

# THE HIND OF THE MORNING AND MOUNTAINS OF DIVISION

## A SERMON

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“Turn my beloved and be you like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether.” Song of Solomon 2:17

HERE is a sinner brought to know Jesus; now with that man the things of this world are passed away, his own holiness and supposed excellency are passed away, and then at the birth of Christ the ceremonial law virtually passed away, and then at the death of Christ sin and death passed away, and then at the resurrection of Christ at the last great day all the fleeting and shadowy circumstances of this world will be done with forever. And do you see what is substituted in all these four departments for the shadow? Here is a man brought to know Jesus Christ; and now that man, instead of making the kingdom of this world his home, possesses the kingdom of God; the kingdom of God which the Lord has, promised to them that love him, is substituted for the kingdom of this world; the kingdom of this world passes away, but the kingdom of our God will never pass away; what a gracious substitution is this. Secondly, the ceremonial law is passed away, and Christ's substantial and eternal righteousness put into the place thereof. Third, our sins and death are passed away, and his salvation, his eternal and sure saltation, put into the place thereof. And, then, at the last day, the ultimate resurrection, mortality, corruption, weakness, and degradation, these are passed away; and immortality, incorruption, mighty power, heavenly image, substantial joy, eternal glory, put into the place thereof. How great is the meaning of the Lord's word; “Until the daybreak, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be you like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether.”

I notice our text under the twofold department in which it is presented; and in so doing, I notice, first, *the simile*, like a roe, or a young hart; and then secondly, *the position*, “upon the mountains of Bether.”

First. THE SIMILE. Now I think in looking into this first part of our text we shall find two things; first, *the devotion of Jesus Christ to God in his humiliation*; and, secondly, *the devotion of Jesus Christ to God in his exaltation*; and as we go along we shall notice the relations which these things

bear unto us. Now the first thing I think we shall find here is, that of the devotion of Jesus Christ to God in his humiliation. "Turn, my beloved, and be you like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether." It appears here that the church saw that Christ would be far from God, and she therefore desired him to turn to God. What, say you, was Christ afar off from God? Yes, he was, he came under our sins, and he was in what he suffered further, in one sense, from God than anyone else ever can be. He was, in coming under the broken law, afar off from God; and we shall presently show from the scriptures that what I am now saying is right. Think then for one moment when the dear Savior was the babe at Bethlehem, think of what laid before him. There is his way to God; but oh! how far he is off. He has a wondrous life, a life of privation, a life of poverty, a life of grief and sorrow, a life in which he should meet with such cruel slanders, such vile slanders, in which the worst epithets of hell should be put by Satan into the mouth of his agents, and hurled at the Savior; enduring the contradictions of sinners; he had this thirty-three years and a half life to live before he could reach God; and then he had to go through all our sins before he could reach God; he had to go through every suffering that sin had entailed before he could reach God; he had to endure every pang, he had to bear every burden, he had to undergo the infliction of every wound, he had to undergo every bruise, he had to bare his back to every stripe, he had to be subjected to the most awful chastisement that anyone ever could be subjected to. And the church evidently saw this, and she saw in the contrast that all other things were shadows in comparison of that which he should bring about, and she might well then call him here the beloved: "Turn, my beloved, and be you like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether." The Holy Scriptures tell us of the inmost soul of Christ under the circumstances to which I have referred. You would naturally say, what were his special, and peculiar feelings? And the scriptures are clear upon what his feelings were. I refer now especially to the 42nd Psalm. Christ under these circumstances thirsted for God, thirsted for the accomplishment of his obedient life, thirsted for the accomplishment of the warfare, thirsted for the achievement of the victory, thirsted for the term inaction of the great scene he came to work out; he thirsted for the joy that was set before him with an intensity to which we are at least comparative strangers. "As the hart pants after the water brooks, so pants my soul after you O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God, when shall I come and appear before God?" See how this accords with the Savior's own language when he said, "I thirst!" Ah, it was for our soul's, welfare that he thirsted; it was for the glory of God that he thirsted it was to bring about on our behalf that eternal glory which he has virtually brought about, it was for this he thirsted. Here then is the Person that answers to that.

