

SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

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MOUNT OF OLIVES.
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A Sermon

BY MR. JAMES WELLS,

PREACHED ON SUNDAY MORNING, 2ND OCTOBER, 1870.

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“And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.”—Zechariah xiv. 4.

THE Old Testament dispensation, as you are aware, is frequently called a mountain, and the mountain of the Lord; and also the New Testament dispensation is called a mountain—that holy mountain in which none shall ever hurt or destroy, that established state of things in which all that are in that new earth or holy mountain know the Lord. Now whatever truths are represented by the language of our text, there is one particular truth that I shall deal with this morning that appears to me to be represented by the language of our text; and though the text may appear to some ambiguous, we shall see presently that we shall come to those things to which we are accustomed, and which are so plain that he that readeth might indeed run. Our text begins with saying, “In that day;” now what is this day? Is there in this chapter any note of time that we may take to guide us as to the period to which our text refers? There is in this chapter a note of time; in the 9th verse:—“And the Lord shall be king over all the earth; in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one.” Now you all know that he who said, “All power in heaven and in earth is given unto me,” you know that he was king, that he was born king of the Jews, that he is king in Zion; and you know he did not come to be king over the literal Jews, but that he came to exercise universal dominion. “And there shall be one Lord,” in contrast to the many priests, and the many kings, and the many rulers which that dispensation had; but now there is “one Lord, and his name one;” meaning that he should retain his name for ever. The kings and priests of that dispensation

did not retain their names for ever, they laid down all their official honours, and departed to another world ; but here comes a priest that shall never change, a king that shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there is no end ; here comes a mediator that shall be between God and man through the countless ages of eternity.

There are three things I shall aim at this morning. First, just to remind you that *this Mount of Olives represents the Jewish dispensation*. Secondly, *why this Mount of Olives, or the Jewish dispensation represented by this mountain, stood in the way, and therefore must cleave asunder, and be put out of the way*. Thirdly, though I fear I shall not arrive so far, *the earnestness of the people who are brought into the valley which is here made by the mediatorial standing of the Lord Jesus Christ*. "His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives ;" he shall take such a standing as to put that asunder which before was joined together. The Saviour came, as a general rule, to bring that together which before was asunder ; he came to join God and man together ; he came to unite Jew and Gentile, and to make in himself of twain one new man, and so making peace ; he came to unite mercy and truth, righteousness and peace. But here is something which is naturally one that Christ had to make two ; and when he had made it two, he put the one half towards the north, and the other half towards the south. Why it reads almost like a riddle, and yet there is nothing at all difficult about it.

Now what is the cleaving of this mountain ? The cleaving of this mountain was to make way for the bringing in of a better covenant ; and this mountain I take to be a figure of the Jewish dispensation. That dispensation was made up of two parts—blessings and cursings ; but these blessings and these cursings could never be kept apart by the people. All through that dispensation curses and blessings more or less mingled with each other, and formed one dispensation. The majority of the people generally were unbelievers, and brought in the curse ; then there were some that were believers, and somewhat kept up the blessing. Here are the curse and the blessing standing together ; but in that dispensation, whenever the curse came in it always prevailed more or less over the blessing, until by and by the curse prevailed altogether over the blessing, and the blessing ceased. Now the Saviour put these two asunder ; and I must be careful here, in order that you may understand what I mean. First, the Saviour laid the blessing aside ; we will name that first ; he severed that from the curse, and laid the blessing aside ; so that after his death, or rather after his resurrection, the promises you have in Leviticus xxvi. especially, no longer belonged to the Jews. It was now of no avail for them to look to the Lord to own their land

