

SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

AFFECTION TO THE RIGHT OBJECT.

A S E R M O N

PREACHED ON SUNDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 20TH, 1863, BY

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AT THE SURREY TABERNACLE, BOROUGH ROAD.

"I have set my affection to the house of my God."—1 Chronioles xxix. 3.

THERE is great uncertainty as to the amount of the talents of silver and gold spoken of in this chapter as the cost of the building of the temple of the Lord. It is by the learned in those matters reckoned, and so different is their reckoning, that some reckon it at ten hundred millions,—that, of course, must be in a measure fabulous,—all degrees of difference, down to six millions; and it seems so left that we cannot ascertain precisely what the cost was; and perhaps so left to make it more strikingly typify that which it is intended to typify. When you read of that temple being very costly, you are led at once to the words, or at least to the subject contained in the words of the apostle Peter, that "Ye are not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

Our text divides itself into three parts. Here is, first, *the object*—the house of God. Here is, secondly, *the act*—"I have set my affection to the house of my God." Here is, third, *the relation*—"the house of my God."

First, *the object*—the house; for it is worthy of very much more attention, perhaps, than we have ever paid to it. Let us get, then, before I set out to make a few remarks upon the house as a figure of things to come, a clear definition of the main point, the main part that I wish to show up. First, then, this house is intended to represent that state of things which is by Christ Jesus,—a state of peace with God and of prosperity. Hence the Lord says, in the time of the second temple, "I will give peace in this place, saith the Lord of hosts." It was in this house where the mercy-seat was. Here was peace; here the sinner found peace. We see in Solomon's prayer how beautifully this is set forth. Now with this view (and this includes everything,—peace with God), when we look at what sin hath done, and what and where we are by sin, and then look at what the Saviour hath done, and see the peace and the prosperity that are by him, I am sure we cannot have greater ends at which to aim; and I am sure it is after that order of things that we must be eternally happy. Hiram, king of Tyre, seems to have had some understanding of this; for when the tidings came to him that a house was to be built in Jerusalem, a palace for the God of mercy, a palace for the God of peace, that men might there obtain mercy and find peace, the king of Tyre rejoiced, and the people with him exceedingly; that while this people had become a great people, instead of their going on to minister judgment to the nations around, as had been their chief characteristic hitherto, now there was an end to judgment, and mercy was about to reign; so that the king of Tyre rejoiced, and granted all Solomon's request. Now, my hearer, can you read this without believing that it has a typical meaning? Can you not

come, are you not Biblical scholar enough as a Christian to come into the New Testament and to see the antitype of the king of Tyre's rejoicing; to see the antitype of these Sidonians' rejoicing? Can you not come somewhere into the New Testament and find something analogous, and there get the ultimate meaning? Can you not come to the 13th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, where the apostle was preaching at Antioch in Pisidia, and where he dwells upon what the Lord had done for the Jews as a nation, and how that he had promised that a Saviour should appear in the world, and how that that Saviour had appeared, and how that he was risen from the dead, and how that he had brought in a sure covenant, or a covenant, even the sure mercies of David, and how that he was no more to return to corruption? He never himself was corrupt, though he went into the grave of corruption; yet he himself personally saw no corruption; therefore, when the apostle says he is not to return to corruption, he means the place of corruption, the grave, where men's bodies do corrupt, and come to the dust, according to the Lord's sentence. Now, and that all that believe in him in this hope, that all that believe in him should be justified, and receive forgiveness of sins, that "the Gentiles besought that these words"—concerning this dear Saviour, concerning this mercy from God, concerning this peace with God, concerning this escape from the wrath to come, concerning this blessed promise of the blessed God—they "besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath." And so the apostle, when he spoke among the Jews, for the Lord having a people among the Jews, it was needful the word should be first spoken to them, in order to gather out from among them the election of grace; "but," saith the apostle, "seeing ye put the word from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles;" they will hear it. "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord; and as many"—Ah! say some, what a pity that Paul had not kept that Calvinism out of the Gentile world, instead of bringing it in at the very first!—"as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Thus the very tidings of building a house for the great God, a magnificent palace for the great God, where mercy should reign, where peace should be obtained, and that should be a house of prayer for all nations,—for Solomon prays for the stranger as well as for those that were near,—this caused, I say, some Gentiles to rejoice, then, as a type of that greater, more holy, more refined, and more lasting rejoicing that shall be by Christ Jesus. He, indeed, is that temple of which he speaks when he saith, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days;" and it was raised, to go down no more for ever. And so now God in Christ reconciles the Gentile world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. Think you that David did not see all this? Is there any one Old Testament writer that was more clear in the new covenant than David, more clear concerning the great Melchizedek than David? more clear concerning the indescribable, the unutterable sorrows of the blest Redeemer, than David? Was there any one more clear upon the resurrection of Christ than David? See his 16th Psalm, from which Peter, on the day of Pentecost, so largely quotes, and from which the apostle, at Antioch in Pisidia, quotes also. See, I say, the 16th Psalm. David saw the Saviour rise triumphant from the grave; he saw him take possession of fulness of joy; he saw him take possession of pleasures for evermore; and he saw him do all this for sinners, and for David among the rest; and therefore no wonder that his affection,—viewing this house only as the shadow, only as the type,—no wonder that he should thus, having this apprehension of things, feel his soul drawn out to the ultimate object, through that type which the Lord had appointed.

