

THE WATERS OF JERUSALEM.

JAMES WELLS.

PREACHED AT THE SURREY TABERNACLE, BOROUGH ROAD,
ON SUNDAY EVENING, SEPT. 26, 1841.

“ And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea; in summer and in winter shall it be.”—Zech. xiv. 8.

THE greater part of the Old Testament was written in the land of Canaan. Therefore many of its metaphors are taken from the sceneries of that land; and hence the mere letter of this text refers to the spread of the Gospel by the apostles. Judea, you are aware, is a land about three hundred miles long (including Samaria and Galilee), stretching from north to south, and upon the average it is about fifty miles wide. On the western side of this land is what is called the Mediterranean sea, which in my text is called “the hinder sea;” called the Mediterranean sea, because the ancients thought that the earth was one extended level, and this sea (which is between Africa and Asia) they thought was the middle of the world, the word *Mediterranean* coming from two Latin words—*medius* middle, and *terra* earth; this sea lies on the western side of Judea. The other sea, which in my text is called “the former sea,” is the Dead sea, which lies on the eastern side of Judea, as the river Jordan runs down from Lebanon about a hundred and fifty miles, till it gets so far south as to lose itself in the Dead sea. ‘But,’ you will say, ‘how do you know these to be the two seas here referred to?’ Why, I know it, because the word here translated “former” is in Genesis translated “eastward,” and it is a word that signifies *east*; and therefore if “the former sea” is the eastward sea, “the hinder sea” must be the westward. ‘But,’ you will say, ‘how came it to be called “the former sea?”’ Why, simply from this circumstance: the word “former” signifies *first*, and the word “hinder” signifies *last*; the sun rises in the east, and this sea being on the east side is called the first or former sea, and the other on the western side the last or hinder sea. And these seas figuratively will include the eastern and western hemispheres, that is, the whole world; and if you take the text in this sense, the two seas representing the two halves of the globe, the text is a declaration of the extension of the Gospel, according to the mission given to the apostles—“Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel.” Here, then, are the “living waters” going out of Jerusalem to the whole world. In this Mediterranean sea there is of course a great deal of turbulence, and therefore it sets forth the rebellious

state in which men are by nature ; but that tumultuous state of men shall be subdued and overcome by the waters of life. The Dead sea, filled with a bituminous sort of mud, sets forth the nauseous and bitter state we are in by nature ; but the Lord says, "The waters that are bitter shall be healed." 'But,' say you, 'on the western side of Judea there are mighty hills, between Jerusalem and the Mediterranean, and how is water to come there ?' Why, as Watts says—

"It rises high, and drowns the hills,
Has neither shore nor bound ;
Now if we search to find our sins,
Our sins can ne'er be found."

This, then, friends, is the mere letter of the text. And now, as we have just glanced at the mere outside of the matter, mercy enabling us, we will endeavour to go in to the kingdom which is here presented, and examine its city, its river, and its ultimate state. First, the city—"Jerusalem;" secondly, the "living waters;" and then the ultimate state of things which is here implied. "It shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea. In summer and in winter shall it be."

I. First, the city. By "Jerusalem" we are to understand of course "the city of God;" that scene of things, which the Lord our God for His own glory hath established. And this city is known by several characteristics, given to it in the Word of God; and all those characteristics of the city are indicative of the state of the people. You will find, that every ignoble name, every ignoble character, every symptom of that which is wrong is taken away; and every thing noble and generous is said of this city. "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God."