How many a child of God has read that part, of the Psalm, and said, Well, I have not that intensity of thirst, my thirst seems feeble, my thirst consists merely of a feeble desire, and the most intense thirst that I have does not seem to come up to the simile there used. Well, suppose it does not; you cannot help that; yet be thankful you have any thirst at all. But let us view Jesus Christ in that scripture; let us view him thirsting for God. And I will tell you something else; he never thirsted for anything but God; that is to say, he never thirsted for anything that was not in entire keeping with the law and covenant of God. I may here repeat an observation I lately made, that Christ served God naturally; his very flesh and blood cried out for the living God; whereas our flesh and blood, in many respects, cry out, alas, against the living God; but Christ's very flesh cried out for the living God; he served God naturally and legally, in entire accordant with the law; and he served God covenantly, in entire accordant with the new covenant. Hence when he handed the cup in solemnity, and no doubt that solemnity mingled with an unutterable delight in his own soul, "This is my blood of the new testament;" not like the old covenant, that is waxed old and vanished

away; that is the shadow; but this is my blood of the new testament, the new covenant; a covenant that will not wax old, that will not vanish away, but a covenant that is everlasting, even the sure mercies of David. Here is his thirst for God: "Turn, my beloved; be you like a roe or a young hart;" as your thirst is intense, let my beloved in this way thirst for God. And if I have not so much thirst myself as I could wish, I will rely not upon my own thirst, but upon his thirst; I will rely not upon the amount of my experience, but will take what little I have as a humble evidence that I have a right to hope in the Lord, that I may hope in his mercy; and if I have not that intensity of thirst that I could wish I will bless God there is one thirsted for me, one sought God for me. If God look upon me apart from his dear Son, there is nothing but that which is displeasing; but if he look upon me in and by his dear Son, then in that way he can be pleased, he is pleased, will be pleased, and will never be wrath with us. Was the Savior congratulated in this by men? No. "They continually say unto me, Where is your God." Why, they despised him; he was despised and rejected of men. That Jesus of Nazareth, why, he is like nobody else; he is one of the most singular men possible; he preaches such doctrines as nobody else preaches; and he lives in that miserable way that no one else lives: we heard him confess that "the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man has not where to lay his head." Who in the world would be a follower of him? Ah, who indeed? if you view it carnally, if you view it after the flesh, if you view it in that sense, who would indeed? But if you can see it after the Spirit, who would not be a follower of him? who would not be like him? who would not be one with him? Ah, what an infinite difference there is between the carnal mind and the spiritual mind: that in which the carnal revels, that the spiritual mind, rejects and despises, while that in which the spiritual mind is happy, and has peace with God, and the certainty of God's eternal favor, that is that at which the carnal mind so kicks. And what did the Savior do? Why, "when I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me." He was cast down, not in a way of discouragement, no but in a way of sorrow. "Why are you," said Christ (for he is the speaker,) "cast down, O my soul? and why are you disquieted in me? hope you in God; for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance." Have you any doubt of these words being intended to personate the Savior, and to set forth that which he should feel? Go to his own language, and what is said of him in the New Testament, when he said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful; and he began to be very heavy and sore amazed." Do not think, my hearer, that the Savior ran through his work as a mere trifle: it was that which he had to endure that has sunken millions of angels to hell to rise no more it has sunken a world into the jaws of death and will sink millions to hell to rise no more. Yet when this mighty Person came into this scene, that, sin and that wrath that have hurled worlds to eternal perdition could not move him. Yet it was not an easy work, I say it was not an easy work; none but such a Person as this, who is God and man in one person, could achieve this wondrous work. Thus, then, he was like the roe or the young hart in his living and intense thirst for God.

I cannot leave this part without another remark: you will see how this feeling kept him in constant devotion; you see also how far we are from it. Is it so with us when we rise every morning, that our uppermost and most intense feeling is thirst for God? You know it is not. Is it so with all our undertakings and in every object we have in view, that there is no self in it, no desire to accumulate a little white and yellow dust, no meditation upon how much we will save, and then we will retire, and say to our soul, "Soul you have much goods laid up now for the remainder of your life, eat, drink, and take your ease." Ah, there is plenty of this among professors in our day: never was more I believe, so that some of those very professors that complain of some ministers going too far are the very men that ought to keep their mouths shut, for if Jesus Christ be not all in all, woe unto

