

SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

THE SAVIOUR RISEN.

A Sermon

PREACHED AT NORTHAMPTON AT THE OPENING OF THE NEW BAPTIST
CHAPEL, ABINGDON STREET, BY

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‘But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.’—
1 Cor. xv. 20.

It is not the resurrection of Christ, nor the resurrection of the body at the last great day, that I intend to dwell upon this afternoon, but rather take the words of the text as they may somewhat apply to your circumstances here. I think that this place being opened, the Lord bringing you here, and favouring you, is a kind of resurrection. We may say, ‘now is Christ risen;’ he is risen in this church here, to enlarge your coasts; and now you want his hand to be with you, and you want the Saviour to rise among you! and if Christ do not rise, what should rise? Let us look, for instance, for one moment, at the importance of the Saviour’s rising in our hearts and affections. The apostle in connection with our text traces out some of the general consequences of Christ’s not rising from the dead. I shall therefore this afternoon take these consequences in their inverse form; and in taking these consequences in the inverse, I shall try, and that will be the first head of my discourse, to point out *some of the advantages unto us of the resurrection of Christ*; and then, secondly, *the character in which he here appears*—‘the first fruits of them that slept.’

I. THE ADVANTAGES THAT ARISE FROM THE LORD JESUS CHRIST HAVING RISEN FROM THE DEAD. The apostle, I say, points out the disadvantages, the terrible consequences, that must follow if Christ be not risen. ‘I will look at these consequences, though they might be laid out in a larger form, I will look at them under four main heads; he says, ‘Our preaching is vain, and your faith is vain; and they which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished; and if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.’ I will take these in their inverse form; that is to say, as Christ is risen from the dead, preaching is not vain; as Christ is risen from the dead, faith is not vain; as Christ is risen from the dead, they are not perished that are fallen asleep; as Christ is risen from the dead, we are not of all men the most miserable, but just the reverse of that.

First then, that our preaching is not vain, or the preaching of the gospel is not vain. And although we have more, a great many more, that know not God than that do know God; and though we have more ungodly than godly; and though out of the twelve hundred millions that constitute or form the population of this globe there are comparatively few that are brought to the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ: when we look abroad, and see what is not done, and see how many thousands and millions too of our fellow creatures are destitute of the Gospel, the scene is very solemn indeed: and taking that view of the matter, we shall be almost ready to say, ‘Why, surely our preaching has been in vain:’ what have we done? Now, while we look at what has not been done, we must not stop there; we must also look at what has been done—for if there are yet millions that are dead in sin, there are thousands that are not dead in sin: and if there be many that know not God,

