

SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

PURIFIED.

A Sermon

BY MR. JAMES WELLS.

“For I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed; for the Lord dwelleth in Zion.”—
JOEL iii. 21.

THESE words, as well as the preceding verse, must evidently be understood in the Christian and in the spiritual, and not in the Jewish and literal sense. Hence the preceding verse saith that “Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation.” And yet our fellow-creatures the Jews do not see that there is an end to Judah; Judah is no longer an organised tribe, or a divinely recognised tribe, and Jerusalem is no longer owned by the Lord; it is given up unto Satan. And yet they do not see this; it is not their lot to see and to receive the truths of the gospel; but we hope the day will come when many among them will be led to see that they have been blinded by the great adversary of souls. But there, it after all lies with the Lord; and the apostle, in the Corinthians, when noticing the difference between those who are called by grace and those who are not; the difference between the state of grace and the former state of nature—he says, “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts;” God said to your soul, or concerning it, “Let there be light, and there was light;”—“to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” Therefore the Judah here spoken of, then, is the spiritual Judah; those who are followers of the Lord, by the regenerating grace of God, and are brought to understand something of those eternal things for which they have to praise the Lord. None but those taught of God can understand these things; for it is a song that none can learn but those that are redeemed. None but a redeemed soul knows what redemption is; none but a pardoned soul knows what pardon is; none but a justified

soul knows what justification is; none but a saved soul knows what salvation is; none but a soul brought into fellowship with the blessed God knows what that fellowship is. It is, then, those people that are brought to seek after these truths, and shall in the Lord's own time find them; this is the Judah that is to dwell for ever. They dwell for ever because they dwell in God, and God is an everlasting habitation; God is that dwelling nigh which no plague can come; there their life is everlasting life. "And Jerusalem from generation to generation;" that is, the new Jerusalem; her foundations still remain firm as ever; her walls, her jasper walls of salvation, still retain their impregnable character; and there the river of God's mercy flows the same as ever; the light is the same as ever; her golden streets have never been defiled, and never can be; and Jehovah has the same interest in it now that he ever had. This, then, is the Judah that shall dwell for ever; for their dwelling-place is an everlasting one; and Jerusalem, the new Jerusalem, shall outlive all earthly habitations, leave the whole by and by behind, and thus arrive at those great ends that are above all other ends, blessings that are above all other blessings, and achievements that surpass all others; for what else can you and I need but to dwell in God, to dwell in the new Jerusalem? It embodies all that we can need for the world that now is, and that which is to come; for "godliness is profitable to all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Therefore to these ends the Lord gives us a gracious promise in relation to those that I have described; "For I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed; for the Lord dwelleth in Zion."

Now the first thing we have here, then, is *vital consecration to God*: "I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed." And the second thing we have here is *the presence of the Lord*; "for the Lord dwelleth in Zion."

Let us, then, look at this *vital consecration to God*. And the cleansing of the blood here must be understood in the first place spiritually; and after you have got the spiritual meaning, I will allow you then to have a literal meaning to it, which we shall see it has when we come to that part. First, then, let us take it strictly in a spiritual sense; and let us take it first medicinally. And perhaps there may be some reference here, by way of simile, to the leprosy you read of in the thirteenth chapter of Leviticus; and the cleansing of the blood may, if it be understood spiritually, refer to the circumstance of the cleansing of the leper. Let us now seek the person to whom this promise belongs. And if you will take the trouble just to turn when you get home, if you cannot now, to the twelfth and thirteenth verses of the thirteenth chapter of the book