Now, first, this city is a city of *truth*; in opposition to this world, which is a scene of falsehood. Here is God our Father its great Founder. He has introduced Himself in all the truth of His eternal counsels; and what He said before time, He says in time, and what He says in time, He will say to all eternity; here is eternal truth. Here is the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of this city, who is "The Truth." That which He was for us before time, He is for us in time; and that which He was for us before time and is for us in time, He will be for us and to us when time shall be no more. The Holy Spirit too, is emphatically called "the Spirit of truth," because He opens up the truth of Jehovah's everlasting covenant, and because He brings us to realise the truth of the Saviour's great work, the truth of the Saviour's dear names, the truth of His saving grace. So that here is truth from first to last. And the people of God are spoken of very peculiarly, as standing in the truth: "Surely they are My people, children that will not lie; so He was their Saviour;" and therefore it is said, again, "Israel shall not speak lies." So

then, every thing in this God, every thing in this city, every thing in this people, being according to truth, this lays a firm foundation for the after characteristics of this city.

Take away truth, and there must necessarily be deception, for the very character of falsehood is to deceive; but God our Father will not deceive His dear Son, but will take good care that He shall have all to eternity, that were given to Him from everlasting. Jesus did not deceive God, His and our Father, when He came into this world; He came for a great purpose, and hath accomplished that purpose, and hath ascended on high. And the dear Redeemer will not deceive the Holy Spirit; for He saith, "Him that cometh I will in no wise cast out," and as the Holy Spirit brings us to Christ, Christ receives us and brings us into the presence of God His Father. The Holy Spirit will not deceive the dear Redeemer; for it is written, "All Thy children shall be taught of the Lord," and the Holy Spirit will be sure to make known the honours and glories of the Lord Jesus Christ. So that our eternal security is founded in this one circumstance—of the persons in the Godhead being infallibly true to each other. Would you wish a better foundation? Has God the Father promised me to Christ? has Christ engaged to bring me to the Father? has Christ left my knowledge of him to the Holy Ghost? does the Holy Ghost stand engaged to bring me to these things? Then I may well rejoice, as did the Old Testament saints, that "truth is my shield and my buckler."

One characteristic, then, of the city is truth. The Persons in the Godhead are true to each other, and the Lord will make His people true to Him; aye, that He will. And their being true to Him is described most beautifully in the thirty-first of Proverbs, where it is said of the Church in her union to Christ, that "she will do Him good, and not evil, all the days of her life," and that "the heart of her Husband doth safely trust in her, so that He shall have no need of spoil." What does that mean? Why, it means that the Holy Spirit brings the Church into such a state of decision for Christ, that He can trust in her securely, as she is in the hands of the Holy Ghost; and His "having no need of spoil," means that they shall bring all the glory to Him that is due to His name, and that He shall lose nothing, for He "will not give His glory to another nor His praise to graven images;" He is glorified in them, and they shall glorify Him for ever.

Another characteristic of this city is *holiness*. It is said to be "a holy city." Now as truth stands opposed to falsehood, holiness stands opposed to unholiness. And if you ask how this is a holy city with God our Father, if you ask how this is a holy city with Christ, if you ask how this is a holy city with the Holy Ghost, if you ask how this is a holy city with us, we have the answer in these words—"The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." God the Father comes forth in His atonement, and casts out all our sins;

the Redeemer comes forth in this same atonement, and casts out all our sins; the Holy Ghost comes forth in this same atonement, (for "He shall take of Mine" says Christ,) and casts out all our sins; we come forth in this same atonement, and shall be everlastingly holy. It is a holy city by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then again: not only a city of truth and holiness, but also of *righteousness*. "The city of righteousness." This means two things—state and conduct. The Lord's people are righteous as they stand in the Lord Jesus Christ, they are "complete in Him;" this is their state. Now as to conduct, there is a twofold conduct; there is the dealing of God with them, and their conduct towards Him; and there shall be righteousness on both sides. For although He has dealt with them after the order of His infinite and everlasting mercy, yet it is altogether in accordance with all the perfections of His nature. And as to our side, Peter saith, "He that worketh righteousness is accepted with Him;" and there is only one way of working righteousness, or doing righteousness, for that is the meaning: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God?" "To do justly" is to renounce all confidence in the flesh, to acknowledge His truth, be decided for His truth, and not be ashamed of His truth. He has owned us before men and devils and angels; and therefore if we "do justly," we shall follow Him, and own Him before men and devils and angels, and contend for the truth through all the varied scenes of time. This will be righteous dealing; and this is the way in which we can deal justly with God—namely, His own way. And this is the way in which it is said that "the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;" that is, we are conformed to His glorious supremacy, and we prefer Him to every thing else, view Him as above every thing else, more desirable than any thing else. Therefore it is a city of righteousness, in opposition to unrighteousness.