there are some that do know him, and nearly all that do know him have been brought—for that is the way in which most are brought—by the word of God, the word of the blessed God. The Gospel is a savour of life unto life to the one, and a savour of death unto death to the other. Let us then see to whom the gospel is not preached in vain. The gospel is a savour of life unto life to the one. How is it a savour of life to the one? I will tell you how it is. Here is a sinner brought to feel his need of the Gospel, and he is glad to receive the gospel, his heart is prepared to receive the gospel: his heart is like the good ground hearer: he receives the word, and understands it: he understands that the word of eternal mercy is something infinitely too important ever to be parted with. Such an one will say, 'Whatever you take from me, do not take Jesus Christ from me, do not take the gospel from me, do not take the Bible from me, do not take from me that sweet hope that I have in the Lord: let me have that.' That man understands that this is of all things the most important. Now the gospel unto that man is testimonially a savour of life unto life: that is, the gospel declares such a man to be spiritually a living man: the gospel declares that such a man hath eternal life—for he that thus 'believeth in the Son hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation.' Here then, unto such the preaching is not vain. So, my hearer, if you do understand the testimony of God concerning Christ, concerning his person, concerning his death, concerning his resurrection, and concerning his final glory; if you do feel that, of all things with which you are acquainted, the most important: and that in your right mind you feel as though you could part, and would be justified in parting, if called upon so to do, with anything and everything, even, (grace enabling you) your mortal life, rather than part with God's blessed truth; then the gospel is unto you a savour of life unto life; you are a saved man, you have eternal life, the Lord is eternally on your side, immutably on your side; you have eternal life: the preaching is not vain to you. But then it is a savour of death unto death to others. To whom is it a savour of death unto death? Does it mean that it kills people? No. It certainly makes those alive to whom it is a savour of life unto life, but when it is said to be a savour of death unto death, it does not mean that it kills people. It is, therefore a savour of death unto death testimonially. Here is a man, he says, 'Well, I do not believe in the gospel,' and therefore he that believeth not shall be condemned. He is enmity against the gospel, he says, 'I do not like to be told too much about that religion:' he is enmity against Christ and against the truth. The carnal mind is enmity against God. Now the gospel testimonially is a savour of death unto death. Let us look at this: there is something here very important, and at the same time very discriminating. You observe that the two characters of the lost and the saved—that is, those who are in a saved state, or are evidently saved, and those who are still in a state of nature, that they are characterised among other features by the two contrastive qualities of love and hatred. The one loves the truth, the other hates it. Now if you hate the truth, if you hate the testimony concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, then the gospel declares that you are a dead man, that you are dead in trespasses and in sins; the gospel declares that dying in that state you will be lost: and therefore the gospel unto you is a savour of death unto death, because you are an enemy to the gospel. But if the gospel should lay hold of you, and turn you into a friend, then the scene is changed: then that same gospel which was testimonially unto you a savour of death unto death while you were in a state of enmity, it is now that you are reconciled, a savour of life unto life. This is the way in which I understand the gospel to be a savour of life unto life to the one, and a savour of death unto death to the other: that is to say, testimonially I am fully aware, of course, of the general interpretation that is put upon it, but if I meddle with that I shall get into the controversial line of things, and that would hinder me from going on with the subjects I want to handle this afternoon. I must just, however, on this point make one remark, and it is

this, and it is to encourage some of you that may be discouraged—for the people of God have their discouragements—and perhaps you fear you are not one with Jesus Christ, and fear that you are not raised up to sit together with Christ. Now if I am speaking to any with these fears—let us have a word of encouragement from what the apostle says when he uses these words, for we may take great encouragement from them, solemn as the words are. The apostle's words are these—'If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not.' But suppose now it is not hid from you: suppose while it was once hid from you, you did not once see what the gospel was, you did not once see what Christ has done; but now you do see what he has done; you did not once see that excellency in him which you now see, you did not once see that beauty in the order of his eternal mercy which you now see: so then, if the gospel be hid to them that are lost, and the gospel is not hid from you, but you do see it, then you are not lost; you may fear you are: but if the Lord meant to destroy you, he would not have shown you the gospel, nor revealed the gospel to you, he would not have won your affections to it. His language is, 'My son, give me thine heart.' Mark, here is relationship first, here is sonship, and on the ground of that eternal relationship or sonship—'My son, give me thine heart.' Let me ask, then, in this part, before I go on to the next, has the gospel won thine heart, has it won thy affections, and canst thou say in some humble measure at least, in relation to this,

'Thou hast my heart, it shall be thine,
Thine it shall ever be.'

If so, then I will say, now is Christ risen in thine heart; now the Day-star is risen in thine heart. Now the day dawn from on high hath visited thee, now a new and everlasting day has begun in thy soul. And it is said, when the world was created that there was a morning and there was an evening to every one of the days, except the seventh day, but you do not read in Genesis, that the evening and the morning were the seventh day; but, the seventh day is represented as without an evening, and without a morning, in order to stand as the sweet figure of that eternal sabbath into which Christ will bring us. In this respect, the seventh day is somewhat analagous to the historical position in which Melchizedeck was placed—he had no predecessor and no successor. He was placed in that position, in order to set before us figuratively, the eternity of Christ in his priesthood. So this seventh day is set before us as having neither evening nor morning, to set before us the eternity of that rest that is in Christ. The most that the Old Testament warriors could do, was to obtain rest for forty years for the land, in one case four-score years; but, when the mighty warrior steps in, he lays our adversaries in an everlasting sleep, brings in everlasting rest, for us to be disturbed in that rest no more for ever. 'There remaineth (therefore,) a rest for the people of God.'