Then the end is answered, because we know that if we love him, the great secret of it is, that he hath first loved us; and if he loves us, all is

well. Love hides a multitude of faults; love worketh no ill to its neighbour; love is sure to be busy in looking after its own immediate objects. Thus, then, the very tidings of this house, when it causeth the Gentiles to rejoice, is a beautiful figure, as shown in the 13th of the Acts, how the tidings of the eternal house, how the tidings of the new-covenant state of things, how the tidings of new-covenant-mercy and new-covenant peace cause the hearts of men to rejoice.

I have no doubt that the materials all have a spiritual meaning. You read in the verse preceding my text of gold, and silver, and brass, and iron, and wood, and glistening precious stones, and marble. Here are seven different materials, and you are well versed enough in the Scripture to know what their explanation spiritually is. You know that the Lord's people are called gold.

"Yes, as gold from the dross he shall bring thee at last,
And then thou shalt praise him for all that is past."

And so the gold typifies his people, as by tribulatory experience brought out from all false confidences. They are the Lord's treasure. Scripture represents them also as purified; and so they shall be tried, not merely as gold but as silver. And then the brass may have some reference to them; if not to them personally to something connected with them; hence to denote their strength. If the gold and the silver denote their preciousness—and all the people of God are precious to God, and Christ becomes precious to them—the brass and the iron must have some reference one way or another. And so it is written that "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass," to denote the firmness of their possession of the promised land, to denote the firmness of their tread, to denote the certainty of their march, to denote their final victory. "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass, and as thy days so shall thy strength be." And then you read also here of the wood, and that must have a spiritual meaning too. Was there not a great deal of wood cut down from the forest of Lebanon, and put into shape and form, brought by floats to Joppa, and there landed, and brought to the temple, and formed part of the temple? And is it not so with us? We all of us naturally belong to the forest of this world. Did not the word of God come and cut us down, and did it not cast us, as it were, into a sea of trouble, and did it not bring us to Joppa? That was our first landing-place, and Joppa means *comeliness*; and Christ is our landing-place; and so those tribulatory experiences brought us to Christ, and there we became landed, so we became part of the temple. And then there are here glistening stones and precious stones; and so these again represent the Lord's people, that there are none like them. They are not common workmanship; but as these precious stones are literally the finest workmanship of the great laboratory of nature, so the people of God are the finest of all the workmanship of the blessed God; there is no workmanship that equals them. They are constituted what no other people are; as the Saviour is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person, they are to be like him. There is no God like our God, there is no Christ like our Christ, and there is no people like his people; all other things are common in comparison of that uncommon glory which he eternally shows forth in what he constitutes his people. The materials have a meaning, then. And it is said, and a scripture I know I have touched upon before, but I have enjoyed the words—they have been very precious to my soul, and though you may say, Well, we came for bread, and you are going to give us a stone, yet somehow or another, as water flowed in ancient time from the flinty rock, I have got something out of the scripture I am about to mention. I have thought of it, and dwelt upon it, and meditated upon it, and blessed God for it, and have thought how true it was; and I have thought, if nobody else could see as I do, and could believe that is the meaning—I believe I have the meaning, and I have the comfort of it, and the rejoicing of it, and I do not mean to part