of Leviticus, you will there see who the persons are to whom this promise belongs. It there saith, "And if a leprosy break out abroad in the skin, and the leprosy cover all the skin of him that hath the plague, from his head even to his foot, wheresoever the priest looketh; then the priest shall consider." Let us stop at that clause for one moment; if there be a man in that state, the priest shall take that man into consideration. And as soon as ever a poor sinner falls down before God, with "unclean, unclean; Lord, I am a poor, filthy unclean creature;" that is just the person that Jesus Christ takes into consideration. "Then the priest shall consider." And you may depend upon it that the Great Physician of all will rightly consider, and that he will lovingly consider, and that he will effectually consider. He will consider the man, consider his constitution, consider the nature of the disease; he will consider everything; there is not anything that shall escape. You know our physicians, sometimes they are exceedingly perplexed to find out the real cause of some of the maladies they see. They study, and labour, and do their very best for us, and after they have done their best they perhaps sometimes err, and somehow or another overlook the essential to the thorough understanding of the case. Now, it is not so, then, with our Great Physician, the Lord Jesus Christ; our High Priest shall consider. There is something, I think, very sweet in the thought that the Lord should thus consider every poor sinner; as he saith in another place, "But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." A sinner conscious of what he really is does tremble at God's word, lest the threatenings of that word should fall upon him, lest he should be cast away, lest it should be written concerning him, "He that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is unjust, let him be unjust still." Those words, to the sinner sensible of what he is, not yet made acquainted with that cleansing we shall presently have to notice; those words are to him very solemn and very awful, and make him tremble. The high priest shall thus consider. And now let us go on. "And, behold, if the leprosy have covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean that hath the plague; it is all turned white; he is clean." I do not pretend to understand that medically or scientifically, and I will therefore not handle it in that way. I have my own opinion about it, but it is not worth giving, and so I will not give it, but simply keep to the spiritual department. It is a remarkable scripture, I think; it is a scripture from which many a child of God has obtained considerable encouragement; that on the very ground on which the poor sinner is cutting himself off; why, as you have been singing,

"All the fitness he requireth,
Is to feel your need of him."

And when the leper was altogether a leper he was pronounced clean. And as soon as ever you become nothing but a sinner inside and out, as it were; a poor creature; have not a particle of holiness or righteousness you can call your own; why, that is really the proof that you are born of God, that there is a new principle in you, and that you are clean. But then I may just add one word; it says, "If the leprosy cover all the skin of him that hath the plague." So you see it is a plague, notwithstanding his being clean, it is a plague to him. Well, the Christian says, if I am clean, how is it my heart is such a plague to me? how is it my nature is such a plague to me? how is it I have such a devilish heart as I have if I am clean? Well, but he hath a plague; the leprosy is a plague to him. And so the man taught of God, what he is as a sinner is a plague to him. But he is clean; there is a vital principle within; he is very bad to look at, but he has got a new heart and a new life, and the man is clean. Now let us look, then, at the cleansing, the ceremonial cleansing, as pointing to that cleansing by which the Lord consecrates his people to himself. The first thing was, as you are aware, the two birds; one bird was slain, and the other dipped in the blood of the slain bird, and the bird that was not slain was let free into the open field. Now I think that one bird here being slain represents the deadly nature of the disease, the deadly character of sin; and the other bird represents the freedom which the leper hath from that disease. I hardly know whether I may without irreverence—for I always feel afraid lest I should apply anything to the Lord Jesus Christ that is improper and unbecoming; it is solemn ground, which we ought to tread with reverence—whether I ought to venture to suggest that the bird slain is a figure of the death of Christ; and that the other that was set free is a figure of the resurrection of Christ. But if we take it the other way, it conveys a delightful truth to us, that there is the death of a substitute, as it were; and that the bird, the live bird, dipped in the blood of the other, and then set free, conveys to us that it is by the blood of Jesus Christ that we are set free. And there is a remarkable expression here; it is said of this live bird that it was let go into the open field, to denote the freedom of the leper. An open field; not a field enclosed, so that you could not get into it, but an open field; the field is thrown open, the field of the gospel. Whenever a sinner realizes pardoning mercy, and is brought into the freedom of the gospel, there is an open field; there is the field of God's love, the field of God's grace, the field of his promises; a pleasant field, a field which the Lord hath blessed. Then again, in the cleansing of this leper there was the sin-offering. How pleasing that must have been to those who understood it, especially spiritually. And that sin-offering, of course in type, is the Lord Jesus Christ.