Again, the apostle says, if Christ were not risen, then faith is vain; but if he be risen, then faith is not vain. I never can speak of faith but with pleasure; the very thought of it is delightful, because it brings before us this one fact, that the terms of salvation are just as suited to us, as salvation itself. It is simply faith. Like Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, when they came and told him that his daughter was dead; 'Trouble not the Master,' it is no use, 'thy daughter is dead.' What was the answer of the Saviour? 'Only believe,' be not afraid, but 'only believe.' Let matters be as bad as they may, let the poor sinner be as sunken as he may, as guilty as he may, as wretched as he may: only believe, be not afraid, only believe, and faith will ask that sweet question, 'Is there anything too hard for the Lord?' Ah, it is wonderful what confidence in the Lord will do. Where is there the child of God that has not wished and longed for the spirit of Job, when he said, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him?' Faith in vain? Why, faith in

God sustains us, supports us, keeps us up; and we seek, and some sweet promise comes home to the soul, that he will never leave us, never forsake us, or some other promise equally comforting. Faith receives and believes it, and when the light of that promise is gone, the hope of it and the confidence of it more or less remain; so that whatever may take place in your experience, or in your circumstances, no change takes place in the promises of God, or in the Word of God. Look at the eleventh of Hebrews, as well as other Scriptures, and see what precious faith can do: it will carry us through anything and everything, if we have but confidence in the Lord. You recollect what the Lord says upon this subject, that all things are possible to him that believeth. Oh! it is a great thing to be able to stand still and see the salvation of God. Our faith vain? It would indeed be vain, were he not risen, but we know he hath risen! If your faith be not in Christ, then it is vain! I want your faith to be in Jesus Christ! If you ask what I mean by that, I mean this; I want you to believe that his blood is infinitely more able to pardon, than your sins are to condemn! That his atonement has in it infinitely more power to save, than your sins have to destroy! That his atonement has in it infinitely more power to put Satan down, than Satan has to put you down! That there is in the atonement of Jesus Christ, all the excellency of his wonderful and his eternal person! That in his atonement, there is his eternal power and God-head! That if your sins were ten million times twice told what they are, if he be on your side, you can laugh at them all, glory in his all-atoning blood, and rejoice that the great Atlantic of his atonement has swallowed up these mountains: not the top of the highest of them can be seen; they are sunk into the infinite depths. I want you to have this confidence in Jesus Christ; and, when you ask God for any mercy, I want you to do it with this confidence: whenever you have any trouble of any kind, I want still this confidence kept up in Jesus Christ. Alas! alas! we are such poor creatures, we are apt to try to make something else our confidence: we are apt to make our comforts our confidence; but, how uncertain they are! And we make many other things our confidence, but how uncertain they are! But, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Some people have been troubled as to whether they have ever committed the unpardonable sin, and what the unpardonable sin is. I cannot attempt to point out the man that has committed it, but I can point out that which will prove you have not committed it. I say this, the man that has committed the unpardonable sin, his heart will never be softened: that man will never care about his soul, that man will grow more and more careless, he will go more and more into Satanic enmity. And therefore, my hearer, if, while you were in a state of nature, you even used bitter oaths against the truths of the gospel, and if you have wished those high doctrine people in hell, if you have gone so far as that, and felt as though if you were God, you would damn them all out of the way; and, if you have done ten times worse than that, if you are brought now to feel what a poor sinner you are, and the Lord Jesus Christ has been revealed to you, if those sins that you have committed, any of them, or all of them put together, constituted the unpardonable sin, you would never have been brought as you now are, to feel that you are a sinner, your mind would never have been turned towards Jesus Christ; you would have hated the gospel too much, to come where Christ is. And therefore, you have no more committed the unpardonable sin, than an archangel hath committed it, for if you had, your feet would never have been turned towards Zion—you would never have sought for mercy, you would never have cared for salvation. My hearers! Jesus Christ is not a little Saviour, not a would-be Saviour, not a sham, pretended Saviour; he is an Omnipotent Saviour—he travailed in the greatness of his strength, while as man he could look around, and wonder that there was none to help, when he saw there was none, he fell back upon his own omnipotence, and rushed into the thickest of the battle—by his own omnipotent arm he brought salvation to himself, rose triumphant from the dead, turns round and says to his people—There my brethren, that is for