with it, namely, "Great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones," hewn out, as the next verse says, by the stone-squarers. "Great stones;" that must mean great sinners;—great sinners, that suits me exactly. There was no stone so heavy that it could not be got out of the quarry, that it could not be brought to the temple, that it could not be got into its place. Great stones! Ah, I said, here am I, a great sinner; and all the stone can do by itself is to sink lower and lower, unless there is something to keep it from it; and so all I could do was to sink lower and lower, until I sank into hell, if God had not put his everlasting arms beneath the weight of my sins; all I could do was to sink down, down, until I sank into hell. A great stone, a great sinner. Ah, I thought, with what heavy groans the Saviour lifted us up out of the pit when he died. It made—the exercise of that omnipotent power by which he redeemingly lifted us up, made the globe tremble, darkened the skies, rent the rocks, opened the graves. Great stones, great sinners. And that delighted my soul; to think of a great Saviour, not to save little sinners, but great sinners. "And costly stones." And so it is costly. "Ye are bought with a price." What is the price? We can never tell; must not attempt to reckon it. The answer is, Jesus Christ himself is the price; he gave himself into our place, he gave himself for our sins, he gave himself for us, he loved the church, and gave himself for it. We may well say, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." Here, then, the tidings made the Gentiles rejoice. The materials set forth the work of the Lord, severing his people from the world, great stones denoting great sinners. Ah, my hearer, how sweet the thought that a minister has never any occasion to be afraid he shall meet with some case too bad, some sinner that has gone too far! And hence the reasoning that we have about the unpardonable sin,—which I think those who will take the trouble to read my sermon upon that question, upon the unpardonable sin, which views it in a very different light from that in which it is in general viewed; it is generally held in a way that is dreadfully detrimental to the gospel, and hence a great many things have been brought forward as kind of signs as to those who have committed the unpardonable sin. I have said, and I do say now, that there is in reality no such thing, except those sins the Lord is not pleased to pardon, as I in that sermon have shown. And therefore, if I meet with a man, let him have been whatever he may, if he be ten thousand times twice told blacker than the devil himself, if he is still living, if God hath not yet cut him down, I have no right to cut him down; if he is still within reach of the gospel, and he begins to have a sight and sense of what he is as a sinner, I say, if he were ten thousand times twice told blacker than the devil, if that man is blessed, black as he has been, with a sight and sense of what he is, when we look at the greatness of the mercy, when we look at the infinite power of redemption, when we look at the person of Jesus Christ, we dare not despair. Why, saith Jesus, "Preach the gospel to every creature." Well, but Lord, perhaps we shall meet with some too bad. No, you will not. Some whose sins are of too deep a dye. No, you will not. "Preach the gospel to every creature," let them be as bad as they may; go rolling on in all the majesty of *I will* and *they shall*. Is anything too hard for the Lord? Able to save to the uttermost; and who can tell, as Dr. Hawker says, what that uttermost is? Great stones and costly stones. But nevertheless, they were hewn, and there were the stone-squarers; and so men must square with God in order to fit into the building. You must square with the mediatorial perfection of Christ, you must square with God's free grace. Thus, then, there are great sinners redeemed; there is the cost; then brought under the forming hand of God, and formed for that building which shall stand for ever. Here then, again, we have the same idea, namely, peace with God; mercy from God and peace with God; mercy from God brought us the tidings, tidings of peace with God; the very materials typifying sinners showing that the Lord in mercy

saveth sinners, being great stones to show he saves great sinners, costly, to show the price of redemption; their being hewn, to show that they shall be brought under the forming hand of God, and to make them square with the building of mercy; and thus mercy doeth these things, and so we have peace with God. "In the world ye shall have tribulation." And so it was that the stones and all the materials were to be fitted for the temple before they reached the temple; there was to be no hammer, no cutting off, no nailing on, no deficiency, no superfluity; everything was to fall quietly into its place when brought to the temple;—the same as the saints shall at the last great resurrection day, when the Lord shall raise his people from the dead, everything shall fall into its place with infinite exactitude, with quietude, with peace and grandeur; "then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