differently from other lands; the blessing was ended, and it was laid aside. That is one thing I understand, which will appear, I think, more clearly presently. Then the Saviour ministered the curse as due to that nation, and when he had done that, he laid the curse aside. So that the blessing is laid aside, denoted by the south; and the curse is laid aside, so that there is no more blessing and no more curse. As soon as ever the curse was ministered to the Jews, and they were scattered according to prediction, the Jews ceased then to be under the blessing, and they ceased to be under the curse. The Jews are not under the curse of the old covenant now; the curse is laid aside: the Jews are no more under the blessing of the old covenant than we are, because that old covenant is laid aside; and they are no more under the curse of that covenant than we are, because that covenant is ended. We look at the Jews as being in captivity; why they are no more in captivity that I know of than other people, nor is the curse of God any more upon them than upon other people. Ah but, say some, look at our ancestry. Well, we may call ourselves captives for that, for what was our ancestry? You know we English people are made up of all sorts, pretty well; you can hardly tell what is the first piece; but suppose the Saxon, or, which would be almost synonymous, the Scythian element, prevails in us, we are therefore as much captives, in a sense, as they are; we are where God placed us, and so are they. They are no more under the curse, and no more in captivity than other people, not the least; and therefore to talk about their return, there is nothing to return from, and there is nothing to return to. The blessing is laid aside, the curse is laid aside, and we shall see presently what use the Saviour made of this circumstance. The Jews, I am quite aware, have been cruelly persecuted and most scandalously used, and until very recently denied in our own country the rights of citizenship, were not admitted into Parliament, as though Parliament had anything to do with eternal things as Parliament. And there are your lords spiritual and your lords temporal. Why, what in the world have human legislators to do with eternal things? to make laws for eternity, to make laws for the great God, to say how people shall pray to him, and how they shall not; to make a creed for the great God, and have laws, and say, That is what you must believe; it does not matter what the Bible says, it is what we say. Therefore your lords spiritual are all a farce; it is all froth and rubbish from first to last. No legislator under the heavens has anything to do with eternal things; and the Jew has just as much right in Parliament as any other man, as a citizen considered; and it is no more a Christian Parliament than the seats on which they sit are Christians. I have nothing to do with Christian legislators; I have to do with citizen-

ship legislators. The civil power bears the sword, and not the book. So then the Jews are no more in captivity than other people; and all citizens ought to be looked on alike; legislators have nothing to do with religion. Now I will tell you where the Jews are, and where we all are. You cannot name an exception to the rule I am going to lay down; some people say there is no rule without an exception, but this rule has no exception. If you just take the last verse of John iii., that will give you all the Christians that are in the world, that will give you all the believers that are in the world, and it will give you all the unbelievers that are in the world. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life;" that is where the Christians are; they are brought to know their need of Christ, and believe on him. "And he that believeth not"—what in the world has the gospel to do with whether a man is a Jew or a Gentile, whether barbarian, Scythian, or anything else? "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." That's where all the carnal Jews are, that's where all the carnal Gentiles are; that's where the whole carnal human race is. Therefore I contend that the Saviour took such a standing as to set the blessing aside and to set the curse aside; and it is a very great mercy that both are done with. You might just as well preach nothing at all as preach anything earthly to an immortal soul. What we want is a gospel not that can carry us to this part of the world or the other; we want a gospel that opens a better world, a gospel that gives us fellowship with a higher world; we want a gospel that brings us direct, apart from man altogether, into fellowship with the Great Eternal. The Saviour laid the blessing aside and laid the curse of the temporal covenant aside, so that the Jewish earth now is cast into the sea of this world, forming a part of the world; and the earthly Jerusalem is no more in bondage than any other town of unbelievers; nor is their land under the curse of God; it is under the curse of man, if you like—that I grant. Would you go into some of our rookeries in London, into the dirty and degraded parts of our large towns, and say, Ah, that neighbourhood is cursed of God? Cursed of man, if you like; don't blame their *wickedness*, *their abominations* upon God. So under the Turkish government, which is a wretched government—no government at all in reality; the land is cursed by men; men go on in their evil ways; it is not God's fault. If you have a farm, and you choose to let it be covered with weeds, don't blame the Lord for that. So then the blessing is done, and the curse is done, and now we have nothing to do with man, but to bring in the Lord Jesus Christ as the remedy for all our woe; we have nothing to do with Jew or Gentile; there is no other name given under heaven but the name of Christ by which

we must be saved. The blessing was enjoyed, and then laid aside for ever; the curse is laid aside. They always would mingle more or less, but the Saviour severed the two; and now here is a valley.