He takes away atoningly that sin by which we became spiritually lepers. And then there was the burnt-offering. So Jesus Christ takes away that wrath that sin hath entailed. And I need not dwell here upon the sprinkling; the leper was to be sprinkled seven times? And what does that denote? That completeness of freedom from sin and from wrath which we have in the Lord Jesus Christ. And as he was a leper from the foot unto the head, so he was sprinkled from the foot unto the head; the right foot, the right hand, and the right ear; and this to denote, in the first place, his freedom from sin by the sin-offering; his freedom from wrath by the burnt-offering; and then the whole man devoted thus to God, head, hand, and foot; the foot to denote that he should walk in the way of the Lord by faith in the blood of the Lamb; the hand to denote that he should lay hold of eternal life by the blood of the Lamb; the ear to denote that he should listen to no other gospel but that that proclaims eternal freedom by the blood of the Lamb. Thus, "I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed;" that is to say, if we feel that we are by nature these poor, spiritually speaking of course, unclean creatures, then we shall look to the remedy the Lord has provided. And as the leper was thus favoured, he had his freedom, and then he had also access to God, unto the holy things; now he was to have access unto the holy things; now he was to eat of the holy things;—just so it is when the Holy Spirit is pleased to bring home a sense of pardoning mercy, we can then live upon the promises, the words of the Lord then are sweet to us; we can eat of the holy things, and it strengthens us in our holy faith, in our holy affections, in our holy desires, and in our ends which we have in view. This, I think, then, is one part of the meaning of our text; "I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed." And I would not pass by the encouraging aspect of this. If I am speaking to one who does not know what this cleansing is, but who is brought to mourn his state as a sinner, and that you have no hope in anything that you are, or that you can do; and that what you are and your own doings rather sink you into despair than encourage you in any way, whatever; then, I say, the promise is unto you; I say the promise is unto you. "I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed." But the man that does not thus know his state by nature, the man whose heart is no trouble to him, the man whose corruptions are no burden to him, the man who has no real concern to know Jesus Christ, the man who is content either without any religion at all, or else content with a false religion, and so stops short of the grace of God and of the Christ of God, I cannot say the promise belongs to him. Whether the promise

belongs to him in God's secret counsels and decrees, that of course I cannot say ; but the promise does not belong to him manifestively. Never forget that all the promises of God are to character : you will find no promise that is not to character. The Lord marks his people by certain experiences, and those certain experiences distinguish them from others. They shall know every man his own grief, and his own sore, and his own plague ; and hereby each shall bear testimony to the efficacy of the blood of the Lamb ; each shall bear testimony to the freeness and sufficiency of the grace of the blessed God. I say to such an one, then, that thus knows his need, but has not realized the mercy ; my answer is, if you have no confidence in anything you are, but you have a humble hope in Jesus Christ, and that your sincere desire is to know in your own soul what this cleansing is, and what spiritual health is ; then my answer is in the Lord's own word—namely, where he says, "I have not said unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain." He saith unto the others, "Seek ye me in vain," and they shall seek but shall not be able to enter in ; but he has never so said to the seed of Jacob. And there are two things in the kind of faith of the seed of Jacob that distinguish them from all others ; and the two things that distinguish their faith are these. First, the seed of Jacob are taught, as I have said, what they are as sinners ; the consequence is that they believe in the same yea and amen Jesus Christ as Jacob did. So that here is this oneness between their faith and the faith of Jacob ; that Jacob believed, shall I say, in the ladder that reached all the way from earth to heaven ; that he believed in a yea and amen promise, and that promise is yea and amen by what Jesus Christ hath done. And so, if you are seeking in this way, by the perfection of Jesus Christ, you are seeking by the same kind of faith that Jacob had, and the Lord has not said to you, "Seek ye me in vain." Another thing that distinguished the faith of these three patriarchs, set forth as patterns of all that in future ages should believe, was that they all three believed in the immutability of the counsel of God in the salvation of the soul. God appeared to them by his immutable oath ; "he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, saying, In blessing I will bless thee." Now if you are brought to seek him in this way, you will find ; but if you are brought to seek him in any other way, you will not find. "Israel," that is, Israel after the flesh, "hath not obtained that which he sought for," because he sought it not purely by faith, but by a mixture of faith and creature doings, and so set aside in part Christ's perfection, made light of Divine immutability, and put human ceremonies into the place of divine essentials ; and so they obtained not that which they sought for, because they sought it not purely by

