

SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

GOSPEL PATIENCE.

A Sermon

PREACHED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 27TH, 1861, BY

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AT THE SURREY TABERNACLE, BOROUGH ROAD.

"Here is the patience of the saints." Revelations xiv. 12.

WE have already from these words noticed the gospel by which the people of God are consecrated to God; we have also noticed some parts of the experience of this saintship: and it is said in connection with their consecration and with their experience, in being brought to give glory to him that made the heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters, it is said, 'For the hour of his judgment is come.' The judgment there does not mean ultimate judgment, but means the present judgment. And there is a twofold sense in which in relation to the present time it may with truth be said, his judgment is come; for there is the judgment recorded that 'he that believeth shall be saved;' that is the judgment upon record; and if I answer to that judgment that is now upon record, then I am a saved man. But, on the other hand, it is said, 'He that believeth not shall be damned;' so that if I am not in possession now of that faith that standeth connected with salvation, then I must be lost. So that now is the hour of judgment in the sense there intended. Then, secondly, it means this: that when the Lord convinceth a sinner of sin, then it is with that sinner the hour of judgment; and the Lord puts that sinner to a test which he cannot stand; and that test is his pure and eternal law. Hence, saith the apostle, 'When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died;' and he found that the law of God, demanding perfection of purity, of righteousness, of love, of wisdom, and of everything that accords with itself, namely, with the law; the apostle found, and so every one now taught of God finds, that he cannot endure that test. And one of old, when the law was given—so terrible was the sight only in the ministration of this law, that a good man said, 'I exceedingly fear and quake;' and it is said of the people in general that they could not endure that which was commanded. And thus the hour of his judgment is come in the experience of this convinced sinner. And then, when the Lord has put him to a test which he cannot endure, this sinner will find that his being put to such a test prepares him for a test which he can endure; for after the Lord has put him to a test which he cannot endure, he will then put him to a test which he can endure; and it will be this; the sinner, feeling himself to be under judgment, and feeling himself to be in a lost condition, his feeling is, his enquiry is, his solemn concern is, 'What shall I do to be saved?' The answer is, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' 'The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.' And thus he can now bear this test of the gospel; and when this same great matter of believing in Christ is opened up before him in detail, when the great scheme or economy of eternal salvation is opened up unto such an one, he can not only bear the test, but he is brought to love every truth of the glorious gospel of God; and thus is fulfilled the testimony of the Psalmist when he says, 'Blessed is the man whom thou

chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law; that thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked.' Now, my hearers, one and all, what do we know of thus being brought to the test, of being thus brought under judgment; the law of God entering our souls, shewing us our state, and creating the solemn enquiry, 'What shall I do to be saved?' This is the weighty experience of saintship. And then such persons, who are thus brought under this judgment, put to a test which they cannot endure, and then led to bless God for a Surety that could endure the test of God's law, and did endure the test of God's law, and did come off victorious after all: and that he is the end of the law for righteousness, that he hath finished transgression, made an end of sin: I say, when brought thus far, such an one will become a true worshipper of the true God. This man will pray with understanding, not with mere formality; he will not mock the Lord with a solemn sound upon a thoughtless tongue, he will pray with understanding, he will bear testimony with understanding. He who is the good ground is he who understandeth the word, and knoweth the value thereof, the preciousness thereof, and so holdeth it fast.

I noticed the saints last Lord's day morning, but this morning my subject will be *the patience* of the saints. And in order to make this clear, I shall first set before you *the relationship of that patience*, that to which it relates—the patience of the saints relates to God and godliness; secondly, I will set before you *the trial of this patience*.

