

# SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

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THE VOICE OF TRUTH.

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## A Sermon

PREACHED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 20TH, 1859, BY  
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AT THE SURREY TABERNACLE, BOROUGH ROAD.

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"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Revelation iii. 20.

WE shall not this morning attempt to go all through our text. There is one main idea that will reign all through our discourse this morning; and that will be *the voice of the Saviour to the Church*, as here indicated, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear *my voice*." It is the voice itself then, that which is implied by the voice, that will occupy this morning the whole time we have to speak of these great matters. Now the voice of the Lord to this church is three-fold, previously to his coming to the language of our text. And when I say three-fold, I refer to what I shall this morning, the Lord enabling me, discourse upon—his voice to the church, as that voice is expressive of the respects in which he is to be received; and as I go on describing what is meant by this voice, I have not any doubt in my own mind but those of you that know the Lord will be comforted by the thought that you do hear his voice, that you have heard his voice; that you do open the door; that is, that you do receive him, that he has somewhat had fellowship with you, and that you have somewhat had fellowship with him. And those of you that know not the Lord, may the Lord open your eyes this morning, and give you to see and to feel that you have never yet really and truly received him. We observe then at once that his voice is threefold; first, *what he is*; second, *the counsel that he gives*; and third, *the rebukes and chastenings which he ministers*.

I. Now the first thing then is that of **WHAT HE IS**. He comes to this church as "The Amen, the Faithful and the True Witness." These words describe what he is; and he is to be heard in what he is, and he is to be received in what he is; received not luke-warmly, but to be received affectionately, earnestly, supremely; received as that, in a word, for which it is well worth our while, if called upon so to do, to reject every thing else, to make room for this wondrous Person, the Lord Jesus Christ. First then, in  
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what he is, "He is the Amen, the Faithful and the True Witness; the beginning of the creation of God." What shall we understand by his being the Amen? for be it remembered that whatever the Saviour is as presented to this church will at once give you to understand that towards which the people were lukewarm. Therefore, however lukewarm you may be towards other things, if your heart be right in this matter, then I am sure every thing else desirable will follow in its place. First, then he is the Amen. Now the amen means *the conclusion of a matter*; and so the Lord Jesus Christ is revealed as the conclusion of things. He is in the first place the conclusion of God's law, the precept of the law; he has gone to the end of it; he is the conclusion of it. And the word *amen* signifies also *certainty*; and hence the Saviour uses this word sometimes repetitively; and this word is translated by the word *verily*; "Verily, verily;" the original is, "Amen, amen;" therefore it signifies certainty, so there is the certainty of Christ's righteousness. Thus then the Lord Jesus Christ is to be received as the conclusion, the end of the law, and in the certainty of his righteousness. And *amen* also signifies *approbation*. - And so the sinner that has found out that he has no righteousness of his own most heartily approves of the righteousness of Jesus Christ; and that sinner will say to himself, oh how sweet the thought that all my unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God; and that all my unrighteousnesses put together cannot make me unrighteous before God; Christ's righteousness is the end of the law; and there is certainty in it; and there is sweet approbation of it; the soul heartily approves of it. And the word *amen* signifies also *satisfaction*; and so such an one is well satisfied with what Jesus Christ has done; and God the Father is well satisfied; and it is really a very pleasant thing for our satisfaction to rest just where his satisfaction rests. This is one point then to which the Laodiceans were very cold. I solemnly declare and I say it I hope righteously, that ever since I have known the Lord, with all the cold feelings I have had, with all the lukewarmness I have had, I can scarcely recollect the time when I have felt cold towards the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Amen, then; he is the conclusion of the law, and he is the certainty of justification; and therefore he has our approbation; and we have here our satisfaction; we are perfectly satisfied with it, and therefore never seek any other; but cleave to the Lord. And then, mark, it is not a mere transitory satisfaction; it is not a passing satisfaction for a moment; but it is an everlasting satisfaction. Here it is the soul will find eternal satisfaction; because here, by this righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord our God is a God of peace for ever; and who can get weary of a living peace? Get weary of a dull, uninteresting peace we may; but get weary of that living peace that we have by the living righteousness of Christ, by his living name, and by the living God, in which we are to dwell to eternity, get weary of that we never shall. Again, I scarcely need say here, for it is implied in what I have already said, he is also the Amen in that he is the conclusion of sin; he has ended sin; it is gone; the penalty of it is gone. All you want, is the Holy Spirit to bring home into your soul the Divine persuasion that Jesus Christ hath put away sin for you. The custom of the present day is to say, Jesus Christ hath died; come and take the benefit of it; come at once. But all this is mockery; all this is awful trifling; all this is contrary to God's holy Word; and contrary to the experience of the people of God; and I will never believe that the Holy Spirit teaches a poor sinner his inability to come to Christ,

