

Storming the Battlements

A Sermon
(No. 38)

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At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

“Go ye up upon her walls, and destroy; but make not a full end: take away her battlements; for they are not the Lord’s.”—[Jeremiah 5:10](#).

WE HAVE BEEN talking very freely during this last week of “glorious victories,” of “brilliant successes,” of “sieges,” and of “stormings.” We little know what the dread reality is of which we boast. Could our eyes once behold the storming of a city, the sacking of a town, the pillage of the soldiery, the barbarous deeds of fury, when the blood is up and long delay has maddened their souls; could we see the fields saturated with blood, and soaked with gore; could we spend one hour amongst the corpses and the dying; or if we could only let the din of battle, and the noise of the guns reach our ears, we should not so much rejoice, if we had anything of fellow feeling for others as well as for ourselves. The death of an enemy is to me a cause of regret as well as the death of a friend. Are not *all* my brethren? and doth not Jesus tell me so? Are we not all made of one flesh? and hath not God “made of one blood all nations that dwell upon the face of the earth?” Let us, then, when we hear of slaughtered enemies, and of thousands that have fallen, cease to rejoice in their death. It would betray a spirit utterly inconsistent with the Christian religion, more akin to Mohamedanism, or to the fierce doctrines of Budha, but not in the least to be brought into compatibility with the truths of the gospel of the glorious God. And yet with all that, far be it from me to check any gladness which this nation may experience, now that it hopes that the incubus of war may at last be removed. Clap your hands, O Britons! Rejoice, ye sons of Albion! there is hope that your swords may yet be sheathed, that your men shall not be mown down as grass before the scythe; that the desolation of your hearths shall now be staid; that the tyrant shall be humbled; and that peace shall be restored. With this view of it, let our hearts leap for joy, and let us sing unto God who hath gotten us the victory; rejoicing that now earth’s wounds may be staunched; that her blood need not flow any longer; and that peace may be established, we trust upon a lasting footing. This, I think, should be the Christian view of it. We should rejoice with the hope of better things; but we should lament over the awful death and terrible carnage; the extent of which we know not yet, but which history shall write amongst the black things. My earnest prayer is, that our brave soldiery may honor themselves as much by moderation in victory, as by endurance of privation, and valour in attack. I have nothing more to say upon that subject whatever, I am now about to turn to a different kind of siege, another kind of sacking of cities.

Jerusalem had sinned against God; she had rebelled against the most High, had set up for herself false gods, and bowed before them; and when God threatened her with chastisement, she built around herself strong battlements and bastions. She said "I am safe and secure. What though Jehovah hath gone away, I will trust in the gods of nations. Though the Temple is cast down, yet we will rely upon these bulwarks and strong fortifications that we have erected." "Ah!" says God, "Jerusalem, I will punish thee. Thou art my chosen one, therefore will I chastise thee. I will gather together mighty men, and will speak unto them; I will bid them come unto thee, and they shall visit thee for these things. My soul shall be avenged on such a nation as this." And he calls together the Chaldeans and Babylonians, and says to those fierce men who speak in uncouth language, "Go ye up upon her walls, and destroy; but make not a full end: take away her battlements, for they are not the Lord's." Thus God used wicked men to be his scourge to chastise a still more wicked nation, who were yet the objects of his affection and love.

This morning I shall take my text and address it in four ways, to different classes of men. First I think this may be spoken by God of *his church*. "Go ye up against her," says he to her enemies, "take away her battlements, for they are not the Lord's." This may also be spoken to *many a Christian*. God often bids troubles and enemies go up against Christians to take away their battlements that are not the Lord's. This also may be spoken to *the young convert* who is trusting in himself, and has not yet been brought low. God says to doubts, and fears, and convictions and to the law, "Go ye up against him: make not a full end; take away his battlements; for they are not the Lord's." And this also shall be spoken at last to the *impertinent sinner*, who, putting his trust in his own strength, hopes by joining hand with hand, to go unpunished: God shall say, at last, to his angels, "Go ye up against her." He will, however, in the last case, alter the next phrase—"make a full end; take away her battlements; for they are not the Lord's."

