

SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

THE GARDEN OF EDEN.

A Sermon

PREACHED ON SUNDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 18TH, 1864, BY

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AT THE SURREY TABERNACLE, BOROUGH ROAD.

“And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden.”—
Ezekiel, xxxvi. 35.

WE may take this garden of Eden to mean the church of God in her gospel condition; that is our subject this morning—the church of the blessed God in her personal, manifestive condition. And as I go along, may it be the lot of you that are brought in to see that you are brought in; and those of you that are yet without, and to whom the gospel has hitherto been as a land of drought, may the Lord in mercy open your eyes, and give you to see that the desolation is not in the gospel, but in your state; that the desolation is not in the church, but in the world; not where God is, but where God is not; where Satan reigns, the prince of darkness, to hide from your eyes those things by which alone we can be saved from the great conflagration and eternity of woe which is yet to come. I shall try, then, as I am obliged to be concise, to notice our subject under a three-fold aspect. First, *the transition from this desolation to this heavenly, paradisiacal state*. Secondly, *that God and the Lamb are the glory of this Eden*. Thirdly and lastly, *the seven-fold analogy between the typical and the antitypical Eden*.

First, *the transition from this desolation to this heavenly, paradisiacal state*. The word Eden means everything that is delightful, lovely, and pleasant; and of course its object is to set before us the blessedness of the gospel state of the church. Who then are the persons to whom such a wondrous promise belongs? The word of God is very clear in pointing them out, and they are pointed out thus: “Hearken unto me, ye that seek righteousness.” That’s one feature; that’s the man that’s beginning to see where that life is that can never die, where those trees are that can never wither, and where that sun is that can never go down, and where that tranquility and blessedness are that can never be lost. “Hearken unto me, ye that seek righteousness;” that is to say, seeking to be righteous. This is the first thing; when the Lord begins his work of grace in the heart, the first thing that such an one doth is, seek to be righteous. And in most cases, unless he has some natural knowledge of the truth before he is called, he is pretty sure to seek to be righteous in a way in which before God he never can be righteous. For you will find that natural men are perpetually making this grand mistake, this serious, this fatal mistake; namely, that they are pleading their righteousness before men, as though it was a righteousness between them and God. Hence how many, in my time, have I in their dying hour visited, and all I can get from them would be this, “I have never done any one any harm, and if I have done a little wrong, I hope the Lord will forgive me; and as to those that have wronged me, I freely forgive them; so that altogether I think