Now let us contrast the dear Saviour with this. By laying the temporal blessing and the temporal curse aside, the Saviour brings in the new and better covenant. And in this part I will just remind you of a sweet and infinitely delightful truth—that while the curse and the blessing always got together more or less in that dispensation, and the curse mingled with the blessing until the blessing was overcome, and matters became as they now are; here, in this new covenant, Jesus Christ looked at the curse, and he himself took the curse, he himself endured the curse, he himself redeemed us from the curse; and so in this better covenant which he hath brought in the curse cannot get at the blessing. If you speak of sin as the curse, my sin cannot get at me as I stand in Christ; sin cannot get at us as we stand in Christ. “It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?” Here, you see, the curse can never get to the blessing; here, in this new covenant, the blessing triumphs in every way over the curse. Doth the blessing meet with sin? What doth it do with it? It puts it eternally away by the sacrifice of Christ, even from the book of God’s remembrance, which hardly any of us seem truly to believe. He, by this new covenant, saith, “I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, and will not remember thy sins.” This is one feature of the better covenant, but we do not believe it; we preach, and pray, and walk and live, as though God did remember; but he hath said he doth not. Then again, doth the blessing meet with error? What doth it do? Why, swallows it up, as Aaron’s rod did the rod of the magicians. And does the blessing meet with great persecutors? What does it do? Why, enables the persecuted to endure the persecutions, and makes them more than conquerors at the last. And does the blessing meet with death? What does it do with it? Why swallows it up in victory. And does the blessing meet with the grave? What does it do with it? Swallows it up in victory. “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” And does the blessing meet with sinners? Nay, it meets with nothing else. What does it do? Why, swallows up all the sin, and all the guilt, and all the unworthiness of that man, brings him up into the everlasting covenant, where the curse is gone, and where the blessing will never be laid aside, where the blessing can never end, where the blessing endureth for ever. See then in the one case the blessing laid aside, the curse laid aside; but here, in this new covenant, Christ hath taken away the curse, the blessing remains; hence it is put in the current tense, “Thy blessing is upon thy people.”

Now if this first covenant, which Christ put aside, had been faultless—dearest covenant God! what shall I say to that expression?—if this “covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.” Is it possible that a holy, a righteous, self-existent, eternal God was determined to have a covenant on behalf of his people that should be faultless, and that they should be as faultless as Christ; and Christ is as faultless as God; therefore “he that is feeble among them shall be as David”—that is, as Christ; “and the house of David”—that is, the “household of faith,” shall be as God, as the “angel of the Lord before them.” Oh, faultless covenant! faultless Saviour! faultless people! neither spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing. Here then we see the blessing of the Jewish covenant petrified, no more to be enjoyed; we see the curse of the Jewish covenant petrified, no more to be ministered; no one is either under the blessing or the curse, for they see gone; and we here see the Saviour bringing in a faultless covenant; he is faultless, the people are faultless, and he shall present us faultless before the eyes of his glory with exceeding joy. But mark this—and the words I am about to quote, I quote them almost with trembling; the words suggest what I have neither gifts nor power to open up the force of—“if the first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.” O our God, is this fallen world in such a condition that from pole to pole, from one hemisphere to the other, not any place is found where the new, the everlasting covenant is welcome? God had to seek a place for it. When Jesus Christ came into the world, how did the world treat him? You know how they treated him; and he would not have had a place even in the inn if God in his providence had not so managed it. And oh, much, much less would this second covenant, this eternal covenant, have a place in your heart if God had not sought your heart and prepared it for it. Talk of human merit, human goodness! My hearer, there is no greater delusion under the heavens. “If the first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.” The Saviour sought a place for it by his laborious life, by his agonising death; the Saviour sought a place for this new covenant by his triumphant resurrection; the Saviour sought a place for this new covenant by the descent of the Eternal Spirit, and by the promise which he gave that the Holy Spirit should “convince of sin, of judgment, and righteousness; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.” And so the Lord seeks a place for this new and better covenant. How beautiful the feet of him that took such a standing as to lay the temporal blessing aside, and bring in the eternal blessing; how beautiful the feet of him that took such a position as to lay the temporal curse