faith. But "the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith;" purifying their hearts by faith. Thus, "he hath not said unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain." Thus, then, if thou art convinced of thy state as a sinner, and art brought into the perfection of Christ, and the immutability of God, thy faith is of the same kind, not yet arrived at the same degree of strength and assurance as the faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; but the faith is of the same kind. Therefore I say, O thou of little faith, thy faith is of the right kind; O thou of little faith, wherefore dost thou doubt? He who has given the little faith will by and by strengthen it into great faith, for faith hath many degrees. And the apostle, when speaking of the increase of faith, speaks of it thus—that "the righteousness of God," he says, "is revealed from faith to faith." By the righteousness of God I there understand the mediatorial righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ; that righteousness the righteousness of God, because it originated with God, and because Jesus Christ, who wrought it out, is God; and because the Holy Ghost, who reveals it, is God; and therefore in every sense that righteousness is the righteousness of God; said to be revealed from faith to faith; that is, from one degree of faith to another. When your faith gets weak, what revives it? A revelation to you of what Christ has done. And when your faith grows strong, what makes it strong? Why, that that made the Psalmist strong when he said, "I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only." Ah, what does this say? It says that the eternal strength of the Most High is thrown into the righteousness of Christ. If you get hold of the righteousness of Christ, you get hold of the righteousness of God, of the love of God, of the power of God, of the grace of God, of the mercy of God, of the promise of God, of the blessing of God; you get hold of everything, for everything is there. "He hath not said unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain." "I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed." That is one view, then, of this consecration.

The second is, it relates to their citizenship; for nothing that defileth, worketh abomination, and maketh a lie, can enter into the city, can be reckoned a citizen. In the 4th of Isaiah we have another beautiful representation of this consecration. It is said there that "the branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious." That branch means Jesus Christ as the Son of God. A branch is the offspring of a tree, the offshoot of a tree; and Jesus Christ was the offshoot of a genealogical tree, given by Matthew and Luke; "that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." There were many branches to that genealogical tree, but

they all withered. Presently came One whose leaf was always green; presently One came who was a fruitful bough, whose branches ran over the wall of sin, and came down to poor sinners shut out by that sin, and gave them to see that that sin was put away. Now this branch, this Son of God, shall be beautiful and glorious; so he is. Whenever I hear a mother admiring her baby I always think of the Babe of Bethlehem. I met a lady with her husband some time ago, and she said, "There is my little baby; it's the most beautiful baby that ever was, sir." "Of course, ma'am," I said, "I would not contradict that; I should a very unpolite if I did." "Oh, but it is really, sir." "Oh," I said, "of course." I knew what I should have got if I had said the contrary to that; so I thought the best way was to say amen to what she said, because I was quite sure it was, in her estimation. And I went away, and I thought—the angels at Bethlehem, they thought the babe of Bethlehem was the most beautiful babe that was ever born; and the shepherds, they thought he was the most beautiful babe that was ever born; and the wise men, they thought he was the most beautiful babe that was ever born; and if I might without irreverence say it, God himself thought he was the most beautiful babe that was ever born. "The branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth"—there is his resurrection, you see—"shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel." Well, say you, what has this to do with your text? We shall see presently. "I will cleanse their blood." How came this branch of the Lord to be so beautiful? How came his resurrection, called there the fruit of the earth, to be so excellent and comely? The disciples thought it excellent and comely when he appeared to them, did they not? Thousands on the day of Pentecost thought it excellent and comely. "With great power gave they witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus." "And it shall come to pass that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem." "He that is left in Zion." The Lord drives some out. Who does he drive out? All that would bring their own works in. Who does he drive out? Those that would drive out any part of his truth. Ah, says one, he will drive me out. I do not know what you are. Well, I am a poor creature, unworthy of the least of his mercies, and I have no hope but in the riches of his grace. And yet he will drive you out, you think. Now don't you be angry if I show you that you are wrong. Just see if you are not the very person that he will leave in. "I will leave in the midst of thee," of Zion, "an afflicted and poor people;" that have no wealth of their own to trust in, so they shall trust in the name of the Lord. These are they that are left in Zion,