and then teaches the minister to contradict that, and tell the man he can come to Christ, I never believe that the Holy Spirit of God is the author of these two opposite sentiments. And so if you are brought to feel your need of Christ as the end of sin, then the great question must remain undecided as to whether he is the end of sin for you or not until the Holy Spirit bring the word home with power, and give you to enjoy a little of the pardoning mercy of God; then you will be able to say, Amen; for Christ, as the Amen, the end of sin, will be received into your soul. Then, again, the word Amen we have said, signifies certainty; and so here is a certainty in this end of sin. Under the old covenant, a man might turn away by reformation from his wickedness, and live consistently, and the result would be, he would enjoy the temporal benefit of his righteousness, according to the order of that covenant; but then if the next day he fell away from that righteousness, and did what was wrong, he would lose all he had gained by his righteousness. That was the order and nature of that covenant; so that there was no certainty about it; it all floated about upon conditionality. But here in this covenant, in Christ Jesus, there is a certainty about it; sin is ended, and ended for ever; it is gone; there is nothing that ever was or ever can be done by the people of God that can bring a single fault before the eternal God to their charge; Christ has ended it with eternal certainty; the rising up of a single fault at the bar of God against them is just a literal impossibility; because such a thing would bear witness that Christ hath not done what the Scriptures declare he hath done; that Christ hath not done what the Holy Ghost declares he hath done; that Christ hath not done what the saints in all ages have realised he has done; and therefore it is, then, that this precious faith in Christ Jesus giveth us the victory. Here then is the Amen, the conclusion, and the certainty, and the approbation. You cannot say Amen conscientiously to a thing unless you approve it: and so here is the approbation. And the Saviour meets us all; comes down to us, I had almost said, as low as he can come; he says, "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me." Art thou, my hearer, offended with this great matter of Christ being the Amen, the conclusion, the certainty? Nay, if thou knowest that thou art carnal, sold under sin, thou wilt give thy hearty amen to what Christ has done. Then it signifies also satisfaction; and so whatever injury sin has done, Christ has repaired that injury, I mean in relation to his people; have the people set God's law aside? Then Christ hath set that right. Has sin mortalized the people? Then Christ has immortalized them. Has sin made the people corrupt? Christ shall make them incorrupt. Has sin made the people evil? Christ makes them good. Has sin made the people unrighteous? Christ makes them righteous. Has sin made them unholy? Christ makes them holy. Has sin made them enemies? Christ makes them friends, reconciles them to God. Has sin put them afar off? Christ brings them nigh. Has sin made them despise the Almighty? Christ brings them to revere the Lord, honour the Lord, and worship the Lord. Again, the Lord Jesus Christ is also the conclusion, as the Apostle nicely argues in Hebrews ix., of the new testament; that is, the new covenant; God's testamentary will,—“Where a testament is, there must also of a necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead; otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth;” and if the will be legal while the testator liveth, then the death of the testator confirms the will. So the Lord our God made a will, and that will was a legal will; it was a will that made, as we have seen,

provision for law, and justice, and holiness; and Jesus Christ has confirmed the will, the covenant is confirmed, not anything to be added to it, nor anything to be taken from it; and the business of the blessed Spirit now is to minister this covenant, to open this testamentary will of the blessed God. Thus, then, the people were cold, or at least lukewarm, towards the Saviour in this respect of his being the Amen. I am sure it is a character in which every child of God glories. Oh, what a blessed thought that whatever may be our state of mind, the Spirit just brings in a word from Calvary's cross; your conscience may be as guilty as the devil, and your mind as dark as midnight, and your soul shut up and encased as in a thousand iron bars, and chained with a thousand chains, and you may be almost sinking into absolute despair; the Eternal Spirit brings in a word of what Christ has done,—swallows up the whole, brings the soul out into life, and light, and liberty, and peace, and all is blessedness, and all is well. But than these Laodiceans generally, as a body, did not know their need of this, without this Amen they said they were rich. What sort of a treasure could it be that would enrich them without this Amen? They said that they were rich, and increased with goods; they were free-will goods, not free-grace goods, you may depend upon it; the Lord would not have found fault with them if they had been free-grace goods; they were duty-faith goods; they thought they needed nothing, while in reality they needed everything. That is the character of the Saviour, then, in which his voice is to be heard—the Amen.