you, that victory is not for me, but for you—that salvation is not for me, but for you—that holy life that I have lived, is not for me, but for you—that death that I died, is not for me, but for you—that atonement I have made, is not for me, but for you. He was not cut off for himself, but for the transgressions of my people was he smitten. Tell me that faith is vain! Give me this precious faith in Jesus Christ. How it exalts him, how it honours him. Christ then is risen; so preaching is not vain, and faith is not vain. You may hear from pulpits sermons innumerable, and from the press read books innumerable, all about the works of men—wonderful day we live in for talk of human doings. But the word of God says that they shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, that they shall speak of thy mighty acts, that they shall talk of thy doings, and speak of the majesty of thy kingdom. Where are the people to do it? Where are they? We have a few here and a few there: but, nine-tenths of your ministers and congregations are wrapped up in cobweb self, and go wherever you may, it is all the same. Why, the sinner that has tried to make himself as holy and good as God's law is, and finds out he can do nothing that the law demands, that is the man that is brought to see the mighty acts of God. The works of the Lord are glorious and honourable, sought out by all them that have pleasure therein. Men are everlastingly thrusting upon us their doings, but all their doings put together, are not worth naming, when set by the side of the mighty acts of the great God, in the salvation of the soul. I want God's works, that is what I want. Ah, say you, you want his works that you may do nothing. I want his works to set me to work, that is what I want. I want his good works to bring me the manna that will set me eating, and they shall eat and praise the name of the Lord. I want his good works to bring me the wine of the kingdom, that will make my heart rejoice, make me glad, and I shall sing,

* The righteous shall hold on his way.*

I want him to come and tread the devil under my feet. I want him to come and heal all my wounds, and I will call upon all that is within me to bless and praise his holy name. I want him to come and let me out of prison, and then I will praise his holy name. I want the works of the Lord that I may work. What made the apostle Paul such a hard working man? Why, he says, 'God worketh in me mightily,' and that made Paul work out mightily. If God works in, the man will work out, no doubt about it. Thus then, preaching is not vain. Christ rises by the ministry of the word, and Christ rises by precious faith. The Lord increase our faith.

Third, if Christ is not risen, then they that are fallen asleep, says the apostle, in Christ are perished. Fallen asleep! that is a very nice representation of death. When the Christian comes to die, he falls asleep. There is no such thing as agony in death, there is no such thing as suffering in death, there is no such thing as what people suppose in death. There are sufferings, and there are agonies in the majority of causes that bring us to death, because almost every one dies a premature death; very few live to that old age, in which death, as it were, becomes natural. Or else, what is death? Why, merely the cessation of the physical powers, just the same as when you go to sleep. I have known some Christians that have died so easily, and so gently, just like going to sleep—falling asleep. It is only the body that falls asleep, the soul is waked up more wonderfully than ever it was before.—'Absent from the body, present with the Lord.' And I do not believe the Lord is in purgatory, as they call it; I am sure he is not; and therefore we will leave purgatory for you good Catholics; you may take it as your way to heaven, we would rather have Jesus Christ as our way to heaven—much rather; we think our way is much better than your way: your way is a very precarious way, a very dark way, and a way the Scriptures know nothing about; but the Scriptures do know about Jesus Christ, and he himself says, 'I am the Way.' So, 'Absent from the body, present with the Lord.' Now, really

you Catholics, you had better come over to us: depend upon it our's is the best way, throw away your books and traditions, and take the Word of your Maker, and let that, and that alone, be your guide. Well, but, you say, our's is a very old religion. Well, but you yourselves do not assert it is as old as the world; why, our's is older than the world, from all eternity; for so we read, that the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting, that his goings forth were of old, even from everlasting. You can quote only a few hundred years, whereas we can quote eternal ages. So then, I say the body falls asleep in a dying hour, but the soul, absent from the body, is present with the Lord. Some people get so afraid of death, though I am aware it is rather the afterwards they dread than not. It is the lot of some of the people of God to live very much in bondage all their days; and the Lord himself doth not intend to free them entirely from that until their dying hour. Hence you read of the delivering them who all their life time were subject to bondage through fear of death. So then, my fellow traveller, if it be but twilight with thee now, at eventide it shall be light—when thy body shall fall asleep, thy soul shall be accompanied by angels, that well understand the great matter; they shall usher thee into the presence of God—Jesus shall receive thee, and present thee there in all his own comeliness, beauty, excellency, triumph, and glory.