I. First, then, I shall regard this text as spoken concerning THE CHURCH. God frequently says to the Church's enemies, "Go ye up against her, but make not a full end take away her battlements; for they are not the Lord's." God's church is very fond of building walls which her God has not sanctioned. She is not content to trust in the arm of God, but she will add thereto some extraneous help which God utterly abhors. "Beautiful for situation—the joy of the whole earth—is Mount Zion, upon the sides of the north, the city of the great king. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, even so is God round about his people, from henceforth, for evermore." But his people are not content with God's being round about them, they seek some other protection. The church has very often gone to king Jareb for help, or to the world for aid; and then God has said to her enemies, "Go ye up against her, but make not a full end: take away her battlements, for they are not the Lord's. She shall not have them. I am her battlement. She is to have none other."

1. The first I may mention is this. *The church of God has sometimes sought to make the government its battlements.* There was a church anciently in Rome, a holy and pious church of God, whose members worshipped and bowed down before the God of Israel. But a certain wily monarch called Constantine, who believed that should he turn Christian he should thus secure the empire more firmly to himself, and put down sundry other commanders who were helped by the priests in order to gain his own ends and promote his own honor, pretends to see a vision in the skies, and professes to become a Christian, makes himself the head of the church, and leader of the faithful. The church fell into his arms, and then state and church became allied. What was the consequence of the church of Rome becoming allied with the state; Why she has become a corrupt mass of impurity, such a disgrace to the world that the sooner the last vestige of her shall be swept away the better. This was because she built up bulwarks that are not the Lord's, and God has said to her enemies, "Go ye up upon her walls." Yea, her apostacy is now so great, that doubtless, the Judge of all the earth shall make a "full end" of her, and the prophecy of the Apocalypse shall be fulfilled, "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning and famine, and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." There are true Protestant churches standing now that have made unholy alliances with governments. Christ testified, "My kingdom is not of this world," and yet they have crouched at the feet of kings and monarchs. They have obtained state endowments and grants; and so they have become high, and mighty, and honorable, and they laugh at those pure churches who will not buckle and commit fornication with the kings of the earth, but who stand out for the royal supremacy of the Saviour, and look only to Christ as the head of the Church. They apply to us the epithets of "schismatics," "dissenters," and such-like, but I believe that God shall yet say of every state-church, whether it be the Church of England, Ireland, Scotland or of anywhere else, "Go ye up upon her walls, and destroy; but make not a full end;" for there are thousands of pious men in her midst, "take away her battlements; for they are not the Lord's." Even now we see a stir throughout the world to take away these battlements. The holy and pious men in the Church of England have multiplied amazingly during the last few years. It is pleasing to see the great improvement in the Establishment. I think no class of Christians have made more speedy advances in reformation than they have. They have a stirring in their midst, and are saying, "Why should we be under the government any longer?" There are many clergymen who have said, "We have no wish whatever for this union: we would be glad to come away from all state control." I wonder they do not do it, and follow their convictions. They are saying, "take away her battlements, they are not the Lord's," and if they do not take them away themselves, we are advancing by slow degrees, and, by the aid of heaven we will take away their battlements for them one of these fine days, and they will wake and find that church-rates and tithes have ceased; that they must stand or fall themselves; that God's church is strong enough to stand herself without government. It will be a happy day for the

Church of England—God bless her! I love her—when those battlements are taken down, when the last stone of state patronage is thrown down; when the unneeded help of kings and princes shall be refused. Then she will come out a glorious church—like a sheep from the washing. She will be the honor of our land, and we who now stand aloof from her will be far more likely to fall into her bosom, for her articles are the very marrow of truth, and many of her sons are the excellent of the earth. Oh, angel, soon blow thy trumpet of war, and give the command! “Go ye up upon her walls, make not a full end.” She is one of my churches; “take away her battlements; they are not the Lord’s.” He has nothing to do with such a battlement, he hates it altogether—state alliance is obnoxious to the God of Israel; and when kings shall become real nursing fathers, they will in another mode afford the gold of Sheba, and the free-will offering of their piety.