there is not much for me to fear." Thus, you see, ignorantly they bring forth their own supposed righteousness, and suppose that this will recommend them to God. Here is the fatal mistake that all of us by nature make; but "by the works of the law shall no flesh living be justified;" and apart from Jesus Christ, the declaration stands that "there is none righteous, no, not one." But then let us see, when this becomes a serious matter—the characters I have referred to, they so speak just to put off the matter, and just to quiet themselves; but if I am speaking to a seeking soul, just beginning to seek, I would say to you, Be not thou like unto them; if you are seeking wrongly, the Lord enable you to seek rightly. And how are you to seek rightly? To seek rightly is this. The Lord Jesus Christ did not live for himself; let that be impressed upon our minds, that he owed no obedience for himself, that he lived a life of obedience, and that he died a death of suffering, suffering in his death that which sin had entailed. And he that sees this, and seeks God by what Jesus Christ has done, he is seeking righteousness rightly. For the Israelites, that sought righteousness partly by their own doings, never obtained it; but the Gentiles—the sinner who, convinced of his state, came with, "God be merciful to me a sinner," feeling his need of mercy,—they attained unto righteousness, even the righteousness of faith. So, then, "Hearken unto me, ye that follow after righteousness." So, if you are following after righteousness, see it is the righteousness of Jesus Christ; and if you are following after, for that is included in it, peace with God, see that it is that peace that is by Jesus Christ, as beautifully described in the 27th of Isaiah, "Or let him take hold of my strength," that is, Christ; "let him believe in my dear Son. Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth." "Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me." Now, then, if we are following rightly, it will be by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; but if we are following wrongly, and we are sincere, the Lord will hear our groaning, and will open up his word, and put us right. We have often said, and in passing along I may just make a slight reference to it, we see how ignorant the eunuch was of the way of salvation of the soul. He did desire to know; he was seeking to be righteous before God, he was seeking reconciliation with God, he was seeking to escape the wrath to come; and the Lord knew, infinitely better than the man himself knew, what he needed, he therefore sent him a suitable minister, who came to the eunuch whilst reading that part of the word which contained, though he didn't know it at the time, the very things that he was seeking after; so that "Philip began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." And the man became a happy man, and went on his way rejoicing. Now the Lord says, "Hearken unto me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord." Where is the difference between the two? Why, the difference is this, when you see what Jesus Christ hath done, when you see that he can save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him, then you want the Lord himself to make it yours; you want the Lord himself to bring home the word with power; your language then is, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." Unless I am told by thy mouth that it is mine, I dare not claim it. I cannot cry "Abba, Father," without the spirit of adoption; I cannot say, "My beloved is mine," unless he shall speak with power to my soul, and I feel that he has embraced me in the arms of everlasting love; and when the Lord doth this, then my soul will be at rest. Thus, then, it is not merely seeking righteousness, but seeking the Lord; first, that you may by him know that it is yours; and secondly, seeking the Lord, that you may stay with him in that gospel paradise into which he brings you; for with him you are in safeguard; he that seeketh your life seeketh his life, but with him you are in safeguard. Thus, then, here is a seeking after a righteousness by which to be accepted of God; secondly, here is a seeking after the

Lord himself, to realize our interest in the same. Now the Lord says, "Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn." This rock does not mean Christ; this rock evidently means fallen nature, in its hard, barren, and sin-blasted condition. So that before you were hewn out of the quarry of nature, the word of God made no abiding impression upon you. Do you recollect what is said in the 8th of Luke, in the parable of the sower? And I am glad there is a little variation of rendering there; it helps me to understand this part of my subject. While in the other parable it says, "And some fell upon stony ground," in the 8th of Luke it says, "And some fell on a rock, and soon withered away for want of moisture;" no root. Just so while in a state of nature; the word falls upon our rocky hearts, it takes a temporary hold, but away it soon goes; our profession soon goes off, our concern soon goes off, and we go off with it; and the last state of that man, after this bit of profession, is worse than it was before; he is more hardened than ever. Oh, he says, I know what religion is; I have tried it, and it is all nothing. But you have not tried it, man; you think you have, but you have not. So the word fell upon a rock. But when hewn out of the rock, when the Lord hews the soul out, it becomes a living soul; it was before dead in sin, but now is a living soul; now the word takes root; now you understand, and hold fast, and prize the word; now you feel that to let the gospel go, the promises of the gospel go, would be to let Christ go, and to let God go, and to let the salvation of your soul go. And you will say, Whatever I lose, let me hold fast God's truth, for that is my life, my shield, my buckler; that is the lamp that will light me through the valley of the shadow of death; that is the voice that will always speak in my favour. If I have ten thousand voices on earth against me, I shall always have the voice of truth for me; for the voice of truth is, "I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me." Thus, then, they are hewn out from the quarry of nature. "And to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged." What an expression that is!—"the hole of the pit." And what is that? First, sin. What is that but the pit of God's wrath, and the pit of death, and virtually the pit of hell? Saith one, "Thou hast delivered me from the lowest hell." Now see, then, as though the Lord should say, See what I have brought you from. You were a part of the sunken rock of nature, that is still sinking; and when this terraqueous globe shall pass away, the whole rock of unregenerate nature, whoever may form a part of that rock, must sink into everlasting perdition. To be hewn out, then, of that sunken rock, and to be brought to Zion, made a living stone in that building, the topstone of which shall be brought home with shoutings of "Grace, grace unto it," is indeed to be brought from desolation into a paradisiacal state and condition. And then, after we have marked their character, that they follow after righteousness, and seek the Lord, and contemplate what they are brought from, then they are to look to the pattern of what grace will make them; "Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you." You know what is meant by looking unto Sarah. Sarah is allegorically the figure of the new covenant, in contrast to the old covenant. "We, brethren, are not children of the bond-woman," Hagar and her son, to be cast out; "but of the freewoman," Sarah. We are thus to look to Sarah as the pattern of that freedom we have in Christ Jesus. "And to Abraham your father. I called him." So he has called you. Why were not your brother, your father, your wife, husband, friends, or relatives, why were not they favoured with the same conviction that you have been favoured with? Why were they not made as much in earnest about their souls as you are about your soul? Why should you know the truth? I thought just now, when you were singing that line of the hymn,—

