

MAJESTY AND MERCY

A SERMON

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“He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet.”

Psalm 18:9

THIS Psalm appears to have been intended by the psalmist as a testimony of what the Lord had done for him, not only in calling him by his grace, but in preserving his life from the attempts of his enemies, especially those attempts made by king Saul. And David was now in a position to review the interpositions of the Lord on his behalf. There are times when we can say nothing. As the wise man said, “There is a time to speak, and a time to keep silence.” And when the Lord brings his people into circumstances of perplexity, and trial, and depression, then it is a day with them of adversity, and a time to keep silence. “In the day of adversity consider.” But then that day of adversity cannot last always; the captivity must be turned; for “light is sown for the righteous; gladness for the upright in heart;” then comes the day of prosperity, and then shall they be joyful. David also interweaves in this Psalm references to the Lords appearing unto the Israelites in ages before his day, as well as in many parts of the Psalm pointing forward to that glorious appearing of the dear Savior to accomplish eternal salvation.

Our text, then, lies before us in a twofold form. Here is, first, *divine condescension*; “He bowed the heavens, and came down.” Here is, secondly, *the majesty of his presence*; “darkness was under his feet.”

We shall apply the first clause of this text to the Lord’s appearing at Sinai, for that is the type of his appearing to his people spiritually. And I shall want also, in this first part, to show the difference between the Lord bowing the heavens and coming down, and his rending the heavens and coming down. You observe, in the 64th of Isaiah, his coming down there is associated with rending the heavens; here it is “He bowed the heavens;” there it is “He rent the heavens.” And the reason for that will, as we go along, become clear. I like personal religion; and I think that every sermon ought to be preached direct home to our own personal experiences, for we cannot be too clear upon all essential matters as to whether we be partakers of the grace of God savingly, or not. Now, then, he bowed the heavens at Sinai; that is, the legislative heavens, and brought down a fiery law to man; and also the institutional heavens; in other words, the Levitical dispensation, which also was given to Moses at Mount Sinai. He bowed down those heavens, and he came with those heavens.

He came with the law and showed the majesty of it; and then he came with the Levitical heavens and took up his abode in the holy of holies, on the mercy-seat, according to that which he graciously appointed. Let us, however, look at these matters as matters of personal experience. Now, first, he bowed the legislative heavens. There he appeared by a fiery law, and in order that the people might be acquainted with the terrible majesty of God, and with their need of a Mediator. And Moses looks upon this conviction of our state, Moses looks upon this, our being taught the need of a Mediator, he looks upon it as a distinguished favor; he looks at it as containing in it the purposes of God's mercy. Hence Moses asks this question, "Did ever a people hear the voice of God speaking out of the fire, and live as you have lived?" My hearer, do you know whereabouts lies the force of that? If not, I will answer. It stands in this way. Cain had some idea, it is true, of his punishment, but no real conviction of his state; and the old world, when God did speak to them, it was in a destructive way; he destroyed them; he did not speak to them in mercy, but he spoke to them in wrath, with an intention of destroying them. And so, the rich man, he never heard the voice of God speaking out of the fire until he heard it in hell; there he, for the first time, when he was in hell, learned the terrible majesty of God; and what he learned there showed him the need of mercy, but even what he learned there did not instruct him as to God's way of mercy. So the natural man now, if you are unconcerned about your state, and destitute of the fear of God, and of a praying heart, you will, by-and-bye, hear God speak out of his fiery law to you; but, that is, living and dying in the state you are in; it will be to your eternal condemnation, it will be to your eternal banishment from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. See, then, whatever terror, whatever deep solemnities, whatever trembling's we may be the subjects of here, how distinguished the favor to know something of the majesty of God, and our need of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us look closely at this. Wherever God intends salvation, he gives those whom he intends to save a sight and sense of his majesty, and especially of his presence; that everything is open and naked to the eyes of the Lord; and a sinner, for the first time in a lifetime, is made miserable. He feels there is a hell beneath him, he feels there is a Judge watching over him; yes, there is an influence brought into the soul that leads him to this conclusion; and whatever different opinions there may be as to a law-work being essential, call it what we may, I am sure there is not a saved soul but has experience enough to be led to this conclusion, namely, "Let not this voice speak to us any more" "for they could not endure that which was commanded." It is a great mercy to be concerned about what is commanded. Men trifle with the commandments of God, and God lets them alone, and lets them go on, and they think that God is as indifferent about their conformity to those commandments as they themselves are. "You thought I was altogether such a one as yourself." Now, not one jot or tittle of that law can fail; so, it is a great mercy to be concerned about those commandments. And then, when conviction comes home, and makes you feel that your heart is anything and everything but that which the law of God approves, you will then see you cannot endure that which is commanded, for you are commanded to be as holy as the law is holy; nothing short of this will do; and you feel you have a heart and nature that makes that impossible; and you are commanded to be as righteous as the law is righteous; you also feel this to be a literal impossibility; and you are commanded to be as loving as described in the word of God, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your strength, and with all your mind; your neighbor as yourself;" there must be no drawback; you feel also that this is an impossibility. Also, you are commanded to be as constant and infallible as is the law of God. Here, then, where there is this conviction, such an one will confess that he cannot endure that which is commanded. Then Moses, a remarkable thing, directly brings in God's salvation. After reminding them thus of God's mercy in convincing them of their need of a mercy-seat, of their need of an