I. First I notice the **RELATIONSHIP** of this patience, or that to which it relates. It bears relation to God and to godliness. The ungodly man, the wicked man, the profane man, he has no patience with godliness; he says, 'Away with your canting religion, I have no patience with it.' It interferes with his pleasures; and the very presence of a real child of God, the very presence of a God-fearing man among the ungodly, makes the ungodly feel condemned; he therefore abhors the sight of a man that fears God, he abhors the sight of a man that cannot run with him to the same excesses in rioting and in ungodliness: he has no patience with godliness. The ungodly man says, 'Away with your godliness, away with your religion; I have no patience with it.' Well, if I am speaking to any poor fellow-mortal like this, I shall not be faithful unless I say to such an one, while you have no patience with godliness, as sure as you are a man, and as sure as you exist, and as sure as you are a sinner, if you die in that state, the time will come when godliness will have no patience with you; when godliness will say to you, 'Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels;' and not one moment of patience will godliness then have with you. Ah, my hearer, it just shews what an awful state we are in by nature that we can have patience and patience, to attain fleshly, and carnal, and worldly, and ungodly objects, and yet have no patience with godliness, no patience with Jesus Christ; 'Away with him:' no patience with his servants, 'Away with such a fellow,' as it is said of the apostle, 'it is not fit that he should live.' And they call us all sorts of ugly names: and thus the ungodly has no patience with godliness. But just where the ungodly have no patience, that is where the patience of the Christian centres, in that godliness I will try presently carefully to set before you. Now I should like to stop here if I could; it would be a great pleasure to me if I could stop here, and go no farther than this. But when I go out of the profane world, from ungodly and wicked men, that have no patience with godliness; and go into the professing world, alas, what is there there? what is there that presents itself to me there? why, this one most fearful fact, this one tremendous truth, this one awful development of the depravity and enmity of man; that while the wicked man, the ungodly man, has no patience with godliness in the general sense of the term, the majority of professors have no patience with God's truth, they have no patience with real godly experience, they have no sympathy with God's way

of saving the sinner. Ah, how hard they are working to prove that God did not hate Esau and love Jacob; how hard they are working to prove that the Lord doth not have mercy upon whom he will have mercy; how hard they are working to prove that God does not act sovereignly, that he has left the matter with man; and what an awful state they would bring us into, if it were possible we could be brought in this state; they make out, in the first place, we cannot get our way; and according to their doctrine, God cannot get his way; and there is but one left to have his way at last, and that is the devil; so that the devil actually gets souls into hell that God intended to get into heaven, and could not; the devil is stronger than God; so that according to their doctrine the devil is more than omnipotent; for I read in the Bible that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth; and if God reign in his eternal omnipotence, what are all the oppositions that have been raised from earth and hell against his government, if he reign in his omnipotence. And so, if he reigns in his boundless power, in his eternal power and godhead, the result is that his counsel must stand, and he shall do all his pleasure. Depend upon it, it is, as I so often say, still true that 'strait is the gate, and narrow is the path, and few there be that find it.' Thus then, my hearer, while the ungodly has no patience with godliness, the majority of the professing world have no patience with the truth. Now this narrows our subject; and brings us to ask, what is the patience of the saints. You may have patience; but is it the patience of a man born of God? is it the patience of a man consecrated by the gospel of God? is it the patience of a man who has the experience of those who are taught of God? is it the patience of the man that is brought rightly to worship the true God after his own order of worship? and that order is in and by the eternal perfection of Christ; as witnesseth the apostle, 'we are the true circumcision, that worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus,' there is the order; 'and have no confidence in the flesh.' So that our faith and hope are in the Lord alone.

Now in order to make that clear, I will first set before you, the godliness to which this patience relates. And if you have hold of that gospel, an experimental hold of it, an understanding hold of that gospel, a real hold of it, then you have the patience of the saints—for it is concerning that that you will have patience. And you may depend upon it you may make up your mind for one thing, that religion is no jest, that the conflict of the saint is no jest, that the prayer of the saint is no jest: no, the prayer of the saint is the deep-fetched sigh of a heart that reaches the throne of the Mediator, who mingleth much incense with their prayers, giveth efficacy to them; and their prayers are so sincere and so real that the everlasting God sees them, worthy of his attention, the Saviour sees them worthy of his attention; and so the Lord hears the groans of his elect, his elect that cry unto him day and night; and God is in earnest concerning them, and makes them in earnest concerning him. And though they be not called upon to undergo in our day actual martyrdom, all that are taught of God have a martyr's spirit; they know that their blood is worth nothing, that their mortal life is worth nothing, in comparison of the truth of God, in comparison of the hope of the gospel, in comparison with the interests of the gospel, in comparison of that eternal life, that they have in and by him. What then is that gospel? The gospel may be summed up in these two parts; the mediation of Christ, and the certainty of God's truth. First the mediation of Christ. Take the fifth of Romans; 'Tribulation worketh patience,' finds something for patience to do; and then 'patience experience;' for as we wait and wait again, we find out in waiting much of our own weakness, our own helplessness; 'and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.' Then the apostle goes on to give us a definition, shall I call it, of the mediation of Christ, wherein lieth the patience of the saints; first, 'that when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.' My hearer, can you lay your prayer