* Vast were the settlements of grace
On millions of the human race,"

I thought, I wonder how many in this congregation this morning can say each to himself, I have a good hope of being one of those happy millions. "Vast are the settlements of grace;" they are indeed vast; the provisions are infinite. "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." "I called Abraham alone," in a way I did not call others. "And I blessed him." The blessing was twofold; first, in the revelation to him of Jesus Christ, for he saw the day of Christ; second, in the revelation to him of the immutability of his counsel; those two things. So he has to you, revealed Jesus Christ to you, and revealed the immutability of his counsel to you. "And increased him;" mark that; so he is called, and blessed with this twofold revelation, the perfection that is in Christ, and the immutability of the blessed God; and increased. When you get the blessing, you are to go on increasing; grace is to be increased, mercy to be increased, peace to be multiplied: blessings are to go on, blessing after blessing, grace upon grace, until we shall say at the last, "Thy gentleness hath made me great; and thou, which hath showed me great and sore troubles, shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth, comfort me on every side." And now, to show that the Lord hath a meaning in this that pertains to his people down to the end of time, it says, "For the Lord shall comfort Zion." There is a kind of explanation of the way in which the foregoing is to apply to us; "and he will make her wilderness"—is not that descriptive of what we are as sinners, apart from Christ, apart from God?—"her wilderness like Eden;" a happy place, neither adversary nor evil occurrent, where the blessed God dwells in a way we shall have presently more particularly to state. "And her desert like a garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody." Just as we are brought to realize the preciousness of Jesus Christ, then there is the voice of melody. Those are wonderful seasons when we can forget earth, the good and the bad, when we can think of our friends only as they are in Christ, when we can think of them only in the grace they possess, when we can think of them only in that relation in which we shall spend with them a happy eternity, without one interruption, immortality shining forth in all its perfection. Here, then, is the transition; here is the coming out of a desolate state; here is being hewn out of the rock, digged out of the pit, called, blessed, increased, and enriched, and the happiest destiny opened before us that we could wish to be opened.

I will now step into the next part, that *God and the Lamb are the glory of this Eden*. Now the kings of Tyre,—though I shall have to speak presently of the king of Tyre in the singular, yet it does not mean any one particular king, but a succession of kings; they were friendly with David and with Solomon, and in harmony somewhat with the God of the Hebrews; and therefore the king of Tyre is spoken of as being in Eden, because this king of Tyre is a type of Jesus Christ, as I think I shall easily show, in five or six different respects, and that will help me to set forth the blessedness of those who are thus reconciled to God, who are thus brought into the true church of God, into the true gospel of God, into the true grace of God. The king of Tyre, then, is thus a type of Jesus Christ. But, by-and-bye, the ruling power of Tyre, or, to use the words of the prophet Ezekiel, for it is to him I am referring, the king of Tyre, by-and-bye, adopted another god, and went away from the God of the Hebrews, and then he ceased to be a type of Christ; and presently, when we come to that part, we shall see what the remedy is. Now the Lord speaks of the king of Tyre thus:—"Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty." Now what the king of Tyre possessed in the merchandise sense of the word, for he was a wise man; they were a wise race of kings as regards merchandise; "full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty." So where do we get a fulness