interposing priesthood, he then reminds them of God's salvation. Thus he bowed the legislative heavens, the law; and comes down to one, and then to another, and makes each one feel this, that the legislative heavens, the law, is as brass over the sinner's head, and it makes the earth, as it were, as iron under his feet, and there is no hope from beneath, from anything he can do; there is no hope in heaven; such a one is then sunk into despair. Now then, this is God's law, that law that must stand good. Then Moses brings in the salvation that God wrought from Egypt, upon which I will not now enlarge, but rather remind you of that institutional, Levitical heaven which the Lord bowed, brought to them and brought in. If you notice, in the twentieth of Exodus, the very first thing after the revelation of the law was that of the altar. "You shall build an altar." So then, to answer this solemn matter, in comes the priesthood, the Lord institutes sacrifice. And to a sinner who is thus brought to see and know where he is by the law, oh, how pleasing the Savior becomes. The dear Savior comes in, and comes in in his obedient life, and that answers all the righteousness the law demands; and all we want is to understand this, to believe it, and to receive it. And then comes the priesthood, namely, the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. The word of God says that "they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them; but your right hand and your arm, and the light of your countenance, and because you had a favor unto them." You will observe that all this was brought about by the priesthood, and that which is connected with the priesthood. "They got the land in possession by your right hand," the right hand pointing to Christ. The priests, not the people, but the priests, who were a type of the Savior, as soon as these dipped their feet in Jordan the waters parted hither and thither, and there was a way for the people to go over on dry ground. Where is there a Christian that does not see Jesus here? If you make Jordan a figure of our sins, they would have carried us away down to the Dead Sea; if you make Jordan a figure of our tribulations, or a figure, as we are in the habit of doing, of death, or in any way. When the priest's feet were dipped in the waters, they parted hither and thither, and thus they came into possession then of the promised land by the priesthood. But let us understand the whole. Here was also the ark: they bare the ark upon their shoulders, that was the ark of the covenant. So, the new covenant rested upon the almighty shoulders of the dear Savior. Now, if any of the people had taken the ark on their shoulders, the waters would not have parted; and if the priests had stepped into the waters without the ark, in that case the waters would not have parted. Ah, say you, I see what it is; if a sinner undertakes to manage matters himself, Satan will not care for him; the waters will not part; no, the way is not made by the arm of flesh, and you must leave it entirely with our God, you must leave it entirely with the great High Priest of our profession. Yes, if the priests had dipped their feet into the water without the ark, then the waters would not have parted. So, the dear Savior; he must not only live, but he must live according to covenant order; he must not only die, but he must die as it is written. "Grace," says the forty-fifth Psalm, pointing to Christ, "is poured into your lips." Christ received the everlasting covenant, and he must do with that covenant according to the order of that covenant. "Do this in remembrance of me: this is my blood of the new testament," that is, of the new covenant; both must go together. Thus, then, they obtained possession of the land. "by your right hand," that right hand seen by the priesthood in the ark of the covenant, that right hand seen by the priesthood of Christ and the everlasting covenant. "And by your outstretched arm," that mighty arm seen by what the Savior achieved "and by the light of your countenance," there is the Lord's presence, "because you had a favor unto them." And much more I might say and must say just another word. They approach the walls of Jericho. How are those walls to come down? How are the people to obtain the victory? In what way is it to be done? Are they to trust in bow, or arrow, or sword, or the arm of flesh? No, but the same that brought them through Jordan, the same order gave them the victory. They compassed