This is not all: it is a city of *liberty*, in opposition to slavery. Therefore the apostle speaks of a "Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children," but he speaks also of a "Jerusalem which is above, and is free." This city is not tributary to any other. It is the city of God, and it owes no custom, it owes no acknowledgment, it owes nothing to any but God; it is altogether a free city. And therefore this city is not nourished by King Free-Will, nor by King Universal-Charity, nor by Lord Human-Learning either of Oxford or Cambridge, nor yet by Lady Church-of-Englandism, nor yet by Lady Roman-Catholicism, nor yet by Lady Moderate-Calvinism. No; the city is nourished from none of these quarters; it is the city of the living God, independent of kings and powers and life and death and hell and angels and principalities and powers, and owing nothing to any but God. We owe *Him* ourselves; and it is

His city; and therefore we are altogether in a state of liberty. Here God is our Father, Christ is our Saviour and our elder Brother, and the Holy Ghost our teacher. God possesses this city in liberty. *He* cannot be brought into bondage—*we* cannot be brought into bondage. Founded in truth, ennobled by holiness, clad in righteousness, and walking in liberty. 'The apostle might well say, "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." This is the object that we seek; namely, to go into this city—to feel more and more of the firmness of truth, to enjoy more and more of the majesty of holiness, to shine forth more and more in the dignity of the Saviour's righteousness, and the glory of entire emancipation, complete deliverance from all adversity, from all iniquity, and from all our fears, by that liberty "wherewith Christ makes us free."

Which, then, is the more desirable of the two—truth or falsehood, holiness or uncleanness, righteousness or unrighteousness, liberty or slavery?

It is an *extensive* city. And therefore it is called a great city. It knows no bounds. If you ask where the city is situated, I will tell you, and leave you to judge whether it has any bounds. Where is it situated? It is in God; in the love and power and perfections of God; and as far as He extends, this city extends. It is indeed an extensive city. We are shut up now in the body, shut up in circumstances, shut up in a variety of ways; but when the soul shall leave the body, and go away into this city, we shall find it indeed a great city—"the city of the great King." Is it not better, then, to be in this great city? not great in a Babylon sense, but great in this exalted and glorious sense.

II. We must come now to the "living waters." "It shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea; in summer and in winter shall it be.

Now I have given you the letter of this, and shall not repeat it; but of these waters I must notice—first, their source—secondly, their progression—and thirdly, their continuation.

First, the *source* of these waters. My text says, they shall "go out from Jerusalem." In the forty-seventh of Ezekiel you have them coming from under the temple. In the last of the Revelation, you have them proceeding out of the throne of God; and therefore the source of these waters is altogether infinite. Now these waters are deep waters. If I speak, for instance, of His love, there is an infinite depth in it; it can never cease to spring up; it is deep love; it is "deeper than hell, what canst thou know?" You read, again, of "the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God;" that "His judgments are unsearchable, and His ways past finding out." You read also, that "His thoughts are very deep." All His thoughts, His plans and His purposes are laid so deep, that