aside, and to take the eternal curse into his own bosom, into his own person, into his own soul; pouring out his soul unto death, and leaving nothing for us but what God can bestow by the worth and worthiness of his dear Son, except just a few tribulations which are compared to salt and fire, to do us good by the way, to keep us humble at the Saviour's feet, and instruct us in eternal things. Now I wonder if I am understood—the Jewish dispensation: the Saviour took such a position as to lay the blessing aside, and to lay the curse aside, and to bring in this faultless covenant; and I shall show presently, and that is about as far as I shall get this morning, how it was this mountain was in the way, this dispensation was in the way. But before so doing, let us have another word upon this faultless covenant. "Finding fault with them:" let the emphasis be on the objective pronoun there, in order to give you a contrast; "finding fault with them;" implying there is another covenant in which he will not find fault. The creatures in Peter's vision were very ugly—four-footed beasts, wild beasts, creeping things, birds of prey; yet wonder, O heavens; and be astonished, O earth, ugly as they were, God found no fault with them. Peter did; he found fault with them. "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." Call no man common that I sanctify. What, these ugly creatures? Yes; you will see them by and by encircling mine eternal throne, clothed in white robes, with palms in their hands, and sounding out the blood of that everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure. "Finding fault with them." He does not find fault with his own. We don't half know the Lord, and that is the reason we do not half love him. If we knew more of him in this new covenant, I was going to say, we should serve him better. You would not come to chapel and feel it almost a task: you would say, What am I going to hear? Nothing but good tidings. Why, if we heard good earthly tidings, we should jump into the swiftest omnibus, go by express train, and find the best horse we could in a cab, to take us, afraid lest we should not get there soon enough. Poor old nature! It may well be said that no place is found for the second, if the Lord himself does not seek it. It is he alone, by his presence and power, can make our souls like the chariots of Amminadab. "I regarded them not." But will Jesus ever cease to regard his brethren? Will Jesus ever cease to regard poor sinners? Why, he came to die for sinners; he came to call sinners to repentance; he came to save sinners.

"Sinners can say, and only they,
How precious is the Saviour."

"I regarded them not." But if you are brought into this new covenant, brought to know his holy word, he will always regard you. How

much? say you. Just as much as he regards his dear Son. "Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me;" and if I love two Christian persons with equal love, I shall regard them both with equal regard; and so our God loves the people as he loves Jesus Christ. Here is the bringing in of this new, this better counsel, this better and everlasting covenant. And the Lord says, "They continued not in my covenant." "They continued not." Well, Peter, give us one more thought; how about this new covenant that you have seen? "This was done thrice, and the vessel was received up again into heaven;"—three times, to present to us the three main causes of salvation; the original cause, the mediatorial cause, and the efficient cause. They were all drawn up again into heaven; not one fell out, not one jumped out, not one flew out, not one rolled out, and one did not push the other out; and the devil could not steal one, and no one else could steal one;—all drawn up again into heaven. They continue in this covenant, brought to receive God's immutable counsel. I defy the devil to find anything that can tempt the Christian to leave this covenant. Why, says the Christian, what can I want more? I don't want anything that is not here; it is all my salvation and all my desire, even when he doesn't make it to grow, and I can't enjoy it. Here it is he makes me faultless; here we stand faultless; God has nothing against me, I have nothing against him; Jesus Christ loves me, and I love Jesus Christ, and I love the testimony of the Holy Ghost, and the testimony of the Holy Ghost loves me. I have nothing to do with curses, and threatenings, and conditional promises; all is settled here, and my soul approves it well. Here, then, is the bringing in of this covenant, wherein you are faultless; and give God the glory for making a place for it in your heart, in your soul. Hence it is one part of this covenant so to do. "I will put my laws,"—that is, the laws of faith, and love, and prayer, and so on,— "into their minds, and write them in their hearts." "Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth my sabbath from polluting it,"—by mixing up any creature doing with the work of Christ, the true sabbath,— "and taketh hold of my covenant." Ah, say some, I don't like that, it is too high. That is ignorance; let the Lord convince us of what we are by nature, and the law, and show us the old covenant which is passed away, and then this new covenant, we take hold of it, set our seal to it, and approve of it. Now, am I speaking to any one that has got just thus far? One that doth say, "Well, I do see that by the law of God I am condemned, and I do see that I can be saved only by the Mediator of the everlasting covenant, and only in accordance with that covenant, so that I do take hold of it in a way of knowing it, and approving