upon that scripture in the fifth of the Romans, and look up to a heart-searching God, and say, O God, I am brought to feel that I have no strength of my own to help myself; thy holy law is a fiery and indignant law, and I am weak as water, and I have no strength, Lord, to do anything but evil; I am a poor helpless creature, Lord, help me; Lord, have mercy upon me. Dost thou know what this is? If thou dost, then thou wilt accept with willingness the truth: 'For this is a saying worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ died when we were without strength.' And mark, he died for the ungodly. Can you travel on with this? Can you say, Ah, that is my hope—I am a poor weak creature, he died for them that are without strength—so that a knowledge of my weakness, even that is an evidence that I am one for whom he died, because it will make me appreciate his death in the freeness of it, dying for me when I was altogether helpless. We say among men, there are plenty to help us when we can help ourselves; but here is One that helped us when we could not help ourselves, and when no creature in heaven nor on earth could help us; when we were without strength and ungodly. Canst thou say that thou seest thyself in this light—that thou feelest thyself to be in this condition: and that thy soul lays hold in the way of hope of this precious death of Jesus Christ; this death set over against thy weakness, over against thine ungodliness. And which, if I may use an apparently paradoxical expression, which think you will be the stronger, your weakness or Christ's death? Ah, his death will swallow up your weakness, and make you strong in the Lord. And which think you will be stronger of the two, your ungodliness or his godliness? Why, friends, his godliness, his death, will prove greater than all your ungodliness. And so he hath set his death over against our weakness and over against our ungodliness. And if you understand this truth, and feel your need of it, you will say, I care not what I suffer, what I undergo, nor how long I wait, if my hope be but real, and if it be my happy lot ultimately to realize those blessings that must result to those for whom the Redeemer died. Then again the apostle would give us to understand that this is the love of Christ, but not the love of Christ only, but also the love of the Father. 'But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' God the Father commendeth his love—that is the way he commends it; it is put in the present tense; not he *commended* his love, but he *commendeth*; he goes on now commending it. So the business of ministers is to set forth Christ as the gift of the Father; to set forth Christ as the expression of the Father's love; and to set forth Christ as the assurance of the Father's love. And therefore it is that Christ must answer to the Father's love—he must be a great Saviour in order to answer to the greatness of God's love; he must be a perfect Saviour in order to answer to the perfection of that love; he must be a sure Saviour, in order to answer to the certainty of that love; he must be an eternal Saviour, must save with an everlasting salvation, in order to answer to the eternity of that love. And so God commendeth his love. Look at his dear Son seeing us as sinners—and that is as bad a character as man can be under, that of sinnership against God—yet he commendeth his love. He does not ask us for anything but an acknowledgment of what we are; he does not ask us for anything but a testimony on his side, he brings us to say of ourselves what he says of us when he declareth, 'there is none righteous, no, not one; the imagination of the heart is evil, and that continually;' and that the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.' The Lord brings us to say that of ourselves that he has said of us; so that we shall become his witnesses in this respect also, to bear testimony that we are as deeply sunken and as deeply dyed as his holy Word declares. And then when he has made us his witnesses in this law sense of the word, to cause us to exalt him in judgment, he will then make us his witnesses in the salvation sense of the word, and make us one with him. If he declared that salvation is of grace, he will bring us to hear the same testimony; and thus, knowing the value of these things we shall

cleave to them. And here is something with which we shall never be out of patience—we may be out of patience with a thousand things, but we can never get fatally out of patience with these great truths.