the city, the ark on the shoulders of the priests, just as the Lord commanded; nothing to do but simply abide by the covenant, abide by the priesthood, abide by the order, and there were the trumpets to sound out God's order of things. Presently the time comes; the Lord, who had bowed the heavens, this Levitical dispensation, who had bowed these institutional heavens, brought them down, constituted them their heavens, when the moment came the walls fell down flat, the victory was complete, the victory was entire, and the song of every right-minded man was like that on the eastern shore, when they came out of Egypt, that "the Lord has triumphed gloriously; he has given us the victory." Here, then, he bowed the legislative heavens, to teach the people the solemnities of his majesty. So now he bows the legislative heavens into the souls of his people, as he did Saul of Tarsus. Saul of Tarsus for the first time saw what an awful distance he was from God. Saul of Tarsus heard God speaking out of the fire, but was not too late; he was not in hell, he was on earth; he heard God speaking out of the fire, in order that he might be prepared to hear God speaking from the mercy-seat. And so, in the Lord's own time, he who had heard God speaking out of the fire, lived, and in God's own time heard God speak from the mercy-seat. "The God of our fathers has chosen you, that you should know his will, and see that Just One, and should hear the words of his mouth." Thus, then, in this twofold sense he bowed the heavens and came down. He did not send the law without coming with it. The letter of the law never yet gave any one a true knowledge of sin; no, it is when God comes with that law. And that dispensation was nothing, only as God was with it, only as he himself was with the people. And there is something of a similar kind, I admit, rather symbolized than not, in the case of Elijah. There was a mighty wind, that rent the rocks and mountains; there was no mercy there, nothing but destruction there; then a fire, but there was no mercy there; and then an earthquake, but there was no mercy there. Is this the way the Lord is going to deal with me, by wind, and fire, and earthquake? This symbolizes not only soul trouble, but those mysterious circumstances that, more or less, attend the pilgrimage of all the people of God through this world. Then how did the scene end? "Then a still, small voice," and that still, small voice soothed all his agitations and troubles. The winds had alarmed him, the still, small voice of mercy calms him; the fire had smitten him with terror, the still, small voice of mercy delivers him from that terror; the earthquake had made him tremble lest his soul should someday be swallowed up past recovery, the still, small voice placed him upon the rock of eternal ages, and enabled him to rejoice. And thus, the Lord bowed the heavens, the legislative and the institutional, the one to teach his terrible majesty, and the other to show his mercy. "He bowed the heavens and came down." Sinai would have been as nothing by the law, unless God himself had been there. So, the law of God now; the law of God has no killing power, the law of God has no terrifying power, the law of God has no alarming power, only as the Lord comes with it. Oh, what a difference there is between the absence and the presence of the Lord. And so, it was with the ark of the covenant; that had no power, only as the Lord was with it. Just so with the gospel, the gospel has no power, only as the Lord comes with it. Thus, then, he bowed the heavens, brought down this legislative system, this law, and also instituted that order of mercy typical of the order of mercy which I presently have to say a word upon. There is to the man who knows the majesty of the law, and knows what Jesus Christ has done to deliver him from it, and knows how free he is, according to that scripture in the eighth of the Romans; "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." To walk after the spirit is to walk by that faith in Christ that works by love. See then the unspeakable mercy of thus knowing the majesty of God. Moses, when he came down