Again, he is the faithful and true witness; he is also to be received in this. The Lord Jesus Christ is God's witness; he is to be received as God's witness. Where shall we go to give a kind of sample of this character of the Lord Jesus Christ? I shall just refer you to a part of the word of the Lord, and not dwell thereon. Turn to John xvii. to exemplify this character of the Saviour. There are other Scriptures as well, but that is the one I would refer to; and I learn there everything that accords with this Amen. There I learn the completeness of the Saviour's work; there I learn his dominion over all flesh; there I learn his commission to give eternal life to as many as the Father has given him; there I learn that the people whom he possesses, he possesses by the Father originally giving them; there I learn the utter impossibility of these people being lost. Ah, the sinner that feels what a poor, changeable creature he is, he wants certainty in all parts of the glorious gospel of the blessed God. Christ, then, is the Amen; and the faithful and true witness to this great matter in which he is the Amen. He never deviated from what he himself had done, he will never deviate from his work; he will never deviate from God's testamentary will; his delight was to do God's will in his humiliation; his delight is to do God's will in his exaltation; his delight will be to do God's will in his glorification. Then, thirdly, in his *headship*; they were cold towards him in his headship. He is here called "the beginning of the creation of God," which some tell us means that Jesus Christ's human soul was the first thing the Lord created; but this appears to be a very poor and meagre explanation of such a Scripture as this. Depend upon it, friends, when we meet with a difficult Scripture the best way is, to go to some other part of the word of the Lord to try to find out the meaning. Now the original word here translated *beginning* very often means *head*, or *chief*. The word *arkee* has a more extensive meaning than the word *beginning*, and I think therefore the reference is to the two-fold headship of Christ; that he is the head of the first and the second creation. - This is another two-fold character in which

Christ is to be received. This appears clear in the word of God; for we are told that "all things were created by him, and for him;" *for him*, so that the chief object of the creation of the world was for the Lord Jesus Christ; for the carrying out the great purposes of eternal mercy which were by the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, let us hear the Apostle upon this great matter of oneness with Christ; and then trace out the headship, and all the consequences of that headship, of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle begins it thus; he looks upon the people of God, upon the Colossians, as being prepared for eternal glory; he then describes how they are prepared; and then he brings in the two-fold headship of the Lord Jesus Christ; the very character in which he appears here to the Laodicean church. And see how beautifully the Apostle Paul describes the preparation of the people of God for eternal glory. He says, "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." Well, how is it done? Why, "He hath delivered us from the power of darkness." What is the business of darkness? The business of darkness,—for the darkness there, my hearers, will mean satanic darkness, is to hide from our eyes this great Amen; to hide from our eyes the testimony of Christ; "If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost." He hath delivered us from the power of darkness; satanic power can no longer blind your mind to the great Amen, to the testimony of Jesus Christ. That is one step towards preparation for heaven; yea, if you can say Amen in the several senses in which I have stated that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Amen,—if you can add heartily and affectionately your little amen to this great Amen, then it is a proof that you are delivered from the power of satanic darkness, and are prepared for eternity, let it come when it may. But he goes on a little further describing it, "and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." The translation there will mean the moving from one place to another—translating. So when you saw the gospel you turned towards the light; and you are drawn along, and drawn along. Perhaps you heard a minister that preached a little gospel, then contradicted it all; you received the gospel that he preached, but you could not receive the contradiction; and by and bye you began to think perhaps, if that space occupied by his contradiction could be occupied by gospel; if you could find a minister any where that could do it; and you study, and study, and at last, that's it, now I've found the minister; all the space that the other filled up with contradiction he fills up with gospel; that one says yea, and nay, this one says yea and amen. And when you are thus delivered from the power of darkness, you are drawn along till you are drawn into the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Here I am standing in the amen of the gospel; nothing but gospel; gospel first, gospel middle, and gospel last; gospel on the right hand and on the left; gospel inside and out; it is all grace from first to last. "Translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son; in whom we have redemption through his blood;" all this preparing us for heaven; "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Now comes in the headship of Christ." Who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature;" or as some would render it, "the first born of the whole creation;" that is, he is the heir of the whole creation. And how is he the heir of the whole creation? Some of our good friends, whom I love in the Lord, tell us he is the first-born of every creature by having a pre-existing soul; and some of you say that, Well, that is your explanation. But the apostle gives another explan-