though the devil has laid His plans very deep, and did so in order to come into the garden of Eden and bring the whole human race into a state of ruin, and though the enemy thought of course, going so deep as he did and laying his plan so well, that nothing could come in and set it aside, yet the Lord from everlasting laid a deeper plan under all the plots of the devil; and so coming in under it all, the plans of the enemy are swallowed up, the curse that sin entailed swallowed up, sin itself swallowed up, and death put away. Therefore the source—or to use the plural, the sources are the infinite depths of infinity. In a word, they are God Himself, in all the depths of His love, His thoughts, His power, and His treasures. And this river continues from everlasting to everlasting: “the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.” Therefore you see, there is a depth in these things. And if God be our supply, it might well be said, that “the river of God is full of water.” Here is our everlasting life; here is the healing of all our diseases; here is the cleansing from all our uncleanness; and here is the satiety of our souls, for this is “the river of His pleasures,” out of which we drink and are satisfied. So then, the source is God himself, in His everlasting love, in His well-ordered covenant, in His great salvation, in that great plan by which He has swallowed up all the plans of the devil, and brought them into such a position that “all things work together for good to them that love God, that are called according to His purpose.” The city is great, and the source of the mercy is great.

Now mark the *progression* of this river. You have this set forth in the second of Genesis very beautifully; and you have it also very beautifully in the forty-seventh of Ezekiel, and the last of the Revelation. Now just to point out the progression of this river, let us notice these scriptures.

In the second of Genesis you have this river; for the river there spoken of, evidently has a spiritual meaning, and it is the same in its meaning as the river in the last of the Revelation. “A river went out of Eden, to water the garden; and from thence it was parted and became into four heads;” containing, you see, the same doctrine as my text, of its spreading to the ends of the earth. And then the names of these rivers, and the departments which they compassed, all carry with them a spiritual meaning. “The name of the first is Pison,” which signifies extension; the first thing with God the Father was to extend mercy unto us, and so it was with the Saviour, and so with the Holy Ghost. And this is said to “compass the whole land of Havilah”—a word signifying tribulation; and so the Lord’s people are brought into real tribulation, and then this extension of mercy unto them becomes the object of desire—“God be merciful to me a sinner!” “The name of the second river is Gihon”—valley of grace; this people, brought into this spiritual tribulation, are brought into the valley of grace. And

this is said to "compass the whole land of Ethiopia;" all these are black in their own eyes and loathsome in their own sight, but this river having extended mercy and brought them into the valley of grace, comes and takes all their blackness away. "The name of the third river is Hiddekel"—sharp voice; and so these persons, having mercy extended to them and being brought into the valley of mercy, speak with a sharp voice, that is, with a decisive voice. There is no more 'if,' and 'but,' and 'may be;' 'Election now and for ever,' says the man—"Predestination now and for ever"—'in Christ now and for ever'—'Christ all in all now and for ever;' the man takes up his standing in "I will" and "they shall;" is decided; and the consequence is, he is called Bigot, and a great many ugly names, but that does not alter the voice. They pray with a sharp voice. 'Aye,' say you, 'I never heard that before; what is the meaning of that?' Why, they tell the Lord they are ruined and lost, and shall be eternally damned, without His grace; they pray with a sharp voice, they become decided. And God speaks to them with a sharp voice; for "the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." The Lord speaks decisively and sharply; when He says to the soul, "Come up hither," "ere they are aware, they are made like the chariots of Aminadib," and nothing can stop them. Then, further, "the name of the fourth river is Euphrates," which signifies fruitfulness or fulness; and we go on, while in this world, to learn more and more of our emptiness, and the consequence is that the fulness of Jesus becomes more and more desirable. And it is our comfort, that the love and grace and mercy of God our Father are full, that the salvation of Jesus is a full salvation, that the teaching of the Holy Ghost is full and shall go on unto perfection, that there is a fulness for us and into that fulness we are to come. How beautifully the apostle connects these things in the Colossians! He says, "In Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" then he brings in the people—"And ye are complete in Him;" and then the dominion of Christ, implying their dominion in Him—"Who is the head of all principality and power." So then, this river progresses; extending mercy, bringing the people into soul trouble and into the valley of grace, giving decision, and supplying all their needs.