Again, this house seemed to delight rather in two things among other things, and that was in tens and in squares. In tens: and I do think, when we meet with tens used rather frequently, that we may turn the Ten Commandments into a kind of key, to unlock the meaning of some of those things. There were ten lavers to wash in: and there is no difficulty, I am sure, in seeing the spiritual meaning of that. It stands simply thus: There are ten commandments in the law, and by every one of those commandments you are unclean; and so here are ten lavers to wash you from the sin against every one of the commandments; so that after you are washed in these ten lavers, these gospel truths, one commandment comes and says, I can find no fault with him; another commandment comes and says, I can find no fault with him; and so all the ten come one after the other, and say, I can find no fault with him; and so, when the Commandments can find no fault, then there is a universal challenge, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." Not one commandment can find any fault; they are clean.

Thus, then, the law can find no fault, and the universal challenge is given, "Who shall lay anything to their charge?" Second: There were ten tables, and these ten tables had provision on them. Each commandment had its demand, and Jesus to each commandment said, Here am I; and the law received him, and is quite content with him. So he was all the food the law wanted; he gave himself up to the law, the Ten Commandments, and Moses is satisfied, the law is satisfied. That is one thing it represents. And then the other is not only the plenty, but the peaceful way in which you shall enjoy that plenty. There are ten tables, to denote that the law is satisfied, and that you shall enjoy that plenty without any interruption from the law. Then is fulfilled that scripture in the 128th Psalm, that "his children shall be as olive plants round about his table;" green, living, and flourishing; peaceful and happy; no inclement skies, no adversary nor evil occurrent; and this peaceful state of things also includes abundant provision; for all Israel in Solomon's day were sitting every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan to Beersheba, and there was not an adversary nor an evil occurrent. Here, then, again, mercy from God, and peace with God.

Again, as there were ten lavers and ten tables, so also there were ten candlesticks. The Lord was determined not any one of the tables should remain in the dark, and the Lord does not intend the provision he has made for his people to remain in the dark. We have plenty of gospels in our day, when we ask them bread, do indeed give us a stone; plenty indeed when we ask a fish give us a serpent; plenty, when we ask for an egg, give us a scorpion. Not so with our God; he will show to his children in his light where the provision is; they shall see the plentifulness of it, the sufficiency of it, and shall be satisfied with it; they shall eat and be satisfied, and shall praise the name of the Lord their God. Thus they shall see the food; they shall not eat in the dark; they shall know what they are eating. Eat things in the dark sometimes, and you will hardly

know what you are eating. No: the Lord's people shall see, they shall understand; they shall distinguish the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth from error; they shall have light to see this. Thus, then, the temple delighted in showing, as I think these things do, how completely the law has been met, how clean, how provided for, and what a perfection of illumination we have by Christ Jesus the Lord.