such men: at any rate, they are the very men that ought to be glad of such a gospel. But then that would not answer their worldly purposes, or make them respectable in the eyes of men, if they once come in with that gospel wherein Christ is everything, and they are nothing. But I have not done with the 42nd Psalm yet. You recollect that God the Father appeared to Christ three times during his life, and that is recorded in the 42nd Psalm; there are the Savior's own feelings upon, it: he looked at what he had to endure, and when he was drawing near, when he was in the garden of Gethsemane, he remembered those manifestations and testimonies of God the Father to him, and took courage, he was strengthened. Hence, "I will remember you from the land of Jordan;" there is the first, when he entered his public ministry, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And said Christ, "I will remember you from the land of the Hermonites;" now we know from the Evangelists that the transfiguration took place in the northern parts of Judea; and where the Hermonites were he was transfigured, and God the Father, a second time said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And from the hill Mizar the word Mizar means *little*, a little hill; and Jerusalem itself stood on a little hill, there were larger hills surrounding it, but itself stood on a little hill. And, at Jerusalem, three days before he died, the voice came again; "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." I will remember this; I will think of this. And now what comes next? He looked back and saw this; he saw that he had come the path that prediction prescribed, he saw that he had lived, and thought and spoken, and acted as it was written of him, he saw that there was no crook, no fault, if there had been he would have been the first to discover that fault, but there was none; and he saw that God the Father was well pleased; that seemed to strengthen him. And what are the very next words in that 42nd Psalm? "Deep calls unto deep." Ah, no sooner had he looked back at these manifestations of the Father's approbation than he heard the deep reservoirs of God's wrath calling to the deep oceans of our sins, and these deep reservoirs of God's wrath and these deep oceans of our sins were brought to bear upon him. "Deep calls unto deep, at the noise of your waterspouts, all your waves and your billows are gone over me." We must arrive, my hearer, at perfect day before we can understand this great subject of Christ going into this sea whose waters roared, of Christ dividing this mighty ocean whose waves thus rolled against him, and thus making in the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over. Now the hart very often has very great dangers to go through before it reaches the water brooks there is a band of Ishmaelites there, with their weapons of war, to slay the hart if it makes a move towards the waters, there is a bear there, a wolf there, a lion there, a great many enemies; so that in many cases when the hart rushes towards the water brooks it loses its life before it reaches them. Not so with Christ Jesus: he had many dangers to go through: yes, they opened their mouths and gaped upon him like ravening and roaring lions, the bulls of Bashan, the mighty rulers of the day, and the assembly of the wicked, set themselves against him; but he rushed through the whole, reached the fountains of living water, reached the land paradisaical, where the river of God is full of water, which shall to eternity flow; and where, in eternal tranquility, he will lead all his people to living fountains of waters, while God will wipe away all tears from off all faces. I think the church has a great depth of meaning in our text, "Turn, my beloved;" you are come unto us, where we are now turn, my beloved, turn to God, thirst for God, rush forward like a mighty man rejoicing to run a race; reach the goal, obtain the prize, reach the promised land, be our forerunner to the possession of the land for your bride, and when you have possession of the land for your bride, then come and fetch your bride, then come and fetch me. And so, it is, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself." Here is Christ's devotion to God then in his humiliation.

And it also means his readiness, that though the Savior was quiet, there was an internal readiness, an internal quickness in the fear of the Lord. I say it implies his readiness. I have often thought that what is said of the Gadites may apply to him and "his people," applying to them in an inferior sense, in 1st of Chronicles, 12; it may be applied to his people in oneness with him, and the more oneness you have with him, the more ready you are to serve the Lord. Let Jesus Christ be my life, let him be my light, my sanctification, my salvation, then I can do as the Gadites did, and shall be a little like them. The Gadites came to David in the wilderness, it is said; and Christ is still in the wilderness, though he is in heaven personally, he is in the wilderness relatively. There is a poor man up there: we do not, think much of him; ah, that is the man I want. But he is not generally reckoned very respectable, sir. Oh; indeed? I suppose not. Rather dangerous doctrine: just the man I want. So if you want to find the Lord's people out, you must find them out by the evil that is said of them, not by the good that is said of them; and so they came to David in the wilderness. But it is said of them that they were "men of might; add men fit for the battle; that could handle shield and buckler." Christ is our shield, and some are very awkward handling that shield; well, what do you call then, say some, a good handling of the shield? why, such as ward off all darts, let them come from what quarter they may and if I handle Christ as my shield rightly, I shall turn him every way, let the darts of the devil come from what quarter they may, in that quarter I shall present Christ. If the devil says, you are a sinner; Christ is my sanctification. You are unrighteous; but Christ is righteous, and I am righteous in him. You are a poor dead thing; but Christ is my life. But you are in darkness; but Christ is my light. But you are under condemnation; but Christ is my salvation. But you deserve to go to hell; but grace will bring me to heaven by Christ Jesus. But see what sins you have committed, but Christ's blood cleanses from all sin. And, what follows next? Why, "their faces were like the faces of lions, and they were as swift as the roes upon the mountains." That will make a man preach well, and live well, and pray well and glorify God well; make him feel altogether at home. Now Jesus Christ then being like the hart and the young roe, means, I say, his devotion to God in his humiliation, as described in the 42nd Psalm: secondly, it means his readiness, and it means the readiness of his people in oneness with him.