But again, 'We are of all men most miserable,' saith the apostle, if Christ be not risen,' but whereas he is risen, we are of all men the most comfortable, the most happy—and yet of all men the most miserable too—but not ultimately. I never knew what real trouble was, till I knew the truth, and you may depend upon it that the Christian man is a man that has sorrows that no other man has, there are no people that have such troubles as the people of God; their own hearts are a burden, their own selves are burdens to themselves, and sometimes terrors to themselves—so that being spoiled for the world, and made sensitive as to matters that are eternal, and having within them that conflict which they have, if their hope reached only to the end of this life, they would indeed be of all men the most miserable. How true the Saviour's words are, even taking that short view of it, when he says, 'The world shall rejoice, but ye shall weep and lament.' I am aware it is the custom in the present day, to say, oh! religion is all comfort; if you did but know it, it is all comfort. The Saviour did not so flatter his disciples, he did not tell them that—he set before them a very thorny path; he shewed them some very dark clouds, he indicated some tremendous storms that would arise; he gave them to understand clearly that it was through much tribulation they must enter the kingdom of God. Therefore, apart from their final home, they are in some respects of all men the most miserable. Here is the natural man, he lives without much care, so that his temporal needs are supplied—he dies, and when he dies there are no bands in his death—he gets the priest to come and bless him, or the Puseyite to come and give him a bit of bread and a little wine, and so rocks him off to sleep—and so he dies; no bands in his death, no troubles in his life. But the man who does know the truth, he is the man of real sorrow, and yet at the same time he would not change his position, his present for his former state—for the world. That man enters into the secret that Mr. Hart describes, when he says

'Though our cup seems filled with gall,
There is something secret sweetens all.'

Only let us remember that those afflictions which may be heavy to-day must by-and-bye become light: that those troubles that are distressing now must by-and-bye lose their power: and therefore saith the apostle, 'These light afflictions which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' So that notwithstanding the people of God have troubles that no other people have, they at the same time have peace, and joy, and consolations that the stranger intermeddeth

not with: so that, notwithstanding all their castings down and all their troubles, their troubles are infinitely more than counterbalanced by the consolations they have in the blessed God. Oh, how sweet and clear the Scriptures are upon this matter, that 'Happy is the people in such a case: happy is the people whose God is the Lord. Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee: O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency; and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee.' So that, notwithstanding all their troubles, they are of all men after all the most happy. Oh, it is a sweet thing to be a Christian. When you know not the Lord, you take such wrong views of those that do. You think we regard you with a kind of supercilious look, with a kind of contemptuous look. Well, you may be sometimes offensive towards us in your conduct, which brings unpleasant feelings; but as a general rule we look upon you with great pity; and we think within ourselves, Oh, if that man did but know where he is standing, were but conscious of the awful state he is in, if that man were conscious of the dreadful destiny, dying as he now is, that awaiteth him—oh, what a different man he would be. We pity him, but we cannot alter it. If we have an opportunity, we speak to the man, but we cannot alter it. There he is, dead in trespasses and in sins—and it is God alone that quickeneth the dead. But there are moments when we think upon this, and we say concerning such of our fellow creatures, Oh, I would not be in the place of that man for ten thousand worlds: then we turn round, and hear the apostle ask this question, 'Who maketh thee to differ? it is the Lord, who hath mercy upon whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.' And I do feel to-day a solemn prayer in my heart and soul to the Lord that this place may be greatly blessed in the ingathering of souls from Satan's kingdom into the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our good brother has laboured in this town now fourteen years, and the Lord has been with him, he has kept steadily on, and is well-known as to his principles and his practice—and now he is through grace risen into this position, and I trust that there will be a corresponding increase of numbers, for I am sure every man that is sent of God will thirst for the salvation of souls, and will seek their welfare. But at the same time, he must seek their welfare by the gospel. We dare not set aside God's gospel, and seek the salvation of a soul by that which is not God's gospel, and therefore if he set aside God's gospel, and place the conversion of the soul somewhat in the hands of the man himself, and begin to deal in universal invitations, this would be to deal in universal mockeries. I know those who do deal in these universal exhortations, they are sincere in their dealings in them, but they are mere mockeries—for there is no such thing in all the word of the living God. No, my hearers, the state of man by nature is too woeful, too wretched, for anything effectual to be done to his soul but by the Spirit of the living God. It is God, and God alone, that can make a Christian, and he claims the honour of having done it: 'this people have I formed:' did not form themselves—nor have any hand in it—'created in Christ Jesus unto good works.'