from the mount the first time, his face did not shine; he looked very dull, and looked very gloomy, hung his head down; didn't know what to think of it; got the law of God in his hand. Why, he says, every one of those laws condemns me, every one of those commandments condemns me. Well, but Moses, perhaps you are going to a very nice people, and they will help you. Nice people! nice people! why, they have set a golden calf up since I have gone; they are sinners, and I am a sinner. And he was so vexed the law worked such wrath, that down he dashed the tables, broke them all to pieces. You are a pretty law keeper, Moses, certainly, break all the commandments at once! When I was under God's law, when I was first made concerned about my state, I could have torn God Almighty from his throne; I hated the very thoughts of there being a God; I hated the very thought of eternity; I could have tom the Bible to atoms, I could have crushed everything; because I said to myself, There is no hope for me; I am damned for time, and damned for eternity. And so, in attempting to make matters right, I made them worse than ever. The law works wrath, brings to light rebellions you thought you would never be capable of. Ah, if you were to work as hard as you could for a man, and he came and found fault with you, that would irritate you, would it not? Suppose he were to keep you without food, would not that irritate you more? And suppose he were to lay stripes upon you in addition to that, and suppose he cast you into a dungeon in the night, would not that irritate you the more? Just so the law of God, if we attempt to please that that way, it always finds fault with us, gives us nothing to eat, lays stripes upon us, casts us into prison, and leaves, us with this despairing sentence, "You shall not come out thence until you have paid the very last mite!" So, Moses' face did not shine. But come, let us see now if there is not something else. So, Moses was called up to the mount again. Now come, here is the mercy-seat, here is a priesthood; and now, Moses, I will condescend to give you the particulars; what kind of a tabernacle it is to be, what kind of priests, what their services, what their array, what the order, everything. Ah, dear, blessed covenant God, this is quite another scene altogether. A rebel like me, a wretch like me. Ah then, here's pardon, here's mercy, here's power, here's love, here's grace, here's favor. I am as happy now as I can be. And he was so filled with the glory of the Lord, that when he came down from the mount, after God had bowed the Levitical heavens, and through them showed him the Christian heavens, for Moses saw Christ, the day of Christ, and wrote of Christ; Moses well knew Christ, by these Levitical heavens he saw the dear Savior represented, and his face shone with the glory of the Lord. So it is now; the law will vex us; but the gospel in its freeness, in its fulness, in its sovereignty, in its efficiency, in its determination, it will brighten up the saddest countenance, will comfort the heaviest heart, will set at large the most strongly imprisoned soul, swallow up mountains of guilt; and cause the soul, as it were, to be like the chariots of Amminadib, and bound over the mountains of freedom, and sing with one of old, "He makes my feet like hinds' feet, to walk upon my high places;" and cause it to rise with wings as eagles. The scene is changed. Here then is mercy in contrast to terrible majesty. Well but, say you, Moses still has the commandments; how about that? You still have those tables, Moses, how is that? They are written again; so, you could not do away with them by breaking them; no; they are as whole as ever. What are you going to do with them, Moses? Going to keep them? No. Going to be as good as they are? No. Going to please God by them? No. What are you going to do with them? I am going to put them into the ark; that's the place; into the ark of the covenant, under the mercy-seat; so that the mercy shall be above the law. And so, the gospel is above the law; mercy rejoices against judgment. And I am glad to put them there. He knew that typified the dear Savior taking that fiery law into his heart, taking that fiery law into his hands, magnifying, fulfilling it, and the law is quieted, and quieted forever; and now mercy reigns, grace reigns, Christ reigns, so that we become dead to the law, the law becomes dead to us, and we rejoice in the sweet freedom

wherewith the Savior has made us free. Thus, then the condescension of the blessed God bowed the heavens and came down. So, if we are Christians, he has thus dealt with us, he has come down to us, and taught us that the law is that which we cannot endure; but the gospel is that which we can endure. Professors generally make a great deal to do about the law; they can endure the law, because they do not know what it is but cannot endure the gospel. The Christian is just the reverse of this; he cannot endure the law, but he can endure the gospel. The carnal mind boasts of the law but cannot endure the gospel; the spiritual mind trembles at the law flies from it, receives the gospel, not only endures sound doctrine, but rejoices with all his soul therein.