It is expressive also of *his devotion to God in his exaltation*. Will not the Scriptures I am about to name, apply first to the Savior, and to his people too? Genesis 49:21, "Naphthali is a hind let loose; he gives goodly words," Naphthali means wrestling, and Christ wrestled with God, and Christ was loosed of the pains of death, it was not possible he should be held by them. And did he not give goodly words when he was loosed, when he came to his disciples, and said, "Peace be unto you?" When he said, "and your Father." And when he said to Mary, "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father?" And when he said, "Go and preach the gospel, baptizing them in the name of the Father," teaching them first, (let that be first,) "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world?" Did he not give goodly words? and does he not give goodly words? "Be you like a roe or a young hart," that is, in your devotion on earth, thus reaching for us, the fountains of living water; and then, in your exaltation, give goodly words! And so, he has, and so the angel answered with good words and comfortable words; and so, will the Christian when he is set free, he can give goodly words. Why, supposing the Lord were going to call you to heaven today, and deal with you as with good old Simeon, as you have been singing this morning; why, as soon as you entered heaven, what good words could you give! And if an angel said, where did you get these good words? Why, Jesus Christ gave them to me, if he had not given them to me, mine would have been all bad words, but his good words have taken all my bad words away, and the good tidings have overcome the evil

tidings. He is free, and we are free, and we are all free together. I know it is the lot of some of the Lord's people to live a good deal in bondage through fear of death, they cannot help it; but then it does not always follow, that all are obliged to do that, because others are obliged to do it. I have found, these last eight or nine years, I am not so easily shaken as to my interest in these things as I was years ago; I seem, so settled down. Nor in all the darkness I experienced last year, when I was ill; if I had died, I felt as sure of my state as I could wish to feel; because I knew, if God intended my condemnation, and had not intended my salvation, he never would have made Christ to me, what Christ is! And he never would have revealed to me the immutability of his counsel, in the way he has; and he never would have given me that unalterable hate, that immutable hate that I have, to every doctrine contrary to the perfection of Jesus Christ; and I would rather never open my mouth again, than I would be found one with those that can compromise the welfare of the souls of men. I know some men that are rank infidels, that reached their present position of infidelity through a fleshly, friendly compromise with half-way men. Every particle of his blessed truth is infinitely more to me than mortal life. What is mortal life? why, beset with thorns, and provocations, and trials, and disappointments, and shadows; and I do not know what all, and, yet I do know what all; but when I come here to Christ, then every truth is a drop of honey, yes, every particle of truth is a drop of honey, I do not wonder that one should say "The law of your mouth," meaning the law of truth, the law of liberty, "is better to me than thousands, of gold and silver."

Now then, Christ gives goodly words, he is as much devoted to God as he ever was, it is his eternal employment to seek the welfare of his people, he is in activity, like the roe, or the young hart, turning to God, devoted to God for us and now in his freedom still devoted to us; and we sharing in that spirit, are made free too. The Old Testament saints were well acquainted with this. Habakkuk looked round, and he saw that Nebuchadnezzar, or the Babylonish nation, (for that is the power to which the mind of the prophet was directed;) would come into Judea and cut everything up. Ah, what will you do now? Well, "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice, in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet." there is the freedom. Now the hind is both swift and sure-footed, and so is the Savior was, and is, sure-footed. I am sure I am a poor stumbling thing. I daresay you are in the flesh; why, who is not? Every man stumbles after the flesh, statesmen stumble, and commercial men stumble, and scientific men stumble, and ecclesiastical men, stumble; all make blunders after the flesh; but saints are sure-footed after the Spirit; cannot get them to step out of the truth, they are sure-footed there. "And he will make me to walk upon my high places." So then, let all creation fail; we have here, in God by Christ Jesus, all the flowing rivers and the tree of life, and all the provision we need, for if Christ had not reached that heavenly world we never could have reached it; but he having reached it we reach it by him.