an afflicted and poor people, nothing to trust in but the name of the Lord. "And they shall be called holy." Why, say you, I am anything but that. Well, you are called that; it does not say you are that, only says you shall be called holy, proclaimed holy, reckoned holy. There is a motley company—four-footed beasts, wild beasts, and creeping things. "Arise, Peter, kill and eat." Why, Lord, they are all unclean. No, Peter, I reckon them holy, I reckon them clean; "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." Here it brings us back, you see, to the idea we had just now, that the Lord looks upon us as we stand in Christ Jesus the Lord; he reckons us holy there. "When the Lord shall have washed away"—there it is—"the filth of the daughter of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning." Now let us be careful here. What is the spirit of burning? First, the fiery law of God, the fiery spirit of that law, as a law of wrath, a law of fiery indignation. And Jesus Christ met the judgment of that law, he met that law burning in its spirit, its spirit is a burning spirit; Christ met it, and with his own blood washed away the filth, that is, the sin, all the sin of the daughter of Zion. Why take that view of it, does it not set the Saviour forth in a lovely light? Doth it not draw out our souls to God, at least at times, when the Holy Spirit is pleased to make the Saviour sweetly attractive to us? That is one view I take, then, of the spirit of judgment, the spirit of burning; washed away the filth of the daughter of Zion by the spirit of judgment; that Christ endured the spirit of burning, the wrath; that he met and quenched the Father's flaming sword, as one of your hymns hath it, "in his own vital blood."

And then there is some bitter experience there as well. When God brings a soul under judgment, and into fiery tribulations, O how that will bring the dross to light, how it will bring your weaknesses to light, how it will make you kick and rebel; and so this is a mysterious thing with God, the deeps of his sovereignty, that he should suffer this, and that, and the other. It is to burn us out of all creature confidence and self-congratulation. We get experience-proud, and practice-proud, and perhaps purse-proud; in a variety of ways old nature is always seeking to exalt itself. By and by the fire is kindled, the furnace hot, everything, as it were, that we prided ourselves in, burnt to pieces, and then nothing will do for us but the fountain that is opened for sin and for uncleanness. And thus, by what Jesus Christ endured, he hath purged the blood of Jerusalem mediatorially; and then the Holy Spirit, bringing us under this chastisement, and leading us into the realization of the preciousness of Jesus Christ, we have an experience of the same; and thus we

enter into the city undefiled, because we enter in by the blood of the Lamb; we enter into the city righteous, because we enter by the white robe of his righteousness; we enter into the city by the truth, for "the Lord desireth truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden parts shalt thou make me to know wisdom." God will never suffer the soul to enter there with a lie in its right hand; he will strip you of all, and make himself all and in all. And thus "Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."

But I said just now that our text had a literal meaning as well; "I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed." I do not see that, say you? Yes, "Know ye not, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God?" that mortality cannot inherit immortality. You will die by and by, and when you rise from the dead you will rise with a pure body, a spiritual body; it will be a body, not a spirit, a pure body, to be inhabited by a pure spirit; so that your soul and body will be one with spiritual and eternal things. It will be an immortal body, like unto his glorious body; a heavenly body. In this sense also their blood shall be cleansed. You will rise from the dead with blood that will dance through your body with unutterable rapture to all eternity. I know when I was a little boy, when any one did me a favour, it was a common saying with me in my little, stupid, hearty way, "Thank you, sir; every drop of my blood thanks you." I sometimes think, when we rise from the dead, when we are immortalized, every drop of our blood will praise the Lord to all eternity for the infinite wonders he has wrought, the glories he has revealed, and that which he brings us to possess for ever. If man, the creature man, may now say, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made;" what shall he say at that great day, when he shall rise with his countenance like the sun, with his eyes like a flame of fire; his eloquence, when he speaks, like rolling thunders; his feet as fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, and marching forth over the enchanting plains of heaven in all the majesty of sons and heirs of God, and in such likeness to Christ Jesus as scarcely to know, as it were, one from the other? Hence it is that John fell down to worship the fellow-servant, and thought it was the Master. So that, bless the Lord, our text may be taken in this literal sense as well. How wondrously full are the Holy Scriptures in their gracious meaning! But then we need the Holy Spirit to keep us believing, and to keep us seeking, and to keep us strong, and to keep us decided. Oh how true it is in our experience, as well as in God's word, that the flesh in these matters profiteth nothing; it is the Spirit that quickeneth. If the Lord do not help us on in these