ation of it; I really don't think you would wish me to receive your's, and lay his aside; you might wish me to receive your's too; but I cannot receive the two. The apostle gives another reason why the Saviour is called the first-born of the whole creation; his reason is the fact that Christ has a natural right to the whole creation; "For by him all things were created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him." Here then is his headship. So then, friends, if we want the providential favours of the Lord, and the Lord to appear for us providentially, we must ask in the name of Jesus Christ; the world is for him; it is his. I do not think it is right we should be cold, or even lukewarm towards him in this matter; we are all creatures of providence; and those of you that are now the most favoured, you know how one touch of the Lord's finger might turn the whole of it to dust; and those that are ever so tried and discouraged, yet the Lord hath infinite skill and resources at command. Jesus Christ is the head of all: "Bread shall be given, and water shall be sure;" and if he give you a contented heart to be a teetotaller, you know that will keep you alive longer than wine would, and therefore you are better with your glass of water than another man with his glass of wine; why, you will live and feel young long after he is gone. The Lord's ways are best if we have grace to live in them; that man that is favoured in every sense to live nearest to the Lord, that is the happiest man; for as a man's life doth not, so neither doth his happiness consist in the abundance or the scarcity he may possess; it consisteth in fellowship with God. Without the Lord all is vanity and vexation of spirit; but give me the Lord, and all is well. The Apostle Paul says—I am not going to be hypocritical, what I myself must have very much more grace than I have to come to his proposition—he says, "Having food and raiment." What shall I do in old age? Well, having food and raiment. Suppose I should go into the workhouse. "Having food and raiment." What shall I do so and so? "Having food and raiment." How shall I meet so and so? "Having food and raiment, let us therewith be content." I do not apprehend he means to put anything like a negative upon industry and diligence, or anything of the kind; but it just shews this, that the apostle well knew from his own personal experience "Let us be content;" for God hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Thus then Christ is the head of the creation; this is the comforting truth to the people of God, all belongs to him; and therefore the Lord enable you to look to him to appear for you, and to help you; he will hear and answer you, depend upon it, and you will be able to say in all these temporal senses,

"When he sees me sunk in grief,  
He quickly flies to my relief."

. Lukewarm towards the Amen! God forbid there should be any here of that stamp! Lukewarm towards the testimony of Christ; the Lord forbid any of us should be of such a stamp or in such a state! Lukewarm towards him as the creation's head, lukewarm towards him, by whom we are fed and clothed, and taken care of all our life long. But then there is another headship the apostles traces out. He is not only the first born or heir of the first creation literally, but of the second creation; for "he is the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness well. And ye are com-

plote in him which is the head of all principality and power." There it is; I have found it at last, carry this completeness back to the Amen; or bring the Amen forward to completeness; see how the Amen and the headship both accord together. Here is the great Amen, here is the testimony, here is the two-fold headship; and thou art complete in him who is the head of all principality and power. "These things saith the Amen; the faithful and true witness; the beginning and the head of the creation of God." That is one part of the voice; namely, "I stand at the door and knock; if ny man hear my voice, and open the door." Then the Apostle, after tracing out what Christ is, and shewing the Lord's way of bringing us to himself, brings in an if, as there is in our text; If ye continue in the "faith," of this great Amen, this testimony, this "headship of Christ;" and be not moved "away from the hope of the Gospel." Ah, faith and hope are beautiful roots, they bear beautiful fruits; yes. Why, take faith away, we could not preach without it, could not pray without it, could not get on at all without it. And also we plough in hope; we sow in hope; we reap in hope, we thrash in hope; all we do is in hope; and if we have this faith and hope, I am sure fruits will follow.