Then if you come to Ezekiel, he saw this river. At first, it reached only to the ancles; and when we first discovered a little of the Gospel, we had no knowledge of its depth. I thought it was a nice little stream of mercy, and if I did my part and kept myself pretty clean and tidy, I should get on very well with it. But he went on, and the waters were to the knees; and so, as we go on, and discover a little more of this stream of mercy, we find it is deeper than we ever thought it was. A little further, and the waters were to the loins. A little

Sermons by A. C. Phillips in Nos. 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110 and 111. The Nine Sermons attached to printed Vespers, give Nineteen. Some of the Sermons are also included in the late Rev. Wm. Williams's I remember a sermon, published by the same publisher.

further, and it was a river that he could not pass over. Aye, and a very good thing too. Depend upon it, Peter was right when he said, "Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." "It was a river that I could not pass over;" "for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over." Sin came—it fell in; it could not pass over; it was stopped. The devil came—he could not pass over; he was beaten back again; he could not sail in this sea; his ships could not be got upon it; he could not strengthen their masts. Temptation comes; it is swallowed up. Mortality comes; it cannot get over. Death comes; it cannot get over. It is "a river that cannot be passed over;" and the children of God, brought to feel their need of this eternal mercy, ever say, 'It is a river we cannot pass over.' 'What!' says the man, 'pass over the eternal love of God! pass over the eternal redemption of Christ! pass over the eternal work of the Holy Ghost! pass over these eternal things! Impossible. I am brought *into* these, but they "cannot be passed over."'

I cannot but again refer to the literal reference of our text. These waters were to go "toward the hinder sea," the sea behind the western mountains of Judea. Now what must be the height of the waters, to roll over those mountains! Aye, so it is; the waters shall roll over the height of our sins, and the tops of the mountains shall not be seen. Not one vessel of mercy shall run aground upon the mountains of sin. No; they shall come to their desired haven; nothing can hinder.

"Could not be passed over." It implies that it could not be hindered. And what is there, which has not come against God in our salvation? Look at what God the Father (shall I use such a phrase?) met with in our election; see what the Saviour met with in our redemption; see what the Holy Ghost has met with in all ages in the regeneration of the people and leading them along. But God the Father in choosing us saw the state of deadly enmity we were in, and yet he wrote down our names, and says they are there for ever; the Redeemer sees the same thing, and yet he goes on; the Holy Ghost sees the same thing, and yet He goes on. Remember, in salvation it is not the people called upon to encounter these great things, and to overcome them; in salvation it is God Himself encountering sin, it is God Himself encountering the devil, it is God Himself encountering death. God is encountering all these adverse powers *for us*; and therefore the prophet might well say, it is a river "that could not be passed over."

See, then, the progression of this river of mercy. In all ages it has answered the Lord's purpose; and the tumult of the people shall be silenced, and the waters of the Dead Sea healed.

I just glance at the *continuation* of these "living waters." "In summer and in winter shall it be." Of course this means their constancy, in the first place; but there is something more than this implied. The chief thing here meant is their independence. You are

aware, that we have springs even in England, that the drought of summer does not diminish, that the frosts of winter cannot paralyse, and that wet weather cannot augment; and the chief idea conveyed in these waters continuing "in summer and in winter" is independence. Does the drought of summer come, and dry up our souls? and the scorching sun of persecution come, and our very hope and strength seem almost to perish from the Lord? yet this life, this sanctification, this satisfaction, which we have by Christ Jesus, are entirely independent of all these things. Now this is just the reverse of temporal matters. I sometimes feel a little pleasure in contrasting the two; in observing what a trivial circumstance is capable of spoiling all the comforts of a man of this world, and on the other hand looking at the mighty powers, the millions of trying scenes and dreadful troubles that have come upon the people of God, and yet all put together incapable of spoiling them, unable to touch them, as they stand in the Lord Jesus Christ. Why, you may have a great deal of the good things of this life, but let the Lord just come and touch your poor body and lay affliction upon you, and it is all of no use; the whole is spoilt; because these things depend upon your capacity to enjoy them and wisdom to use them and so on. But the things of God are independent of all this. Here is a life, that nothing can touch; here is purity, that nothing can tarnish; here is satisfaction, that nothing can spoil. So that we might well say with the woman of Samaria, perhaps in a higher sense than she then meant—Lord, give me this water, that I thirst not neither go to any human wells to draw. "In summer and in winter shall it be." If persecution come, the mercy goes on. In summer prosperity, the mercy goes on; when winter comes, and paralyses all temporal things, the mercy goes on. It never did stop; it never can stop. Therefore the idea is, its independence of all created things, together with its constancy.