of wisdom? In Jesus Christ. No folly in his thoughts, no folly in his words, no folly in his works; there wisdom in perfection dwelt. Oh, is this the husband of the bride? Whatever her mistakes, her follies, her Husband is perfect in wisdom, and will ultimately deliver her from all. Is this the Brother of the many brethren? Whatever their follies may be, his perfection of wisdom shall deliver them ultimately from all their errors and follies, and they shall appear at the last before God—he being their wisdom, wise as he is wise. “Then shall we know even as we are known.” And perfection of beauty; there is perfection of beauty in Christ, because there is no sin there. It is sin that has made everything ugly. There is no sin in Christ; and, as we so often say, the people of God are in Christ, and therefore there is no sin in them as they are there; there is a perfection of beauty. Do you see Jesus Christ as the end of sin, and the end of the curse, and the end of the law, and the end of everything against you, and see him as the perfection of beauty? If so, for you not to love him is impossible. And then it is said of the king of Tyre, “Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God;” and he is thus a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. The next thing is that of riches. “Every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle;” he was decked with these precious stones. Now these are the symbol of riches. Do you not read in the 4th chapter of the book of the Revelation, that “he that sat on the throne was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone; and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald”? Now all this indicates riches. Why, then, is Jesus Christ set forth as a jasper and a sardine stone? To indicate riches; and therefore, wherever we see these things, their meaning is, that our God is infinitely rich. We have a very nice dialogue in one of our old divines, between John and the angel. When John asked the angel what the best things of this Eden, of this paradise, were? And the angel answered and said, “Your best things are our worst things.” “Why,” saith the angel, “our walls are of jasper, our streets are paved with gold, our gates are of pearls; these are your best things on earth; so that your best things on earth are our worst things in heaven.”

So true are the words of the poet,—

“Too poor to speak the Saviour’s worth,
Too mean to set his glory forth.”

I have often admired that dialogue. Then John said, “If our best things are your worst things, what are your best things?” And the angel’s answer is very concise, but very full: “God and the Lamb are our portion, God is our delight, God himself the length of our days, and our portion for ever.” Thus, then, the king of Tyre was, in his wisdom and beauty a type of Jesus Christ. Then the next thing that comes is that of music. “The workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in the day that thou wast created.” Music attended their prosperity, and so it does now. Just as we prosper in the gospel, we go along thankfully. And, for my part, if I could have my will, and do just as I liked, I would, every moment of my time, go right on to the end, just as the eunuch did when he left Philip—went on his way rejoicing. Nevertheless, it is a great thing to be kept in the ways of the Lord, if we are not able yet to rejoice. I would not for one moment think lightly of those who cannot yet rejoice in the Lord. But, poor believer, there is a harp for thee; there is a tabret for thee; there is a musical instrument, a psaltery, for thee; and thou shalt, when the days of thy mourning are ended, go forth in the dances of them that make merry. Then here is also defence. “Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth.” The word *cover* there means *to protect, to defend*. So the king defended the riches and the people. And so our God defends us and defends our riches. Ah,