2. But there are other churches that are making battlements for themselves. These are to be found amongst us as well as other denominations. There are churches who make battlements out of *the wealth of their members*. It is a respectable congregation, a most respectable church, the members are most of them wealthy. They say, within themselves, “We are a strong and wealthy church; there is nothing can hurt us; we can stand fast.” You will find wherever that idea possesses the mind, prayer-meetings will be ill attended; they do not think it necessary to pray much to keep up the cause. “If a five pound note is wanted,” says a brother, “we can give it.” They do not think it necessary to have a preacher to bring together the multitude, they are strong enough in themselves. They are a glorious corporation of quiet personages; they like to hear a drawing-room preacher; they would think it beneath their dignity to enjoy anything which the populace could understand; that would be a degradation to their high and honorable position. We know some churches now—it would be invidious to point the finger at them—where wealth and rank are reckoned to be the first thing. Now, we do love to have wealth and rank in our own midst, we always thank God when we have brought among us men who can do something for the cause of truth; we bless God when we see Zaecheus, who had abundance of gold and silver, giving some of his gifts to the poor of the Lord’s family, we like to see the princes and kings bringing presents and bowing before the King of all the earth; but if any church bows before the golden calf, there will go forth the mandate, “Go ye up upon her walls; but make not a full end: take away her battlements; for they are not the Lord’s.” And down the church will come God shall humble it; he will bring it down from its high position; he will say, “Though thou sittest on the rocks, and buildest thy house amongst the stars of heaven; even thence will I pluck thee down and this right hand shall reach thee.” God will not have his church relying on man and putting trust in princes. “Cursed shall be such-a-one,” he says, “he shall be like a heath in the desert, he shall not see when good cometh; his leaf shall wither and he shall bring forth no fruit unto perfection.”

3. There are some other churches relying upon *learning and erudition*. The learning of their ministers seems to be a great fort, bastion, and castle. They say for instance “What do these uneducated and unrefined preachers? Of what use are they. We like men of sound argument, men who give a large amount of biblical criticism, who can decide this, that, and the other.” They rely upon their minister; he is their tower of strength; he is their all in all. He happens to be a learned man. They say, “What is the use for any one to oppose him? See the amount of his learning! Why his enemies would be cut in pieces, because he is so mighty and learned.” Never let it be said that I have despised learning or true knowledge. Let us have as much as we can. We thank God when men of learning are brought into the church, when God renders them useful. But the church now-a-days is beginning to trust too much to learning, relying too much on philosophy, and upon the understanding of man instead of the Word of God. I do believe a large proportion of professing Christians have their faith in the word of man, and not in the word of God. They say, “Such-and-such a divine said so; that so-and-so beautifully explained that passage, and it must be right.” But whatever church shall do this, God will say, “Go ye up upon her walls; make not a full end; take away her battlements; for they are not the Lord’s.”

4. But I think that the worst battlement the churches have now, is an earthwork of *great and extreme caution*. It is held to be improper that certain obnoxious truths in the Bible should be preached; sundry reasons are given why they should be withheld. One is, because it tends to discourage men from coming to Christ. Another is, because certain persons will be offended on account of these rough edges of the gospel. Some would say, “O keep them back! You need not preach such and such a doctrine. Why preach distinguishing grace? Why divine sovereignty? Why election? why perseverance? why effectual calling? These are calculated to offend the people, they cannot endure such truths.” If you tell them about the love of Christ, and the vast mercy of God, and such like it will always be pleasing and satisfying; but you must never preach deep searching law-work, you must not be cutting at the heart and sending the lancet into the soul—that would be dangerous. Hence most churches are shielding themselves behind an ignominious bulwark of extreme caution. You never hear their ministers spoken against; they are quite safe behind the screen you will be very much puzzled to tell what are the real doctrinal views of our modern divines. I believe you will pick up in some poor humble chapel more doctrinal knowledge in half an hour, than in some of your larger chapels in half a century. God’s church must be brought once more to rely upon the pure truth, upon the simple gospel, the unalloyed doctrines of the grace of God. O may this church never have any bulwark but the promises of God! May he be her strength and shield! May his Aegis be o’er our head and be our constant guard! May we never depart from the simplicity of the faith! And whether men hear, or whether they forbear, may we say—

“Should all the forms that men devise

Assault my soul with treach'rous art
I'll call them vanities and lies
And bind the gospel to my heart."