Again, when the Savior is spoken of as coming down, he rends the heavens when he comes, 64th of Isaiah, "Oh that you would rend the heavens, and that you would come down: that the mountains might flow down at your presence." Rend the heavens, what heavens? The very heavens that God brought down, set up, established by Moses, were the very heavens that Christ came to rend in sunder, the very heavens that Christ came to put an end to, the very heavens that must pass away before the presence of the Christian heavens. Do you not read something like it? "The veil of the temple," as the symbol of the whole of that covenant, was rent in twain "from top to bottom." That mercy-seat is wanted no more, there is a better mercy-seat; that holy of holies is needed no more; now it's to be heaven itself; the Jewish priest is needed no more, now it's to be the great High Priest of our profession; the earthly Canaan is needed no more; now it's to be the Canaan that we love, the inheritance that is on high; where, without a drawback, let, or hindrance, the lines fall to us in pleasant places, where we have a goodly heritage. No longer the royalty of David, that royalty has answered its end; the royalty of David now passes away, and the one Eternal King comes that shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end. No longer now merely fruitful harvests and vintage, but a better harvest, a better vintage, an order of better things altogether. "Oh, that you would rend the heavens." They saw the difference between the Levitical heavens and the Christian heavens. David was clear upon this; he was not only in the Levitical heavens when he said, "He has made with me an everlasting covenant," but in the Christian heavens. David was not only in the Levitical heavens, but in the Christian heavens, when he was led by the Holy Ghost to seek to know what one Divine Person had said to another in the deeps of eternity past; "The Lord said to my Lord, Sit you at my right hand, till I make your foes your footstool." Here was David in the Christian heavens. Thus, in the one case, God bowed the heavens; in the other case, he rent the heavens in sunder, and they are to be organized no more. The apostle, taking a view of this same subject in another form, said, "He has blotted out the handwriting of this broken covenant that was against us, and has taken it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; spoiled principalities and powers, swallowed up death in victory, brought life and immortality to light." But who shall rend the Christian heavens? Who shall rend one lamb from the omnipotent arms of the Great Shepherd? Who shall rend the child, however little in faith, whose prayers are but as a whisper out of the dust, and whose songs of praise are in the singer's estimation a mere nothing, want to praise the Lord more; yet there is a decision for the truth, and a sincerity and a love to it; who shall take that child of God out of the hands of God the Father? Who shall rend the kingdom of the dear Savior? David was in the Christian city, spiritually so, when he said, "Jerusalem is a city built compact together." The walls of the old Jerusalem were thrown down; but who shall throw down the walls of salvation? The foundations of that city were razed, not one stone left; but who shall overthrow the foundations of God's eternal truth? If those truths be overturned, what shall the righteous do? The waters of Canaan are in a great measure dried up; but who shall dry up that river that proceeds out of the throne of God and the Lamb? The

trees of the earthly Canaan are withered, a few solitary trees about, just a sign of what the land once was, but who shall blast or blight that tree of life that is in the midst of the Paradise of God? "Oh, that you would rend the heavens!" In the one case he bowed the heavens; in the other case he rent one heaven and brought another heaven with him. The Lord said to the Old Testament church, "I have put my words in your mouth that is, words of promise, declarative of what in the Christian age he would do. "I have covered you in the shadow of my hand," taken care of you, "that I may plant the heavens;" that is, the new heavens. And when Christ was born in Bethlehem, the heavens were planted. "That I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth;" that is, the new earth; this glorious scene of things; "and," on the ground of so doing, "say unto Zion, You are my people." We are living in a day when that old wives' fable of an earthy millennium, there are some men zealous for it up to the boiling point, and yet not one scripture can they bring to bear out their notion. It's a pity; I lament it, because it so obscures the gospel, and has a tendency to make men look for something on earth more than they have. There never will be anything on earth while the word lasts more than you have now. You have the gospel now, you will never have another gospel; you have the Spirit of God now, you will never have another Spirit; you have the Christ of God now, you will never have another Christ; you have God now, you will never have another God. It will go on just as it is going; only one can but pray, of course, for the expansion and extension of the glorious gospel of God. Let us therefore understand things spiritually. Jesus Christ's heavens, that he has planted, are the last heavens; he is the first, and he is the last; there is no dispensation to come after the present dispensation, except that of eternal glory. Thus, then perhaps I have made this matter somewhat clear; I hope I have, the Lord coming in his majesty to teach us our need of mercy; then coming in that mercy to reconcile us to himself. And thus, these very heavens that God bowed in the Mosaic dispensation, or by Moses, were rent in sunder and abolished by the Savior, and the Savior has planted a new testament dispensation, which is to last forever. I do not want another life I only want to live the life that I have in me out to perfection. I do not want another light I only want to go on till I get into the perfection of the light I now have. I do not want another sanctification I only want to go on till I get to the perfection of that sanctification that I now have. I do not want another righteousness I Only want to go on till I reach the perfection of that righteousness that I now have. I do not want another inheritance, but that which is in heaven. I do not want another Holy Spirit, another Jesus Christ, another God no. Let us, therefore, look at the eternity of these things, and having nothing hereafter to look for but eternal glory, and I am sure that's quite enough.