III. Now mark the ultimate state of things brought about. These "living waters shall go out from Jerusalem;" the Lord's people shall feel the benefit of them—(we have in some measure); here is some great end to be brought about.

The first idea is that of freedom from any thing like winter, or tribulation. John tells us of "a new heaven and a new earth" with "no more sea." Now here is something over our heads, something under our feet, and something round about us, *new*. "I saw a new heaven;" what does this mean? Why, it means the new circumstances, under which we are brought. If you view it ultimately, it means that we are brought from under the present canopy of heaven, to live under the canopy of the everlasting covenant of grace; pass from under the created sun, to live under the shinings of the uncreated sun, that will never go down; pass from under this cloudy sky to a sky that is cloudless; pass from this tempestuous scene to a scene of eternal tranquillity; pass from this changing scene, uncon-

genial to our health, comfort and happiness, to a scene, an atmosphere, a state, altogether suited to our highest pleasure: "a new heaven." And then there is "a new earth." This implies, that we shall be brought to stand upon something else. You know, that we rest now, for the support and comfort of our bodies, upon the things of this world; the Lord has made us depend upon these things; and therefore that Scripture is rather dear to us, where the Lord has said, that "seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease, while the earth remaineth;" I cannot but bless the name of the Lord for the faithfulness of His promise, even in this temporal sense, for we are dependent upon these things while we are in this world. But here is a promise that we shall go out from these things, to be dependent upon something else. And what is that? Why, "a kingdom that cannot be moved." You will admit, of course, that nothing but Divine power can move this present state of things, but the Lord has told us to "lift up our eyes to the heavens and look upon the earth beneath, for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment;" but Paul says, this kingdom cannot be moved." So that the scene of things is altogether another; we come into a scene, that is altogether new.

But let us go a little further, with the last chapter of the Revelation; it is set forth there beautifully. John says—"He showed me a pure river of water of life," the same river, "clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." In the midst of the street of it, and of either side of the river, was there the tree of life"—Christ Jesus (those who are on the other side of Jordan are living upon it as well as we)—"which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month," that is to say, constantly bearing fruit, and having at the same time great variety. "And there shall be no more curse;" that is God's declaration; oh! what a blessedness is lying before us! "No more curse?" how is that? "The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him." It means, "serve Him" *only*; and it is a Scripture I like very much indeed. Says Free-Will, 'They shall serve me:' 'No,' says the Lord, 'they shall serve Me.' Says the devil, 'They shall serve Me:' 'No,' says the Lord, 'they shall serve Me.' Says the world, 'They shall serve me:' 'No,' says the Lord, 'they shall serve Me.' Says the Pope of Rome, 'They shall serve me, or I will send them to hell:' 'No,' says the Lord, 'they shall serve Me.' Says the Church of England, 'They ought to serve me:' 'No,' says the Lord, 'they shall serve Me.' Says the flesh, 'You must serve me'—and I believe we are pretty often at it; but the promise stands good, "They shall serve Me." So says Paul, "Be not the servants of men;" come out from all other servitude, and serve God, and no one else. "His servants shall serve Him." A new state of things. What is your uncomfortableness and minē