II. We shall now address the text to THE CHRISTIAN—THE REAL CHILD OF GOD. The true believer, also, has a proneness to do as the church does—to build up sundry "battlements," which "are not the Lord's," and to put his hope, his confidence, and his affection in something else, besides the word of the God of Israel.

1. The first thing, dearly beloved brethren, whereof we often make a fortress wherein to hide, is—*the love of the creature*. The Christians' happiness should be in God, and God alone. He should be able to say, "All my springs are in thee. From thee, and thee alone, I ever draw my bliss." Christ in his person, his grace, his offices, his mercy, ought to be our only joy, and our glory should be that. "Christ is all." But beloved, we are too much inclined by nature to hew out for ourselves broken cisterns that hold no water. There is a drop or two of comfort somewhere in the bottom of the leaky pitcher, and until it is dried up, we do not believe it is broken at all. We trust in that sooner than in the fountain of living waters. Now whenever any of us foolishly make a battlement of the creature, God will say to afflictions—"Go ye up against her: take away her battlements, for they are not the Lord's." There is a father—he has a son. That son is as dear to him as his own flesh and blood. Let him take heed lest that child become too much his darling, lest he sets him in the place of the Most High God, and makes an idol of him for as sure as ever he does, God, by affliction, will say to the enemy, "Go up against him: take away his battlements, for they are not the Lord's." There is a husband. He coats upon his wife, as he should do. The Scripture telleth us, that a man cannot love his wife too much: "Husbands love you wives, as Christ also loves the Church"—and that is infinitely. Yet this man has proceeded to a foolish fondness and idolatry. God says, "Go ye up against him make not a full end; take away his battlements, for they are not the Lord's." We fix our love and affection on some dear friend of ours, and there is our hope and trust. God says, "What though ye take counsel together, ye have not taken counsel of me, and therefore, I will take away your trust. What though ye have walked in piety, ye have not walked with me as ye should. Go ye up against her, O death! go ye against her, O affliction! Take away that battlement, it is not the Lord's. Ye shall live on me—ye shall not feed, like Ephraim, on the wind. Ye shall lean on my arm; ye shall not trust in the staff of these broken reeds. Ye shall set your affections on things above, and not on things on earth. For I will blast the Joy of earth. I will send a blight upon your fair harvest. I will make the clouds obscure your sun, and you shall cry unto me, 'O God, thou art my trust, my sun, my hope, my all.'"

Oh, what a mercy it is that he does not make a "full end," beloved! It may seem to be an end sometimes, but it is not a *full* end. There may be an end of our hopes, an end of our faith, an end of our confidence at times, but it is not a full end. There is a little hope left;

there is just a drop of oil in the cruse, there is the handful of meal in the barrel: it is not the full end yet. Though he has taken away many joys, and blasted many hopes, though many of our fair flowers have been blighted, he has left something. One star will twinkle in the sky, one faint lamp glimmers from yonder distant cottage—thou art not quite lost, O wanderer of the night. He has not made a full end; but he may do, unless we come to him.

2. Once more. Many of us are too prone to make battlements out of our *past experience*, and to rely upon that instead of confiding in Jesus Christ. There is a sort of self-complacency which reviews the past, and says, “there I fought Apollyon there I climbed the hill Diffidently; there I waded through the Slough of Despond.” The next thought is, “And what a fine fellow am I! I have done all this. Why, there is nothing can hurt me. No, no! If I have done all this, I can do everything else that is to be accomplished. Am I not a great soldier? Shall any make me afraid? No; I have confidence in my own prowess, for my own arm hath won many a victory. Surely I shall never be moved.” Such a man cannot but think lightly of the present. He does not want communion with Christ every day. No, he lives on the past. He does not care to have further manifestations of Jesus. He does not want fresh evidence. He looks at the old musty evidences. He makes past grace the bread of his soul, instead of using it as a seasoning to sweeten his meal. What does God say whenever his people do not want him; but live on what they used to have of him, and are content with the love he once gave them? “Ah! I will take away your battlements.” He calls out to doubts and fears—“Go ye up upon his walls; take away his battlements, for they are not the Lord’s.”