But again, not only is Christ's death set over against our weakness and ungodliness, but also over against our sinnership. I cannot tell you how much I like that—I cannot tell you how much I love that—I cannot tell you how dear that is to my heart. Ah, in vain, in vain, my hearer, may you set your own works, your own deeds, your moral character, or whatever you may bring forward, in vain may you set these things over against your sins; your sins would consume all these things, but these things could not consume your sins. But when Christ's death is set over against my sins, then my sins cannot consume his atonement, but his atonement shall consume those sins. And thus the fire of God's wrath meeting upon him, both sin and wrath are gone. Oh what a sweet hope does this give us; the death of Christ set over against our sins; that death that is deeper than hell, that is high as heaven, that is longer than the earth, that is broader than the sea—that is the death he has set over against our sins. Is there one poor fellow mortal in this congregation that is saying to himself, I have no patience with such a doctrine? Ah, poor man, thou art deluded, thou art blinded, my worst feelings towards thee is this, may God open thine eyes, and give thee to see that so far from having no patience with such a doctrine, nothing else can really reach thy case as a sinner.

His death also is set over against God's wrath, and that for our justification. Being then justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath. What think you of the love of God, to put his dear Son into such a position, instead of putting you there, to have remained there for ever? what think you of the love of Christ in coming into such a position, instead of leaving you there, and you must have been there for ever; for we are all of us by nature children of wrath, and we should have had that to which we were heirs, we should have had that that would have been our right, if Christ had not stood there. But he came and stood in that awful place, and for us did sweat great drops of blood falling down to the ground; and for us died such a death as none but incarnate God could die. Thus we go in the death of Christ from step to step; whatever evil ariseth, the death of Christ is set over against that. Taking this view, is it any wonder that it should be written of the martyrs that 'they overcame by the blood of the Lamb?' And I do not wonder at the apostle coming to the climax; now mark, not only is the death of Christ set over against our weakness, and ungodliness, and sinnership, and enmity; 'for if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life,'—but the apostle now comes to the climax, 'And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. Why, the death of Christ is set over against our weakness, against our ungodliness, against our sinnership, and against our enmity, he having slain the enmity and we have received this, what then is our portion? why, to joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Now if you understand this, are brought to believe this, and to love this, then here your patience will be, you will have patience with it. You may be out of patience with the minister's tedious way of preaching it, you may be out of patience with other people's tedious way perhaps of speaking of it but you will never be out of patience with the fact itself, with the truth itself; you will never say, Ah, I have done with that, but as you grow in grace you will grow in acquaintance with this, and more and more bless God for such a shield, such a rock, such a defence, such an everlasting remedy, set in opposition to all your grief and woe.

The second feature of the patience of the saints, or that to which the patience relates, is the certainty of God's truth. Hence the apostle Paul upon this subject would not have us sleepy, he would not have us careless; he would have us be prayerful and be diligent in seeking the Lord, and praying

for wisdom and grace : and therefore he says, 'That ye be not slothful.' He is not there speaking of temporal things, but of spiritual things. Slothfulness in temporal things is bad : no question about it, very bad : and slothfulness in spiritual things is worse still. 'That ye be not slothful ; but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.' According to the modern phraseology it ought to be, who through the flesh and piety obtain the promises ; but here it is 'through faith :' ah, faith in Christ ;' and 'patience' to wait, holding fast the truth : 'who through faith and patience inherit the promises.' And what strengthened their patience was not only that of which I have spoken, the mediation of Christ, but the certainty of God's truth. 'Because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.' And so, after he had patiently endured, Abraham sojourned above a hundred years ; you have not gone quite so long as that ; his patience lasted out ; so did the antediluvians, their patience lasted out till they were a thousand years old, some of them. 'After he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife :' 'an end ;' now mark that ; 'an end of all strife.' In vain will sin strive to take me from God, God has put an end to it ; in vain will Satan strive to pluck me from his hands, God hath put an end to it ; in vain will death strive, in vain will hell strive, in vain will tribulation, or height, or depth, or creature, or anything else, be able ; God has put an end to all strife, the matter is eternally settled, never to be disturbed. If the human oath then, in matters legal, put an end to all strife, and settle matters legally, here is an immutable oath, founded in the priesthood of Christ ; and that priesthood of Christ has terminated the strife legally, so that peace and tranquillity universally pervade all the perfections of God ; peace and tranquillity must be the portion of the Saviour and all those who are one with him. Here is the certainty of truth. 'Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise,' that which men labour in our day very hard to hide from us. What canting rubbish we hear in our day. 'Do not believe, say they, those high Calvinists, dear friends, for the love of God is boundless, and all may have it if they like.' Pretty love, certainly ; love me to-day, and damn me to-morrow ; a pretty Saviour, certainly ; save me to-day if I am not too bad, and damn me to-morrow ; a pretty gospel, certainly, take me up to-day, and let me go to hell to-morrow. Why, these mawkish fellows, these ministers of the devil, with all their pretensions of God's great love, it is no love at all ;—it is a sham from first to last, there is no reality in it. Whereas in God's love, in God's truth, there is divine, intense, and infallible certainty. He shews to the heirs of promise—and I have no right to conclude I am an heir of promise if I am enemy to his truth : he shews them the immutability of his counsel, that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us—which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.'