now? Mine is because I do not serve the Lord. 'Dear me, do not you serve the Lord?' Not a quarter as much as I wish; I do not love Him as much as I wish, I do not pray as much as I wish, I do not search into the mysteries of the kingdom as much as I wish, I do not rejoice in Him as much as I wish. But, bless the Lord, I soon shall. "His servants shall serve Him." And mark another feature in this new state of things: "They shall see His face." What does that mean? It means something I like very much. It is the fashion of Eastern kings to issue all their orders in private, and there are a great many task-masters between the king and the people, and these issue out laws as they think proper, and the people do not know but they are *all* the laws of the king. But it shall not be so here; we shall "see His face," hear His voice, and understand His laws to perfection. No Judaizing teacher, no false doctrine; we shall read out the everlasting covenant, we shall see His perfections, we shall know what we are about. Aye, and they shall do it with boldness too; for "His name shall be in their foreheads, And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever."

You see, then, the spiritual meaning of the text. To us, falsehood is hateful, truth is desirable; uncleanness is hateful, holiness is desirable; unrighteousness is rejected, righteousness is received; bondage is objected to, liberty is in some humble measure enjoyed; extensiveness in God is desired, contractedness is hated; eternal duration is delighted in, a mere time kingdom will not satisfy the longing desires of our souls, and if we have a true thirst, we know that nothing but an infinite source can supply our needs. And this river has overflowed all opposition; it has reached us.

Now mark the five successive steps or stages of the Lord's mercy we have an account of in the eighth of the Romans; they set before us very gloriously this new state of things. We are apt sometimes to leave part of these steps behind, as though there was something gone; but none of the works of God are gone by, they are all still present. Now mark: "Whom He did foreknow." It is true, it is spoken in the past tense; but what then? He knows them *now*. Joseph's brethren had not seen him for seventeen years, and they did not know him; and the Lord's people certainly have passed under a great variety of circumstances; but all the disguises under which they have been, could never make them unknown to the Lord. No; He knew us in our fall, knew us in our infancy, knew us in our blood and sin, knew us when enemies—knows us now—and will know us for ever. "Whom He did foreknow," He knows now. "He also did predestinate;" and it is just the same now. 'I determined from everlasting, they shall go to heaven.' Well, Lord, is Thy pleasure the same now? 'Yes, I am of one mind; "I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed;" I am with you

in my knowledge, and with you in My eternal purpose, and nothing can hide you from My sight or alter My purpose; I am determined you shall go to heaven.' But go on: "To be conformed to the image of His Son;" conformed now in the soul, and by and bye entirely in our persons and circumstances—no deformity for ever. If you want to see the difference between the conformity we have to God in the first Adam, and the conformity we have to God in the second Adam, read the sermon I have just published, called "Good Tidings." "Conformed to His image." Was the Lord Jesus Christ deformed? could sin ever defile Him? Certainly not. What is said of us? Why, that we "abide in Him," "the wicked one toucheth us not," "we are born again of the incorruptible seed." "Moreover them He also called." And the Lord never called His people but once. He says to the soul, Follow Me; and life comes into the soul, and the man is called for ever. At the resurrection of the last day, they are called but once; He will say, "Come, ye blessed"—quite enough—that will do; His calling gives life, eternal life, raising them from the dead to die no more. "Them He also justified." "And whom He justified, them He also glorified." And so it is eternal glory, everlasting glory.

This, then, is the state of things brought about by the Lord Jesus Christ. But you must not measure the future state of things by what I have said. Alas! we "know in part" only, and therefore prophecy only in part." But we do desire to bless our God for forming our city; we do desire to bless His dear name for this river of eternal mercy; we do desire to bless Him, that ever He brought us to feel our need of this river, and to drink out of it; we do desire to bless Him, that ever He made us to feel the misery of our bondage, so as to render Him the object of our desire and best affection. May the Lord lead us more and more into these things, and enable us to cast our care upon Him; knowing, after this glorious assurance of eternal bliss, He will never, never leave nor forsake us.