saith one, I am glad of that; then I shall not lose what I have. Well, friends, it is a truth he defends your earthly possessions; he has given you earthly possessions, many of you, and he defends them; he alone can protect you and protect what you have. The Lord help you to walk in a consciousness of this. Still I have no scripture to assure me or to assure you that you shall not lose your riches. You know that riches make themselves wings somehow or another—I do not know how they do it, but they do,—and fly away. But then that is not because the Lord is angry with you; he was not angry with Job; it is for your good. But when we come to spiritual things, there we can assure you that the riches you have in Christ shall endure for ever; moth cannot corrupt, nor can thieves deprive you of them. When you get home you will find all your treasures safe; there will be no want of dignity, no want of durable riches. Jesus Christ, then, is God's anointed cherub, and he protects all our riches. The Lord would only trust the riches in the hands of his dear Son, and there they are safe. Well, then, mortal life must presently pass away. Why, it will take us home to this paradise, in its glorified department, to enjoy this fulness of wisdom, this perfection of beauty, these unsearchable riches, these heavenly treasures, and there to bless God that he hath protected us all our journey through. "And I have set thee so;" I the Lord have set thee so, to be this defence. You will see in a moment how this applies to Jesus Christ. "Here have I set my king" in the best place he could be set. Ah, if he had been set at Sinai, there had been no love between him and ourselves then. If he had been set in an earthly place, it would have been very poor, unworthy of such a person as he is; and if he had been set in the old covenant, all had been lost. But "here have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion;" Zion, that cannot be moved, but abideth for ever. "I have set thee so; thou wast upon the holy mountain of God." There are two reasons why the king of Tyre is said to be so; first, because Tyre was within the boundaries of the Holy Land; secondly, because the king of Tyre was in harmony, previous to the time that Ezekiel is speaking of, with the God of the Hebrews, as you see in the history of David and Solomon. "Thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire;" that is a figure, I think, of the gold and precious stones to which I have referred. So the Lord Jesus Christ lives encircled with eternal riches and glory. "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day thou wast created,"—ah, there it comes,—“till iniquity was found in thee.” Then the king of Tyre retires; for after we have thus noticed him as a type of Christ, he comes out at last as an apostate, and we can go no farther with him; now we must stop. What shall we do now? We were going on very well with our paradise, but now we are stopped. We have met with wisdom, and beauty, and riches, and music, and defence, and sparkling glories, and establishment, and consecration, as in the holy mount of God; all was right, and fair, and square; presently we come to a dead stop. We see how this applies to Adam also before the fall; his ways were perfect until iniquity was found. Now, then, let us see if we can continue this paradise. We will try first with our God; then we will look at our God in his dear Son. And we come to our God, and we find it thus, that he is the "Rock;" that is a good beginning; "his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment; a God of truth, and without iniquity." Here it is, then, a God of truth, without iniquity; "just and right is he." Iniquity there stands in contrast to truth; iniquity, therefore, is an organized system of error that is set against God's truth. God is a God of truth, without iniquity; just and right is he. Oh, then, we shall go on with this Eden. Here, then, is the glory of this Eden; it is our God; this glory typified in the king of Tyre; then our God himself steps in where the king of Tyre steps out.

"The law of truth was in the Saviour's mouth; and iniquity," or anything contrary to that truth, "was not found in his lips; he walked with

me in peace;" never quarrelled with God; I have quarrelled with the Lord a great many times, and so have you; forgive me for saying so, but you know it is the truth; I do not say it to reproach you, but just to remind you of your state; but Jesus Christ, in this as well as in all other departments, walked with God in peace. "And equity." To walk in equity is to do according to what is done to you. Now Hezekiah did not do this; he did not render again according to the things done unto him; and I am sure I have not. But Jesus Christ did, he did; he did turn many away from iniquity. Every one that he calls by his grace, by his atonement he takes their iniquities eternally away; brings about an eternal separation between his people and their iniquities. "Far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth;" and so they did. One came with, "Master, what is the greatest commandment?" Another came, "Master, whose wife shall she be in the resurrection?" Another came, "Master, is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar?" And he well knew how to answer; his pure lips kept knowledge; he never took time to consider, he was never at a loss for an answer. Oh, many times I have been proud of my dear Jesus Christ, to see how promptly, with the most profound wisdom, he answered every question that was put to him. Truly, then, his lips kept knowledge. "And they," the people, "should seek the law at his mouth;" and they did so; "for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts" in a way that none other ever was, ever will be, or ever can be. Thus, then, here is a new state, here is Jesus Christ in his wisdom, beauty, riches, melody; here is Jesus Christ defending both the people and their eternal possessions; here is Jesus Christ in the land, to go out of this holy mountain no more for ever; here is Jesus Christ, and iniquity was not found in his lips, but he hath put ours eternally away, and presents us in his own perfection. Thus, then, this land, this gospel land, what do you say to it this morning? Can you say that it is delightful to you? can you say it is pleasant? can you say you love Jerusalem? can you honestly before God say,—

" My soul shall pray for Zion still,
While life or breath remains;
There my best friends and kindred dwell,
There God my Saviour reigns ?"