- II. But secondly, after the Saviour reminding us of what he is, he then gives us COUNSEL. There were some among them that were unhappy in their lukewarmness, not settled down contented. "I counsel thee to buy of me gold." Ah, says one, I know what you are going to say the gold is; you are going to say that gold means God's truth. Can you say anything better? I know you cannot if you try. And so it is God's truth; *buy* the truth; to buy it is to get it honestly and at some expence. We sometimes say, lightly come, lightly go; but when you know the value of a thing by what it costs you, you will prize it. What will it cost you, then? It will cost you earnest prayer; it will cost you many sighs and many groans, and a great many sneers from professors, if they find out what you are about; you will lose the smiles and the friendship of the world; but the man that thus buys the truth will say, Ah, this is precious gold, yea, gold tried in the fire. What has been tried like God's truth? It has always stood the fire; not a particle of it has ever been consumed; there it is, fresh, precious as ever. Ah, when the truth is thus acquired experimentally, what a treasure it becomes; generally spoken of as that which is superior to gold; "the law of thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver." "The judgments of the Lord," saith David, "are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold; yea, than much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb." Well, what do you say, my hearer? Are you willing, God giving you grace, to buy the truth at any price, and sell it at no price? are you willing to abide by it, no matter at what sacrifice? That is one idea of buying the gold. Do not think you are going on easy; no, you must have your tossings to and fro to the dawn of the day; you must have hard reckonings against yourself, you write bitter against yourself; and all this will humble self, and exalt the Lord. But that is not the only idea intended by the gold, there are two more ideas. The next is that of faith. What is it? "That the trial of your faith, being more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, may be found unto praise and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." There will be a crying out for more faith; Lord, give me a stronger persuasion of the ability of thy love to make me happy; a stronger persuasion of the ability of thy dear Son to make me happy; a stronger persuasion of the ability of thine eternal Spirit to maintain these

things in my soul, maintain liberty in my soul. Lord, teach me to believe more as thy servant Paul, when he said, "The life that I now live in the flesh is by faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Third, it means more grace. Lord, make me more of a grace-man; let grace reign in me more, Lord, that I may be more spiritually minded; and to be more spiritually minded is life and peace; and the more spirituality of mind we have, the more we glorify the Lord our God. "And white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." If you appear with all your sins, if you are left with them, then you are destined to shame and everlasting contempt. White raiment; that white raiment we know to be the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ; for so we read it; the array of the saints in heaven is called the righteousness of saints; called the righteousness of saints because it was wrought out for them, imputed to them, possessed by them, and enjoyed by them. Counsel again; what kind counsel this is, friends, is not. I am not advising you to anything that would not be advantageous. Oh, when you have more of golden truth, more of precious faith, and more of grace, you will indeed bear testimony that I gave you good counsel; and when you appear in this white array, this robe of righteousness, pure, perfect, spotless, outshining the highest angel in heaven, you will say I gave you good counsel. "And anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see." In the wilderness of the East, the eyes, through the heat, and winds, very often become feeble, and irritated, and inflamed; cannot see their way along. Just so it is now spiritually; how many things there are to blind our eyes; if we see a little bit of worldly prosperity how it blinds the eyes; that little bit of an oasis in the wilderness seems everything to us; so that unless the Lord is pleased to anoint our eyes with eye-salve, to enlighten our understanding by his truth, we are altogether blind, and must remain so.

III. Lastly, to hear his voice is to endure his voice is to endure his REBUKES AND CHASTENINGS. "As many as I love I rebuke." That is a very poor religion that leaves its possessor unconscious of divine rebukes. Ah, where should we be without reproof? how much reproof we need; without reproof the conscience gets hardened, the heart calous and careless. Now, saith the Saviour, "as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." What a mercy for us, friends, that all the afflictions, all the losses, all the crosses we meet with, are just kind of rebukes from the Lord, but it is because he loves us, not because he hates us; and he does not like to see other things have our hearts, he does not like to see other things have that affection that belongs to him; he does not like to see our souls wandering about the barren wilderness of flesh and sense, when they might be enjoying his presence; he will reprove and rebuke; and I am sure it is the desire of every child of God to be thus chastened and corrected, so that he may be kept in that right spirit by which he may cleave with all his heart to the Lord Jesus Christ, and feel him to be indeed precious; and when he is precious, then all things go well. Amen.