Also that temple delighted in squares, and that again is another delightful truth. First, the brazen altar was square, and so Jesus has made everything square. Sin threw things out of square; and I suppose there is not a man under the canopy of heaven that has not something out of square. I suppose that the best governed, and the best behaved, and the best regulated family has something out of square sometimes. But, bless the Lord, in and by Christ Jesus everything is in its place; a place for everything, and everything in its place; all square, all made square; mercy and truth meet there, righteousness and peace embraced each other; it is square, all made square; as just as it is merciful, and as merciful as it is just; as true as it is gracious, and as gracious as it is true; and so grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. But also the porch was square; Solomon's porch. The word Solomon signifies *peaceable*, and that porch was square. And there is a man sitting in the beautiful gate in Solomon's porch, and this porch was square; this was the way of access to God. This again typifies the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Is he not the door? is he not the porch? is he not the beautiful gate? is not his mediatorial work the peaceable porch? may not a poor creature place himself there until the Lord shall send a Peter along, and the poor creature expects a little favour, not such a great favour as was manifested? Ah, thou art brought into the porch, thou art brought part of the way to God. "Silver and gold have I none; such as I have I give thee; in the name of Jesus Christ rise up and walk!" And he rose up, and walked, and leaped, and rejoiced with them in the temple; and that brought the attention of others upon them, and so the gospel was preached, and God was glorified. And then, third, the breastplate upon the High Priest was square, to show that Christ represents us in that perfection of his sacrifice which he offered on Calvary's cross, that he presents us in the perfection of that righteousness which he wrought out and hath brought in. And then, fourth, the holy of holies was square. That is heaven, that is a type of heaven, the holy of holies. Christ is not entered into the type, but into the antitype, heaven itself. That is the only family that never will get out of square; so well regulated, and each so happy, that they can never be out of square. The holy of holies was perfectly square; so heaven, everything will be square, everything right, no disorder there; not a pain, not a sigh, not a tear, not a regret. No: one will not say to the other, I wish I had been called by grace as early as you were, but both will unite to bless God that they were called at all. One will not say to the other, I wish I had been preserved as you were, but both will bless God that they are there. All will be square; and all past circumstances, let them be what they may, shall be subservient to the establishment of that eternal harmony that shall reign in those happy regions, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest. A great many more things of a like kind I could go on with, but I suppose I must say no more upon this. Now I should think you can think of this pretty well. You can think of the Gentiles rejoicing, because you have rejoiced sometimes. You can think of the materials, because you have had some very severe and trying experiences to square you into the building. You can then think of the costliness of these things, because you do prize the price by which your soul is redeemed from hell, and on its way to everlasting glory. And you can think also of the several tens,—the ten lavers, the ten tables, and the ten candlesticks; and you can think of the four squares, and the word *four* itself will remind you of the square. There is a square

sacrifice,—all is right; there is a square breastplate,—all is right there in representation; and there is a square porch, so that I can approach God in accordance with righteousness. And then the holy of holies was square; and all to set forth the delightful truth that all these are by mercy from God, in order to give us peace with God; and if we have thus peace with God, we have confidence in God, and is anything too hard for the Lord?

I will now come to the next part of our subject. Now, then, viewing this house as indicative of the same thing as contained in the angelic anthem, of peace on earth, good will toward men, glory to God in the highest; David thus seeing the ultimate spiritual, glorious meaning of these things, his affections were drawn out hereby to God. "I have set my affection to the house of my God." Now, first, he set his affection there understandingly; he understood after what order of things he was placing his affection there. Thousands in our day that have a love to religion, but they do not understand what it is they love. I was in love first with my own works; I found out that mistake, and took my affection away from there. I was then in love with the Church of England prayers, went to church and said their prayers, and took my affection away from there. Then I set my affection upon free will, and there I worked as well as I could; but I found it was no use, took my affection away from there. And then I set my affection upon duty faith, and tried that, and again found that was no use; so I took my affection away from there. What did you do with it then? Kept it to myself. Well, you loved nothing then. No; I do not think I loved anything. Well, you are a curious creature. Only there were all the elements, though I did not love anything. I said, I cannot love myself, and I cannot love this Church of England prayer-saying, I cannot love duty-faith, I cannot love free-will; I see nothing at all to love. But when the Lord in his own time opened unto me an everlasting covenant, opened to me that order of things in which the dear Saviour shone forth in the perfection of his work, God in the immutability of his counsel,—that drew out my affection, I at once understood the truth; my heart became fixed, and there it has been from that day to this. And I could tell you a great many secrets about this, that just in proportion as you are enabled to plant your affection there, it is astonishing what a good harvest it will yield. You could not plant the tree of your affection in such good ground anywhere else; you will be surprised what a wonderful revenue it will bring; it will bring you life, and light, and consolation, and liberty, and riches; yea, everything, more than thou canst desire. Why, say you, then the Lord help me to plant the tree of my affection there, if it will grow like that. Well, it really will. "Let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might." "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." We shall never have to mourn here at the loss of the object of our affection; we shall never have to mourn that we were mistaken in setting our affection there. No one ever yet repented of truly setting his affection upon the blessed God; no one ever had cause to repent, but cause abundantly and eternally to rejoice, that ever he set his heart there, his affection there. So, then, let us love with understanding; let us understand what we love. The good-ground hearer is the man that understands the word; knows the value of it. So David set his affection toward the house of his God understandingly; the Spirit of God had given him the plan, he understood the whole, knew what he was in love with. Then, as he set his affection there understandingly, so he set his affection there sincerely. "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." I do solemnly think that hypocrisy in this matter is one of the most awful states that a man can be in; to pretend to love the truth, and yet not love it; to pretend to love it, and yet care but little whether you hold fast the true gospel or