3. Then, again, we sometimes get trusting too much to *evidence, and good works*. Ralph Erskine did not say amiss when he remarked, “I have got more hurt by my good works than my bad ones.” That seems something like Antinomianism, but it is true; we find it so by experience. “My bad works,” said Erskine, “Always drove me to the Saviour for mercy; my good works often kept me from him, and I began to trust in myself.” Is it not so with us? We often get a pleasing opinion of ourselves: we are preaching so many times a week, we attend so many prayer meetings; we are doing good in the Sabbath-school; we are valuable deacons; important members of the church; we are giving away so much in charity; and we say, “Surely I am a child of God—I must be. I am an heir of heaven. Look at me! See what robes I wear. Have I not indeed a righteousness about me that proves me to be a child of God?” Then we begin to trust in ourselves, and say, “Surely I cannot be moved, my mountain standeth firm and fast.” Do you know what is the usual rule of heaven when we thus boast? Why the command is given to the foe—“Go ye up against him, make not a full end: take away his battlements; for they are not the Lord’s.” And what is the consequence? Why, perhaps God suffers us to fall into sin, and down goes self-sufficiency. Many a Christian owes his falls to a presumptuous confidence in his graces. I conceive that outward sin is not more abhorred by one God than this most wicked sin of reliance on ourselves. May none of you ever learn your own weakness by reading a black book of your own backslidings.

More to be desired is the other method of God when he sends the light of the Spirit into the heart, and developes our corruption; Satan comes roaring there, conscience begins calling out, “Man you are not perfect.” All the corruptions burst up like a volcano that had slept for a little moment. We are taken into the dark chambers of imagery; we look at ourselves, and say, “Where are my battlements gone?” We go to the hill-top again, and see the battlements are all gone. We go by the side of the city—they are all departed. Then we go again to Christ, and say,

“I, the chief of sinners am,
Jesus died for me.”

“Nothing in my hands I bring;
Simply to thy cross I cling.”

Heaven smiles again, for now the heart is right, and the soul is in the most fitting position. Take care of your graces, Christians!

III. Now to bring the text to the young CONVERT, to the man in that state of our religious history which we call conversion to God. All men by nature build battlements for themselves to hide behind. Our father Adam gave us as a portion of our inheritance when we were born, high battlements, very high ones; and we are so fond of them that it is hard to part them. There are different lines of them; multiplied walls of fortifications; and when Christ comes to storm the heart, to carry the city by storm, to take it for himself, there is an over-turning of all these different walls which protect the city.

1. In the forefront of the city of Mansoul, frowns the wall of *carelessness*—an erection of Satanic masonry. It is made of black granite, and mortal art cannot injure it. Bring law, like a hugh pickaxe, to break it: you cannot knock a single ship off. Fire your shells at it: send against it all the hot cannon balls that any of the ten great mortars of the commandments can fire, and you cannot move it in the least. Bring the great battering ram of powerful preaching against it; speak with a voice that might wake the dead and make almost Satan tremble: the man sits careless and hardened. At last a gracious God cries out—“Take away her battlements, they are not the Lord’s.” And at a glance down crumbles the battlement. The careless man becomes tender-hearted, the soul that was hard as iron has become soft as wax; the man who once could laugh at gospel warnings, and despise the preaching of the minister, now sits down and trembles at every word. The Lord is in the whirlwind: now he is in the fire, yea, he is in the still small voice. Everything is heard now, for God has taken away the first battlement—the battlement of a hard heart and a careless life. Some of you have got as far as that, God has taken that away. I know many of you by the tears that glisten on your cheeks—those precious diamonds of heaven—testify that you are not careless.