things, vain is the help of man. A Paul may plant, and an Apollos may water, but the plant derives no nourishment from its root, its leaves droop, its fruit is weak, and cannot ripen, only as God gives the increase. But when he sets in, then the roots derive nourishment, the leaf is green, the fruit is perfect. Thus then I have tried, in my poor, feeble way, to describe this consecration to God; the man thus, by faith in Jesus Christ, brought into spiritual life and health, and fitness for citizenship in Zion while he is in this world, and fitness for eternal glory. Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath thus, by bringing us into this knowledge of his dear Son, made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in everlasting light.

The presence of the Lord is the next thing we have to make a few remarks upon. "I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed; for the Lord dwelleth in Zion." First, as the strength of Zion; he dwells there as the strength of Zion. "In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; we have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks." It is strong then, if salvation be the walls. God is our salvation, he is the strength of it. "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation," that keepeth the truth concerning these things which those who are consecrated in the way I have described do; "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation," that keepeth the truth in all these respects, "may enter in." "Thou wilt keep him," who is thus brought to see that God is the strength of the foundations, and the strength of the walls, and the strength of the citizens; "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace." I should prefer another reading there; I know Jesus Christ is our perfect peace; but I should rather prefer another rendering there, which is given sometimes in the margin: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect security whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." "As thy day, so shall thy strength be." He therefore dwells with his people as their strength; the strength of Zion, the strength of the city in all its departments, and the strength of the people. "Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death." Second, for I must end, he dwells in Zion also as the defence of the people, as their defence, to defend them. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." And when we see this, it is only then—it is true I am going now by my own experience, it is so with me—it is only then, when we can see, and understand, and believe, that he is our rock, and strength, and present help in

trouble, "therefore we will not fear." But when we are the subjects of gloomy doubts and fears, when these prevail, it is different then, we fear then. But when we can see that "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble," then we can say, "Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;" because then "there is a river," that is, the gospel, "the streams whereof," of that gospel, "shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High." Let the earth and all it contains pass away, our God will never forsake us; he will be our defence, he will help us, and that right early. It is true the heathen may sometimes rage, and pour out, belch out—I use the word because the word of God uses it—great threatenings; but "the Lord uttered his voice, the earth melted." Not, the people uttered their voice, and the earth melted; you utter your voice to the Lord; have nothing to do with the devil or his people if you can help it; utter your voice to the Lord, not to them. And when the Lord utters his voice, interposes, he knows how to make the flames, that were intended for you, slay those that would cast you into the furnace; he knows how to make the lions devour them that would cast you into the lions' den. "He uttered his voice, the earth melted. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." He will defend Jerusalem; he will rejoice in Jerusalem; he will glory in Jerusalem. So that the Lord dwelleth in Zion as the strength of it, and as the defence of the people. But lastly, what, after all, would be this security, what would be this defence, if the people were not happy? Will the people be happy? That's another thing we want; we want not only strength and defence, but we want to be happy. Let us hear the word of the Lord upon it. It stands thus,—John saw a new heaven and a new earth; that is, the Christian dispensation, called a new heaven and a new earth; the first heaven and the first earth, that is, the Jewish heaven and the Jewish earth, were passed away, and by and by this heaven and earth will pass away with us, this earthly heaven and earth; "and there was no more sea;" that is, no more trouble. And then John sees the new Jerusalem come down from God; said to come down from God because the citizens derive their spiritual birth from God, their salvation from God, and all they have from God. "There was a man sent from God." John did not come from God as to his natural descent, but he did as to his spiritual descent. See Revelation xxi. 4.