give way to a false one. What a state England would be in were it not for the few that abide faithfully by the truth! Would your duty-faith men preach so much gospel as they do were it not for those persons they are pleased to call *hypers*? No; they would not; they would very soon thrust aside even what little gospel they do preach. But they are obliged, for shame, to preach a little gospel; they would be so exposed, they could not stand before one half of their own people if they did not. And even the Wesleyans themselves, their fire goes out sometimes, and they are obliged to come and warm themselves by a good Calvinistic fire, or else they could not go on; they get a great many of their materials from the Calvinists. The Wesleyan ministers, they don't wear those Quaker-like coats so much as they did, or else you might see three or four here on Wednesday evening sometimes, as busy with their pens as possible; their fire would go out if it were not for us. Thus, then, in abiding by the truth you not only encourage others, and show your sincerity, but drive the enemy back, and make others advance more gospel than they otherwise would. Like an old woman I met many years ago in the coach, though she did not know what I was; I would not let her know that, or else she would not have listened to me; she was admiring the Wesleyans, and I told her what the Calvinists said. "Well," she said, "I wonder you don't join a church; certainly you must have read the Bible, you seem to know very much about the Scriptures." I had not said I did not belong to a church, mind. And the old woman said, "Well, I do begin to think the Calvinistic religion is the best of the two." And I said, "I wonder you don't go over to it, then." "Well," she said, "I really think I shall." So then, I say, let us love the truth sincerely; let us abide by it firmly; and we know not what use it will be to our own souls; yea, it will be of constant use, of everlasting use, of infinite use. All those saints of God that held fast the truth of God in ancient times, see what use that truth was to them. If the three worthies were cast into the fire, the truth of God brought them out again. If Daniel was cast into the den of lions, the truth of God brought him out again. The Lord gave Jacob yea and amen truth to go to Padan-aram with, and that truth preserved him while he was there, brought him back again, and until his very dying day he rejoiced that he had set his affection upon the truth, and set it there sincerely. Love the truth in sincerity. And, lastly, upon this point, David set his affection there effectually. They obtained the gold, obtained the silver, and obtained all the materials, and the house was built. There were, no doubt, some croakers in that day that said, Oh, dear me, what a mad scheme has David got hold of now! Why, he is out of his mind. Why, it cannot be done. But it was done. And when the help of those around was needed, God gave those around a heart to help them, and the work was done, the temple was completed, and the Lord filled it with his presence and with his glory.

And then, again, the house may be said, then, to represent four things. First, Christ Jesus; he is the house. Second, the church; that is the house. Third, heaven; that is the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Fourth, and last, our places of worship; they are houses, and we have to bless the Lord for them, and to bless his holy name that he is a God of providence as well as a God of grace. Now, I have no time to dwell this morning upon the relation here, but I shall have another sermon out of this chapter. Ah, say you, I see what you are driving at. I am glad you do. Well now, you have said nothing about the new chapel; I see you are driving that way. Of course I am. I set my affection upon the house of my God; my heart has gone before, and I have nothing to do but follow after it, that is all. Where your heart is, there, you may depend upon, it you will go. God hath drawn my heart there. I go to Christ because my heart is there; I go to the Bible because my heart is there.