingdoms, supposedly to deliver oppressed females from enchanted castles or from the grasp of giants and monsters. But how much more generous and kind a Deliverer is here,—marching through the nations and rescuing the oppressed and those that have no helper, from the tyranny of Satan. "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, Or the captives of the righteous be delivered? But thus says the LORD: Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, And the prey of the terrible be delivered." O the divine compassion of this Godlike advance! Again we say, the Almighty God speed thee, thou glorious Conqueror! We will follow the wheels of his triumphal chariot, and shout as we go, "Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord" to redeem a wretched race: "Hosanna in the highest."

How many millions has this high-minded King subdued, from Abel to the present day? How many even of us? How many of our dear children and friends? Has not some of us seen a parent or a brother delivered from eternal slavery and ruin? Has never a parent among us seen a child set free from bondage and restored to his right mind? In the hour when that parent stood with his child to thank his Deliverer, did he not say again, "Hosanna to the Son of David: blessed is he that comes" to save our children from eternal death? But the most glorious triumphs of this divine Conqueror are reserved for ages yet to come, which the voice of prophecy and the signs of the times declare to be now at the door. His hand is brushing away the kingdom of religious authority and dropping spiritual Babylon like a millstone into the mighty deep. His shafts will shortly pierce the curtain that hides from the seed of Abraham the glories of their Messiah; and some of you, I trust, will live to see that long lost race restored to the land of their fathers. His hand will break the Muslim powers, when they assemble on the mountains of Israel to disinherit the restored tribes, and will thus put a final end to that delusion which has long enchained that part of the human race. His bow will bring down many nations which are now kneeling to gods of wood and stone. His arrows will pierce the priests of Hinduism and Buddhism, and lay the dervishes of Turkey at his feet. They will sing his triumphs on the banks of the Ganges and in the deserts of Sahara. They will celebrate his victories on the frozen beach of Kamchatka and in the sultry regions of Congo and Peru. The mosques of Mecca and the pagodas of Hindustan shall be converted into temples of the living God: and the enemy who deceived the whole world, ejected from all his dominions on earth, shall be confined to his prison for a thousand years. For a thousand years shall he who hung on Calvary reign over this restored world, with all his enemies under his feet, with none to question his messianic office, with none to deny his godhead. At the end of this period he will triumph once more over "Gog and Magog"; and then, as the last act of his dominion on earth, will judge the world. And when he shall have committed all his enemies to prison, and shall be returning, at the head of his redeemed Church, towards heaven's gate,—going home from all his wars and victories, covered with scars and honors,—how will they shout his triumphs as they ascend: "Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, The LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall

come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory." And when they have conducted him to his throne, they will sing out the eternal strain "like the sound of many waters": voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!" And the whole sanctified creation will send forth the loud response: "Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!" My dear hearers, fall down at the feet of this divine Conqueror, and submit to his empire, and risk your eternal all upon his mediation. If you refuse, know you that he has other arrows with which to reach your heart. "God shall shoot at [you] with an arrow; suddenly shall [you] be wounded." They that will not have this King to reign over them, shall be brought forth and slain before him. He will reign till all his enemies are made his footstool. His first advent, with all the kindness which attended it, was foretold in terms terrible to the wicked. "And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire." And that coming in his kingdom which is yet future, is predicted in language equally alarming. "Who is this who comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, this One who is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength?; 'I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save.' Why is Your apparel red, And Your garments like one who treads in the winepress? 'I have trodden the winepress alone, And from the peoples no one was with Me. For I have trodden them in My anger, And trampled them in My fury; Their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, And I have stained all My robes. For the day of vengeance is in My heart, And the year of My redeemed has come.'" Terrible things are to be accomplished upon the wicked, which will cause men's hearts to fail for fear. "The kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, [will hide] themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and [say] to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?'"

Therefore my friends, seek the arrows of his love before the time comes for the arrows of his wrath. Run to the shelter of the Savior before you wish for the shelter of the rocks. May you be a trophy of his grace and rejoice in the day of his coming. Amen.

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