it, and believing it. Very well ; and you can go no further ? No, I can't go any further ; I can't call it mine. I will tell you what you do, you that are in that position, stop just where you are, and the Lord will do what he saith. I am now quoting from Isaiah lvi. : "Even them will I bring to my holy mountain." Ah, then, here is something to be brought to yet ; you are not brought into liberty yet ; "and make them joyful,"—not made joyful yet, then,—“in my house of prayer ;” and of course that house of prayer to the Christian is Christ ; Christ is the house where all meet. “Their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar.” Ah, if you are got thus far, by and by your soul will leap into liberty ; he will make you joyful in Christ ; your services will be accepted, and you made happy for ever. And to show there is an ultimate house of prayer, Christ Jesus is there referred to, “My house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.” Thus, then, that dispensation was severed in two, the blessing laid aside, and the curse laid aside ; Gerizim and Ebal are no more, and all men now are equal by nature ; and the next likeness that they shall have will be the likeness of all believers ; for there is one pattern to which they are all to be conformed ; and thus Christ brings in by his work this immutable, this faultless covenant, seeks a place for it, and finds a place for it, plants it, makes it prosper, and the Lord will never cease to regard such a people as this. Several scriptures upon this matter of the new covenant strike my mind, but I must leave them for the present, and go to the next part.

Now, why must this dispensation be put out of the way ? I have not made it clear yet how the Jewish dispensation could be in the way, and I have not yet made it clear why the mountain should cleave towards the east and towards the west, and not cleave the other way. Well, then, the meaning of that I may as well at once state. You can perceive the temple on the western side of the mountain, and you can perceive the Dead Sea on the eastern side of the mountain ; and therefore the Holy Spirit, using this imagery, to use it consistently, makes the mountain divide, that the waters,—taking it literally first,—may come direct from the temple down this valley, which Christ has made by this new covenant to the Dead Sea ; this Dead Sea representing dead sinners ; and the waters shall be healed,—men's souls shall be healed by the rolling in of this tide of eternal mercy, which all the Old Testament saints saw. See how David sings of it in Psalm xlvi.,—this river. See how Ezekiel dwells upon it largely, and rejoices in it. But how is it that that dispensation was in the way ? It never had been in the way. Certainly not. It was not in the way until it had done its work ; and then, when the outer-door servant has done his work, and he is determined to go

indoors and upset the master, and the mistress, and the servants, and the house,—why, then that servant, who was very useful in his place, now that his work is done, and he is determined to come into the house and upset everything,—what would you do? Well, says one, I should go for a policeman, or something or another. Why, of course you would; the servant is in the way, you see. And so, when this servant walked indoors, it heard at Galatia that it had a few friends there. I will go and see them; and so those pretended friends came in, pretended to be lovers of gospel liberty, but were not all the time;—in came the servant, and upset the people. You think you are going to get to heaven by grace, do you? Yes. I can tell you this, you must be circumcised and keep the law. So the servant got into the house, and upset the table, and everything, and there was such a to-do; and one of the little children cried, and sent an account of it to the apostle Paul, and said, That servant, whose work is done—the ceremonial law—is come indoors, and we have had no peace since. And so the apostle sent a letter, and sent the servant about his business, and told those who would admit that servant that they should not be saved in that way. “If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you.” Christ is come, the servant’s work is done. I will not say how many ministers there are that bring the servant into the house now; chapels I have gone into in my time, where, after hearing the gospel about half an hour, in comes the law, upsets everything, away goes the table, and away goes the feast, away goes everything; I think, dear me, it is no use stopping here; here is the servant come in, and everything is out of order. But we will make this more clear yet. How was it that the ceremonial dispensation, now that it had done its work, was in the way? All may be summed up in one solemn reason—because God had now forsaken that dispensation; and for that temple now to pretend that it had God in it was pretending to a lie; for that mercy-seat now to be pretending it was a mercy-seat, was pretending to a lie; for that city now, that had become a part of Babylon, spiritually called Egypt, where our Lord was crucified,—for that city now to pretend to be the city of God, was pretending to a lie; and for those sacrifices now to pretend to any right to continue to serve, was pretending to a lie. You send me to the temple, God is not there; you send me to the Jewish sacrifice, God is not there; you send me to the literal Jerusalem, God is not there; you send me to the literal priesthood, God is not there; you send me to the various ceremonies, God is not there. Well, then, do you not think it was better for it to be out of the way? The servant’s work was done. Well, lest I