And you see also the priesthood of Christ corresponds with God's immutability, corresponds with the certainty of the hope—for this hope 'entereth into that within the veil, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec.' Here is one scene of certainty, first the death of Christ set over against all my woe ; secondly, certainty, eternal certainty, as to my eternal destiny. Ah sin, thou monster, I need not fear thee ; Satan, thou old serpent, I need not fear thee ; death, I need not fear thee ; free will and duty faith, with all your cant I need not fear you ; tribulation I need not fear you : 'the Lord is my light and my salvation, I will not fear what man can do unto me.' Why, 'if God be for us, who can be against us?' My hearers, we seem to have been lost in a great measure to the ancient triumph of the gospel : we are coming into that mawkish spirit now, as though it was a crime to speak of the Saviour's perfection, or

Jehovah's eternal counsels. But the poor and needy will seek these things. But I must go away from this now: not away from it either, but to the next part of my subject.

II. Now the PATIENCE. What is it that tries the patience of the saints? I will mention several things. First, that before which a great many quail, that under which a great many bow, that which makes a great many twist, that which brings the hypocrisy of a great many to light, and what is it? That which is recorded in Mark xiii.: 'Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake; but he that shall endure,' that is, endure this hatred, 'to the end, the same shall be saved.' Ah, but I should not like such a popular minister to hate me. Why, the devil is more popular than the most popular minister that ever lived. Ah, but I should not like such a reverend gentleman to hate me: I should not like such and such persons to hate me. And what is the result? You see men that profess the same truths that I profess on the platform with free willers, in chapels with duty faith men. What is it all for? Why, lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. And what good are such men to the tried people of God? Go and hear them; why they are muzzled; they dare not thunder out against error: if they meet with a heap of chaff, they believe it is chaff, but they do not dare set fire to it: if they meet with a lot of rubbish, they believe it is rubbish, but they do not dare to set fire to it; and if they meet some hungry people of God, they don't dare feed them, they might let them have a peep at one corner of the loaf: and if they preach ten minutes gospel, they are obliged to stop, because that old woman with her muff, and that old man with gold headed cane, will be offended: obliged to stop and make an apology, and say, my friends, these truths are not to lead to licentiousness. You hypocrite, who ever thought of such a thing? the truth of God is holy, and just, and good. What are these apologies, these interludes for, these parentheses for? why, all to court the friendship of those of whom they are afraid. But remember you are to be hated of all men, your name cast out as evil; and if you have not made up your mind to suffer affliction with the people of God rather than to enjoy sinful compromise, and apostacy, and hypocrisy, then I say there is something materially wrong in your religion. I have no ill feeling towards any of these, but I would rather die this morning in this pulpit than live to see the day when I would cringe to any of them. Why, Milton actually makes the devil out to be better than such men, where he makes him say,

'To bow and sue for grace, that
Never shall be mine.'