2. The first wall is surmounted, but the city is not yet taken: the Christian minister, under the hand of God, has to storm the next wall—that is the wall of *self-righteousness*. Many poor sermons get their brains knocked out in the attack; many of them are bayoneted by

prejudice, in trying to storm that bastion. Thousands of good sermons are spent all in vain in trying to make it totter and shake, especially among you good moral people, children of pious parents, and godly relations. How strong that wall is with you! It does not seem to be made of separate stones, but it is all one great solid rock. *You* guilty—*you* depraved—*you* fallen. Yes, you believe it, and you pay a compliment to Scripture in so doing; but you do not *feel* it. You are the humble ones that stoop down—as needs you must, because you cannot sit upright; but you are not the humble ones who stoop willingly and feel that you are less than nothing. You say so; you call yourself a beggar, but you know that you are “rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing,” in your own opinion. How hard it is to storm this wall! it must be carried at the point of the bayonet of faithful warning; there is no taking it except by boldly climbing up with the shout of “By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.” We have to use very rough words to get your self-righteousness down. Ay! and when we think it is nearly overthrown, it is soon piled up again in the night; the devil’s sappers and miners are soon out to repair all the breaches. We thought we had carried you by storm, and proved you to be lost and ruined ones; but you take heart and say, “I am not so bad as I seem; I think I am yet very good.” We have by the grace of God, to carry that wall before we can get at your hearts.

3. Thus the double rampart is passed, but another still opposes our progress—Christ’s warriors know it by the name of *self-sufficiency*. “Ah!” says the man, “I see I am a lost and ruined sinner—my hope has deceived me; but I have another wall I can make myself better. I can build and repair.” So he begins piling up the wall, and sits down behind it. He makes the covenant of grace into a covenant of works. He thinks faith is a kind of work, and that we are saved for it. He imagines we are to believe and repent, and that we thus earn salvation. He denies that faith and repentance are God’s gifts only, and sits down behind his self-sufficiency, thinking, “I can do all that,” Oh! blessed day when God directs his shots against that. I know I hugged that old idea a long while with my “cans,” “cans,” “cans;” but I found my “cans” would hold no water, and suffered all I put in to run out. There came an election sermon; but that did not please me. There came a law sermon, showing me my powerlessness; but I did not believe it; I thought it was the whim of some old experimental Christian, some dogma of ancient times that would not suit men now. Then there came another sermon, concerning death and sin; but I did not believe I was dead, for I knew I was alive enough, and could repent, and set myself right by-and-bye. Then there came a strong exhortation sermon; but I felt I could set my house in order when I liked, that I could do it next Tuesday week as well as I could do it at once. So did I continually trust in my self-sufficiency. At last, however, when God really brought me to myself, he sent one great shot which shivered it all, and, lo, I found myself utterly defenceless. I thought I was more than mighty angels, and could accomplish all things, then I found myself less than nothing. So also every truly convinced sinner finds that repentance and faith must come from God, that reliance must be

placed alone on the Most High; and instead of looking to himself, he is forced to cast himself at the feet of sovereign mercy. I trust, with many of you, that two of the walls have been broken down; and, now, may God in his grace break down the other, and say to his ministers, “Go ye up upon their walls: take away their battlements; for they are not the Lord’s.”

Perhaps there are some here who have had their battlements taken away lately, and they think God is about to destroy them. You think you must perish, that you have no goodness, no hope, no help—nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation. Now, hear ye the last words, “make *not* a full end.” God *would* make a “full end” of you if he did not take away your battlements, for you would then die inside the walls of self-sufficiency; but he says, “make *not* a full end.” Rely, then, upon his power and grace, for he will not destroy thee.