Second. I now notice the last part of our subject, which contains two ideas. The church wished Christ to be like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether. Bether means *division*; the first idea is *division*, the second is that of *eternal distinction*. And mountains mean elevation; that you stand high; and so, Christ stood independent of men. There is a range of mountains that marks the promised land and what is that range? "Whom he did foreknow," why, there is a mountain of division; ah, says one, I do not like that at all, I can see there is election there; and that is where I differ from you. Well, God grant you may be brought up to that mountain; it is a mountain of

division. "He also did predestinate," another mountain of division: "them he also called;" did not leave it with one lump of clay to call the other lump of clay; no, the yes and no minister says, there, I have told you, it is at your peril to refuse what I say; well, it would be at our peril to receive his lies. And do not say I have not warned you, apiece of clay arrogating to himself the prerogatives of the most high God. Why, such men with all their pretended humility are as proud as the devil; and gratulate themselves in private on the ground of the mighty works they do for God; and so their language at the very last will be, "Have not we" this big *we*, "done many wonderful works?" But the Savior says, "I never knew you." "And whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them:" the same persons, "he also glorified." Here is the range of mountains. I rejoice to see Christ in God's foreknowledge, I rejoice to see Christ in God's decree as foreordained; I rejoice to see Christ in God's calling, that he was called to the priesthood; no man takes this honor to himself; Christ was called of God to all the relations that he bears, and we called by him; I rejoice to see Christ justified in the Spirit in all he did; I rejoice to see Christ glorified. Here is the mountain of division then that separates the church from the world; Saul and his men on the dark side of the mountains, David and his men on the light side of the mountains; and Saul and his men came to nothing, and David and his men came to the throne; and so the devil and his men shall come to nothing, Christ and his men shall come to the throne. This subject of division is a favorite subject of mine, I like it. Ah, when I think of it, the great God, look at it my hearer, to take notice of you from all eternity is there no praise due to him for it? and then and there determining you, unalterably determining you, to eternal life; is there no praise due to him for that? when you remember that when you came into the world he watched over you, and cared for you with more solicitude than a mother could have done; that is the language of the apostle, that "God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace." He saw to you every day, and whatever dangers your mortal life was exposed to, he took care it should not be destroyed; and when the time and means which he brought about met, the arrow reached your conscience, and you began to pray; by-and-bye Christ's righteousness is revealed, you are brought to receive it, and you are justified; and as sure as you are justified you shall be eternally glorified.

And these mountains signify also *distinction*. Ah, my hearer, what an infinity of contrast between the destiny of the man that is thus brought to know Jesus Christ, and the man that lives and dies without this knowledge. And, in order to set forth this distinction, I cannot do better perhaps than close my little discourse this morning (I say little because it is little in comparison of the subject) than refer you to the 33rd of Deuteronomy: "The eternal God," here it is, by Christ Jesus, "is your refuge;" let us never forget that, that he is our refuge by Christ Jesus. Now there must be a door or a way to enter into the refuge: you cannot enter into the refuge without a way of entrance: and hear what is said, "I," said the dear Savior, "am the door, by me if any man enter he shall be saved;" and again, "Him that comes unto me I will in nowise cast out." "And underneath are the everlasting arms, and he shall thrust out the enemy from before you," sin, and death, and tribulation: "and shall say, destroy them." Now is it any wonder that it should be said of these people that they shall dwell alone, upon these mountains, these gospel mountains, this heavenly land; "Israel then shall dwell in safety alone, the fountain shall drop down dew."

Now to how many of us does the close of that chapter apply? "Happy are you, O Israel; who is like unto you O people saved by the Lord, the shield of your help, and who is the sword of your excellency; and your enemies shall be found liars unto you:" yes; even if they can say some truth against you they shall be found liars, because the death of Christ, has taken away all sin has laid

against you. The Christian is complete in Christ; and if you attempt to bring anything before God to the charge of that Christian, then that Christian will ultimately meet you by what he is in Christ; and you will look like a fool which you are now in the attempt, if you are attempting, any of you; you will say, Oh dear, what I said was true, but I see now the man is without fault after all. Ah, to be sure he is. Well but he had faults down there in the old Adam. And had not you any? You just mind your own business, you will have quite enough to do, I am sure. But to the believer he says: "Your enemies shall be found liars unto you; and you shall tread upon their high places; because your standing shall be higher than theirs; your high places can never sink, but their highest exaltations must come to nothing; the enemy must fall like lightning from heaven, but the church of God is founded upon the Rock, there she must eternally stand.