Now, the last part of our subject. I hardly know what to do about entering upon it, "Darkness was under his feet." Just a word upon it. Now the darkness here, as at Sinai, has one meaning, and when applied in the Christian sense, has another meaning. The darkness under his feet at Sinai means obscurity, concealment: they saw no similitude. Great emphasis laid upon this at Sinai, that "you saw no similitude." There was only one man there that saw a similitude, and that was Moses; he saw a Divine Person in human form, up in Mount Sinai, for so the Lord said, "My similitude shall you behold." How did Moses see that? Why, when the dispensation of mercy was given, then appeared a Divine Person in human form, to represent the future appearing of that Divine Person in actual human form. He had so appeared to Abraham; this Divine Person in human form had so wrestled with Jacob; this Divine Person in human form had so appeared to Manoah and his wife; had so appeared to Gideon, and some others. But the Israelites at large saw no similitude; darkness, obscurity; they saw no pattern to which they could be conformed; they saw nothing that could give them any hope of access to God. And so, God in the law, what is he there? A consuming fire. What

is he in the law? Thick and impenetrable darkness. What is he in the law? A distant God, and between us and him there is a gulf fixed that none can ford. "Darkness under his feet," therefore, at Sinai, means the terrible majesty of his presence; yes, Moses, the man of God, was commanded to set bounds to the people, lest they should come near, and to keep them at a distance; and when God himself came, the people removed, and stood afar off. And happy the man that knows spiritually something of this; he will, as John Bunyan says, like the publican, stand far enough off to leave room for a Mediator. But in conclusion, for I cannot say one half or one quarter of what I have thought and enjoyed upon this subject. Nice thing, friends, to have fellowship with God. You know what Jesus. Christ says, that "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace." If ever you get out of the range, out of the circle, of his work, and covenant, and person, you are sure to dash your foot against a stone, pick up a thorn, or get under a burden, or into a cloud, or into a crook, something or another. Depend on it, you will never find any rest anywhere but in Jesus Christ. "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace; in the world you shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer," I will bring that right by-and-bye, for "I have overcome the world." Now the darkness, when applied to the Christian dispensation, has quite another meaning. If we take the darkness here to mean first, the sin of the people, I mean as applied to the Christian dispensation, Christ kept that darkness under his feet. Sin has trodden us down into its own mire, all of us, as sinners considered; but it could not tread down Jesus Christ; he remained undefiled: he kept that under his feet. Hence, he says, "I will not fear when the iniquities of my heels compass me about;" no. Our sins compassed the Savior about, but he always kept his feet upon these serpents, these adders; these dragons he trampled underfoot; the dear Savior, treading sin under his feet. And so, the people of God tread sin under foot by faith, by their oneness with this Almighty Conqueror, Christ Jesus the Lord. Then, secondly, the darkness may mean the world, for the world of darkness, and Christ kept the world under his feet. Not in one instance did the world gain dominion over him; but he always walked about it, never partook of its spirit, always abode in the spirit of prediction, the spirit of the Father's good will, rejoiced as a strong man to run a race. Thirdly, the darkness may mean Satan; he is the prince of darkness; Christ kept him under his feet. Satan never gained one advantage over Christ, not one. He has gained a thousand over us; will not gain many more, though; soon, be over with him, and that he knows. But he gained none over the Savior; there is our delight and our victory. Fourthly, darkness may mean tribulation; Christ kept that under his feet. Not so with us always, our tribulations move us; I confess they do me, and have made me many times say with David, "I will speak in the name of the Lord no more."