But, lastly, *the sevenfold analogy between the typical and the antitypical Eden.* I must merely name these analogies, without amplifying any one of them, though a sermon might be preached upon each. Our text says it is like the garden of Eden, and therefore there must be some analogies, or else we should not have this declaration. The first is that of termination. In the first paradise, "the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them." So in this new paradise, this gospel paradise, the new heavens are finished; the earth, the new earth, completed, and all the host of the people, the people are all complete. There they are complete; the new earth complete, the dwelling-place complete; "I have prepared a place for you;" the new heavens complete; Jesus the sun and the moon, and his glory as the stars; all the host of them. That is one analogy. So that you come out of a world that is shaken to pieces, and must soon be subjected to the great conflagration that shall burn it to a cinder, into that new heavens and new earth where perfection reigns; Jesus Christ and God himself the strength of that perfection, shall never fail. Second, consecration. The Lord consecrated the seventh day, blessed it, and in it he rested. So we rest in this paradise, rest in this gospel garden, rest in the love of God. Third, plantation. The Lord planted the garden: he did not say, "Adam, let us see what sort of a gardener you are; lay it out, arrange it, plant it." No; the Lord himself planted the garden in Eden toward the east, or sunrising. So he plants his people under the sunrising, in the likeness of Christ's death, in

the promised land. With my whole heart, with my whole soul, will I thus assuredly plant you in this land. Fourth, irrigation. A mighty river parted into four heads, to denote the gospel, that the gospel should travel east, west, north, and south. I will not now stop to notice the names of those rivers, all of which are very significant, and will notice only the last; and the last river is Euphrates. Euphrates signifies *fulness*; and therefore a figure of that fulness and satisfaction that shall be brought about to all these people when the end shall come. Fifthly, legislation; gave him all the trees of the garden, bearing all manner of fruit, of which he might eat, except one, and of that one he must not eat. I bless God there is no tree of forbidden fruit in the antitypical paradise. No; there is no gospel promise that we are forbidden; there is no part of the gospel to which we are not welcome. And therefore the difference between the typical and the antitypical legislation is, that in the antitypical legislation it simply stands that "he that overcometh"—which they all do by faith in Christ—"shall eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God;" and that will be our delight for ever. Sixth, nomination. The cattle and the fowls of the air were brought to Adam; whatsoever he called them, that was the name thereof. That is the way, Christian, you should look at it. If the Lord call you a son, if he call you a saint, never mind what men call you, that is the name thereof. If he call you an Israelite indeed, never mind what men may say. What Adam called each was the name thereof. So in this gospel paradise it is the Lord that names his people, names them after himself. Seventh and lastly, conjugation. Adam and Eve, a type of Christ and the church. I scarcely need repeat the old ideas here; the ideas did not originate with myself; I have no doubt you all know them; but I will just name them. Eve was not taken from Adam's feet; she was not to be trampled under foot. She was not taken from his back, not to be left behind. She was not taken from his breast; she was not to be put into the forefront of the battle. She was not taken from his hands; she was not to do the work. She was not taken from his head; she was not to exercise the ruling power. But she was taken from his side, to denote her oneness with him, her protection by him. There are a great many things implied in that being taken from his side. "Leaning upon her beloved," by his side. When people are walking together, they can whisper so nicely to each other. Just so as we walk with our Beloved; we can tell him all our troubles, and all our sorrows, and all our joys, and he will sympathize with us. But as your time is gone, I will say no more.

NEW SURREY TABERNACLE,

WANDSEY STREET, WALWORTH ROAD.

(SEVEN MINUTES' WALK FROM THE "ELEPHANT AND CASTLE.")

THE FOUNDATION STONE

OF THE ABOVE IS TO BE LAID ON

MONDAY, OCTOBER 17th, 1864,

AT THREE O'CLOCK IN THE AFTERNOON.