IV. Now, lastly, I must take this passage as it respects the UNGODLY AND THE SINNER AT LAST. How many there shall be at the last great day who will sit down very comfortably behind certain battlements that they have builded! There is one man—a monarch: “I am irresponsible,” says he, “who shall ever bring anything to my charge? I am an autocrat: I give no account of my matters.” Oh! he will find out at last, that God is Master of emperors, and Judge of Princes; when his battlements shall be taken away. Another says, “Cannot I do as I like with my own? What if God did make me, I shall not serve him. I shall follow my own will. I have in my own nature everything that is good, and I shall do as my nature dictates. I shall trust in that, and if there be a higher power, he will exonerate me, because I only followed my nature.” But he will find his hopes to be visionary and his reason’ to be foolish, when God shall say, “The soul that sinneth it shall die:” and when his thundering voice shall pronounce the sentence—“Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire.” Again, there is a company of men joined hand in hand, and they think they will resist the Eternal yea, they have a plan for subverting the kingdom of Christ. They say, “We are wise and mighty. We have fortified ourselves. We have made a covenant with death and a league with hell,” Ah! they little think what will become of their battlements at the last great day, when they shall see them crumble and fall. With what fear and alarm will they then cry: “Rocks, hide us! Mountains, on us fall!” What will they do when God’s wrath goes forth as a fire in the day of his fierce anger, when he shall melt their hopes and make them pass away, when he shall blast all their joys and compel them to stand naked before his presence? Then I picture to myself, in the day of judgment, a band of men who have said on earth, “We will trust in God’s mercy. We do not believe in these religions at all: God is merciful, and we will trust in mercy.” Now, suppose—what is impossible, because their delusion will be dissipated at death—suppose them, in the dread day of account, to be crouching in the fortress of uncovenanted mercy. The judge opens his eyes upon their city, and says, “Angels! go ye up upon their walls; make a full end; take away their battlements, they are not the Lord’s.” Then the angels go, and demolish every stone of the bulwarks. They utterly cut off all hope of mercy.

Each time they lay on the blow they cry “without holiness no man shall see the Lord! Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins! Ye are saved by grace through faith, but ye trusted in naked mercy, ye shall not have it but ye shall have naked justice and nothing else.” Then there is another party who have built a castle of rites and ceremonies. On one side they have a huge piece of granite called “Baptism,” and on another they have the “Lord’s Supper;” and in the middle they have “Confirmation.” They think what a glorious castle they have builded. “We be lost?—We paid tithes of mint, cummin, and anise. We paid tithes of all we possessed. We know that grace is in ceremonies.” Out comes the Almighty, and with one word blasts their castle, simply saying “Take away their battlements, for they are not the Lord’s.” Ungodly men and women! what will ye do at last without battlements, without a rock to hide yourselves, without a wall behind which to conceal yourselves, when the storm of the Terrible One shall be as a blast against the wall? How shall ye stand when your hopes shall melt like airy dreams, like visions of the night that pass away when one awaketh? What will ye do when he despises your image, and when all your hopes are utterly gone?

The Christian man can go away with the reflection that *his battlements can never be taken away, because they are the Lord’s*. We rely upon the electing love of Jehovah—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; we trust in the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ, the Everlasting Son; we depend wholly upon the merits, blood, and righteousness of *Jehovah-Tsidkenu*—the Lord our righteousness; we are confiding in the Holy Spirit. We confess that we are nothing of ourselves—that it is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. We do not acknowledge one scrap of the creature in our salvation nor one atom of self; we rely entirely upon covenant love, upon covenant mercy, covenant oaths, covenant faithfulness, covenant immutability, and resting on these, we know our battlements cannot be taken away. Oh, Christian! with these walls surrounded thou makest laugh at all thy foes. Can the devil touch thee now? he shall only look upon thee and despair. Can doubts and fears take away our battlements? No: they stand fast and firm, and our poor fears are but as straws dashed against the wall by the wind; for, “though we believe not, yet he abideth faithful,” and not all the temptations of a sinful world, or our own carnal hearts, can separate us from the Saviour’s love. We have a city, the walls of which are mighty, the foundations of which are eternal; we have a God who says, “I the Lord do keep her, and do water her every moment, lest any hurt her, I will keep her day and night.” Trust Christian, here, salvation shall God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Surrounded with these, thou mayest smile at all thy foes. But take heed you add nothing to them, for if ye do, the message will be, Take away the battlements, they are not the Lord’s.”