should be interposing human authority, I will just bring the word of the Lord before you, and then you will see it was because God was not there; and that therefore, as that dispensation continued to pretend that God was there, and God was not there, the best way was to put that out of the way that now made a false pretension. God was there until the servant had done his work; but when the work was done, God was no longer there. Of all the priests and all the kings, there was not one with whom God could stay for ever. He wanted a priest and a king he could stay with for ever, that he might stay with the people for ever, and that the people might stay with him for ever; and so he found David his servant—our mystical David, our heavenly David; “with my holy oil have I anointed him;” he is a king I can be with for ever, he is a priest I can be with for ever; and the people can be, by him, with me for ever; and I, by him, can be with them for ever;—here it is eternally established. Now Jeremiah calls the Jewish dispensation not only a mountain, but he speaks in the plural, and calls it mountains; and I will just quote the scripture, which is solemnly beautiful: “I beheld the earth”—that is, the Jewish earth, no question about that,—“and lo! it was without form, and void.” Without form? Yes; it has done its work: and void—empty. Well, let it get out of the way, then, and let that new earth come in that is not without form, but hath in it the form of the new, the better covenant. It was void, or empty; let that new earth come in that brings in all the fulness of the eternal covenant. “And the heavens”—not the sun and the moon literally, but the Jewish institutions,—“and they had no light.” Why not? Because the light had left them; they became dark as midnight. “I beheld the mountains,”—there you see the dispensation is called mountains, spoken of in the plural,—“and lo! they trembled;” those mountains will soon be carried away into the common state of men at large, as the mountain is carried into the midst of the sea; and when all these institutions become one with the world, we shall rejoice in the new and better covenant. “And all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and lo! there was no man,”—there was no man. Christ would not be a Jewish king, and he did not descend from the right tribe to be a Jewish priest; he was not a priest by descent at all; the Levites were, but Jesus Christ was not; he was a priest not by genealogical descent of his human nature, he was a priest by the sworn, immutable oath of the great God; that made him a priest; that is better still, firmer ground. “The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.” So then the Jewish earth became without form and void, the heavens had no light, the mountains trembled, the promises trembled. What made the promises tremble, if they

are the mountains and hills, which I think they are? Because the people did not perform the conditions belonging to the promises, and so that gave the promises a weakness, and the promises trembled and staggered, and by and by fell down. Christ has given eternal permanence to all the promises of God, by the new covenant; for it is written that all the promises of God in Christ Jesus are yea, and in him amen, to the glory of God. The mountains, then, moved; but the eternal mountains, the eternal testimonies of God, confirmed by the Saviour, borne up by everlasting love and immutable counsel, shall those promises ever tremble? No. You sometimes sing in the eloquent words of Watts,—

"The voice that rolls the stars along,
Speaks all the promises;"

and those promises are in and by Christ Jesus. And now mark, in this Jewish earth there was no man, there was no man that could save them; the God-man was not there,—they put him away, they crucified him, and now, when the time came, there was no man; "and all the birds of the heavens"—not the birds of the earth, but the *avi Paradisi*, the birds of Paradise—"were fled;" and so the apostles and all Christians fled from that ruined scene of things, that scene of desolation, and were brought into that city where there is no violence, where they shall call the walls salvation, and the gates thereof praise. Thus you see how clear Jeremiah is upon this matter; he thus saw the termination of that dispensation. And who would go to an earth, if he knew it, that was without form and void? who would go to pretended heavenly institutions that had no light? and who would attempt to range over and be happy upon mountains beneath which is an earthquake moving, and those mountains are soon to be swallowed up? who would wish to be where there is no man, no God-man mediator? and who would wish to be where the birds of Paradise are not?

I have merely introduced the subject this morning; when I shall speak upon it again I do not know. I should like to have given two or three sermons upon it, but sometimes fear lest the friends should not feel profited. But I may just say, see how clear the word of the Lord is upon this—taking this mountain out of the way. But the truth of God will never be taken out of the way, that will never be thought to be in the way by the people of God; and yet there is not anything under the heavens that has been so much in the way as God's truth. But what a change takes place when the Lord becomes the teacher, when he makes us fly from those regions where there is nothing but desolation, and brings us into the better country. Now that same truth that was once to us a stumbling-stone and rock of offence, is more precious than language can describe.