II. THE CHARACTER IN WHICH THE SAVIOUR HERE APPEARS—'the first-fruits of them that slept.' Well now the ancient fathers, the Old Testament saints, they all fell asleep in Christ. There are ministers in our day that tell us—and I suppose they tell us so because they do not know any better—that the Old Testament saints knew a mere nothing about Christ. But think you that Abel knew nothing about Christ, when he brought the more excellent sacrifice? Think you that Abel's hope for eternity was founded on the literal sacrifice he brought? think you he did not see that sacrifice which he brought as a shadow of the one great Sacrifice, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.' He knew Christ, and he fell asleep in Christ. Think you that Enoch could walk with God in any way but by faith? and

there can be no faith without an atonement, there can be no confidence in God contrary to his holiness and his justice, and there can be no confidence in God consistently with his holiness and justice without Christ. Enoch did know Jesus Christ. Think you that Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord, yet knew nothing of the New Covenant? Think you that Abraham did not see the day of Christ? Think you that Isaac did not know that the promise was in Christ? Think you that Jacob did not know Jesus Christ? Think you that Moses spake not of Christ? Point out to me, if you can, the prophet that did not witness to him? So then they all fell asleep in Christ, all died in Christ. There is a sweet Scripture upon this matter in the 11th of Hebrews; a Scripture that gave great comfort to my mind in a circumstance in which I was very much tried, and it was this—there were three or four of our members died some years ago, and every one seemed to die somewhat in the dark, somewhat doubting and fearing, not manifesting that full assurance that I could wish. I felt much exercised in my own mind. I thought, really when I come to die I hope I shall not die in the dark like this: this is very trying. And it so happened that they were persons that stood so clearly manifest to my conscience as real Christians; had they been persons about whom I might have had some doubt, perhaps I should have thought—well, after all they have deceived themselves, and had suspicions, of them: my suspicions are rather confirmed than not—and they have died, and they are lost. But they were persons whose religion I could not doubt, and I was therefore much exercised about it. But presently these words came into my mind, distilled through my soul with savor and sweetness, and put me at rest upon the matter, ‘These all died in faith.’ Then I said that will do; if they did not die in feeling, in enjoyment—they died in faith—if they did not die in faith of assurance, they died in faith of adherence. ‘These all died in faith.’ They were kept in faith to the last, and if kept in faith, they are kept one with Christ, and by him have an abundant entrance into the kingdom of heaven. Now the Saviour is here called the first fruits. This simply means these two or three things. First, under the Old Testament age, when the first fruits were brought and accepted, that was the pledge, the assurance that the harvest would be gathered in, and everything would be saved. And so the Lord Jesus Christ is called the first fruits, if he be accepted, the people will not be rejected—so he is accepted as the pledge, as the sign, as the assurance that the people shall be received; and if the first fruits be holy, saith the apostle, the lump is holy—that is, when the first fruits were dedicated to God, they were reckoned holy, and that consecrated the whole harvest. And so, if Christ be holy, and you are one with him, he is your sanctification, ‘His blood cleanseth from all sin;’ and so you are presented, not in your character, but in His character. If Christ be your first fruits, then you have a holy first fruits; and whatever that is, you are to be; and if that be received, you yourselves shall not be rejected. One more thought and then I will close. The first fruits also means pre-eminence of place, pre-eminence in dignity. Hence this is a name given also to the people of God. The people are called the first fruits, expressive of their position, their oneness with the Saviour. And so, the Saviour, he stands first—there is no name equal to his name; his name stands first, above every name that is named, not only in the world that now is, but also in that world which is to come. And as he stands first, and the people stand one with him, they are represented also as he is—He is God’s First Born, and the people also are called the first born—as He is called the First Fruits, they are also called the first fruits. Therefore, it is expressive of pre-eminence. And what is there stands so high in the estimation of God, and the people that are one with him?