And so I say, to bow and sue for grace at the hands of men, to compromise the truth, I trust never shall be mine. But to be a little mild now, I can be mild sometimes, you know; don't wilfully give offence to anybody, be courteous: and if offence be given, let your religion give the offence, and not you, for I shall get the blame if you do, depend upon it. There is a certain class of misjudging people generally blame all the faults of children upon the parents, and so the world will generally blame all the faults of the congregation upon the minister. I say then do not wilfully give offence; we will avoid all we can giving offence; we will live peaceably with all men, as much as lieth in us. Secondly, many of the Lord's dealings with you will try your patience. Ah, what a mystery it was to Job's friends. Why, Job was perfect and upright in Christ, and feared God, and eschewed evil in Christ. Job was a believer in Christ; and in that object of faith he had perfection; in that faith he was upright, and in that faith he feared God, for without faith it is impossible to please God; and he eschewed evil, got rid of evil in his personal practice, and by his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; and thus stood in the liberty of the gospel; and endured all the Lord's dealings with him without giving up the truth. You have heard of the patience of Job, and wherein did his patience

lie? His patience laid in this one thing, that he did not give up God's truth; he did not get out of patience with that: it is true he bore his losses at first; 'in all this Job sinned not:' but then that was when Job's God was with him, the Lord deserted him in a sense as a God of providence, but he was with him as a God of grace. He let Satan in upon Job as to his property, his family, and his body, but God kept the soul of Job all the time; so that he was strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; and could say, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: 'blessed be the name of the Lord.' Well, Job, you are a very nice man, it may well be said there is none like you in all the east, none like my servant Job. You may depend upon it that is the way men would have reasoned, and have inferred that Job's excellency consisted in something that he had constituted himself, instead of something that God had made him. But the Lord lets us into the secret; when the Lord hides his face from Job, he gets out of patience not only with himself, but with his very existence. And I am sure I don't know what I should do without such a scripture; for I have cursed the day of my birth many a time, I have: I have never cursed God's truth since I have known it, nor got out of patience with that, but I have wished almost innumerable times I had never existed; and have gone, I was going to say, almost farther than that. Were there not a case of the kind in the Bible, I should think I had done what a Christian could not do, and should despair. But when I see a man like Job with his patience so tried, he did not get out of patience with the truth of God, but he got out of patience with himself; but the Lord appeared again to him, turned his captivity; and made everything right; and that is only a pattern of the way in which he will deal with all his Jobs. So that for my part I do not make a meal of the faults of the people of God recorded in the bible; but while I feel myself to be a subject of the same things, I bless God that such things are recorded to keep me from despair, and help me to magnify the riches of his grace; and to join with Job, and say, 'He is in one mind; and who can turn him?'

One more trial I name, and with that I am sorry to say I shall be obliged to close, though I have many things to say, which may come in perhaps, if I should be so led, at the latter part of this verse. Another source of great trial, and one upon which I have had more quarrelling with the Lord than upon anything else you can name; a totally apparent want of correspondence between the promises of God and the experience of my soul. 'The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me.' I do not see that the Lord is doing anything for me. Here am I, prayerless, faithless, hopeless; the Bible seems to have no interest, the house of God a task to go into it—a task to preach; and if you meet a Christian in the street, and might say something spiritual, you turn your head the other way, and pretend not to see him, or pop round the corner, and avoid him. The Lord perfect that which concerneth me; I do not see that he is doing anything. I often say to the Lord, Lord, if I am to preach the word, how is it I cannot preach it always in such a way that there shall be no adversary, no one to gainsay an expression? How is it that I preach so many sermons apparently in vain? These things often try me very much—and then to myself, I wonder the Lord does not carry on his work better than this; and I have been out of patience with the Lord many times in his dealings with me in this respect. How do you reconcile it? Before I tell you how I reconcile it, I must have another word. The way-side hearer has a little of this experience: and he says, I am not going to be made miserable like this; if this religion is going to make me miserable, I will have no more to do with it—and off he goes. The stony ground hearer has a little of this experience, and he says, the minister is not such a nice man as he used to be; and the chapel is not such a nice chapel, and the people are not such a nice people as I thought they were; that is his excuse, so off he goes. The good ground hearer has much of this experience—and why does he not go away? Simply because he understands the value of the truth.