

## **The Mediator' The Interpreter**

A Sermon

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And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that His fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not." [Exodus 20:18-20](#).

THE GIVING of the law was glorious with pomp of power. The blaze of splendor was intended to impress the people with its sense of the authority of the law, by letting them see the greatness of the Lawgiver. It was meet that with great solemnity the law of the Most High should be proclaimed, that Israel might have a holy reverence for its commands. This terrible grandeur may also have been intended to suggest to the people the condemning force of the law. Not with sweet sound of harp, nor with the song of angels, was the law given; but with an awful voice from amid a terrible burning. Not in itself is the law condemnatory; for if there could have been life by any law, it would have been by this law: but by reason of man's sinfulness, the law worketh wrath; and to indicate this, it was made public with accompaniments of fear and death: the battalions of Omnipotence marshaled upon the scene; the dread artillery of God, with awful salvos, adding emphasis to every syllable. The tremendous scene at Sinai was also in some respects a prophecy, if not a rehearsal, of the Day of Judgment. If the giving of the law, while it was yet unbroken, was attended with such a display of awe-inspiring power, what will that day be when the Lord shall, with flaming fire, take vengeance on those who have willfully broken His law?

To us, that day at Horeb is a type of the action of the law in our nature: thus doth the law deal with our consciences and hearts. If you have ever felt the law spoken home to you by the Spirit of God, you have heard great thunderings within. You have been forced to cry with Habakkuk, "When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones." And God intended it to be so, that you might look to the flames which Moses saw, and abandon forever all hope of acceptance by the works of the law.

The glorious majesty which surrounded the institution of the law is not, however, our subject at this time. I shall handle the text in another manner. The Lord God, in this instance, came as near to man as was possible; yea, He came nearer than man could bear. Until a Mediator was found, the approach of God brought to man nothing but terror. Although under no great apprehension of guilt at the time for they had only then heard the law for

the first time yet the people removed, and stood afar off, and cried out, "If we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, then we shall die." God was near them in special condescension; for Moses said, "Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?" Yet this memorable manifestation caused them alarm. Does it ever happen now that the Lord comes to His people in a way which dismays them? I think so. It is not really so, that God will fight against His people; but, to our apprehension, so it seems at certain times. Of these tempestuous manifestations of the Lord to our hearts I am going to speak at this time; and may the heavenly Comforter use it to the spiritual profit of his tried family!

Our first head is this: *the Lord has ways of communing with His people which fill them with fear*; but, secondly, *this endears the Mediator to them*; and thirdly, *this Mediator teaches them to interpret wisely the Lord's darker dealings with them*. When we have thought upon these things, we shall close by saying to you that *this sacred art of interpretation should be practiced by us now*.

1. First, let me remind you that THE LORD HAS WAYS OF COMMUNING WITH HIS PEOPLE WHICH FILL THEM WITH FEAR. You must not think that the Lord always appears to His people in robes of light: sometimes He enrobes Himself in clouds and darkness. His paths drop fatness, and yet He often hath His way in the whirlwind. True, He manifests Himself to us as He doth not unto the world; but in the brightest of those manifestations He may make us fear as we enter into the cloud. It is not every revelation of God which inspires the saints with joy; for in many cases it is far otherwise, even as with Daniel, who said, "I saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength." This experience may not have occurred to some of you; it is, however, known to many of the people of God, who have had long dealings with Him. If any of you do not understand this matter, lay the sermon by till you do.

Sometimes the near approach of the Lord fills His people with apprehension and alarm; and this sure to be the case when His coming includes *a close application of the law* to their hearts. We used to talk of "law-work" in days which are not past, and are by moderns looked upon with contempt; and, my brethren, our talk was not without good reason, for there is such a work, and it ministers greatly to our good. Certain servants of God, who had experienced this law-work to a very deep degree, fell into the error of regarding a marked measure of it as absolutely necessary to every child of God. We will avoid that evil, for it was a grievous cause of uncharitableness; but we will not conceal the fact that many souls, in coming to God, and in God's coming to them, have been made to feel a hewing and burning work from the law of God. The law has rent them in pieces, because they themselves have rent in pieces. The law has wrought in them a sense of bondage, burden, and despair. Even after we have fled for refuge to the hope set before us in the gospel, after we have a full as-

surance that our iniquities are put away, the Lord sometimes works in us a further work of the law, in which He makes us to see its exactness, its spirituality, strictness, and infinite compass. It is no little thing to see how the law judges the thoughts, desires, and imaginations of the heart. As the plummet of the holy law is held up, we see how out of the perpendicular we are, and we are therefore distressed. Brethren, when I have carefully considered, and inwardly perceived, the holiness of God's law, I have felt as though the sharp edge of a saber had been drawn across my heart, and I have shivered and trembled. Though the law did not actually cut or wound, yet its very presence, in all the keenness of its two edges, has made me shudder. So pure, so just, so uncompromising is the law of God, that when it is really understood, it makes us quail, and brings us to our knees. The law searches to the dividing asunder of joints and marrow, and it is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Its excessive light strikes us, like Saul of Tarsus, to the earth, and makes us cry for mercy, When you begin to judge yourself, and estimate your actions by its infallible rule, you cease from boasting, and are filled with self-abhorrence. I believe it to be one of the best means to growth in humility, to be well instructed in the law, in the force and power of it. No man knows the brightness of the gospel till he understands the blackness of those clouds which surround the law of the Lord. Much of the shallowness of current religion is the result of a failure to apprehend the demands of divine justice, and a want of clear perception of the heinousness of disobedience. Let but God set up the throne of His law in your heart, and make you feel the power of that law in any one item of your daily conduct, much more in the whole circle of your life, and you will feel as the Israelites did when they could not abide the presence of the Most High.

The Lord also may most truly and profitably come to a man, and in His coming *may unveil to him the depravity of his nature*. If any man could see his own heart as it is by nature, he would be driven mad: the sight of our disease is not to be borne unless we also see the remedy. When the Lord permits the fountains of the great deep of our depravity to be broken up, then are the tops of the hills of our self-sufficiency drowned in fear. When we see what we are capable of being, apart from divine grace, our spirit sinks. When believers are allowed to see how much there is still about them that is akin to hell, when sin becomes exceeding sinful, and we feel that the taint of it has defiled our whole nature, then it is that we are horrified and appalled. What an abyss of evil is within our bosoms! Probably some of you know very little about it. I pray that you may never discover it by its painful results; but I desire that you may believe it, so as to take a firmer grip upon the doctrines of grace, and exercise greater watchfulness over your hearts. Sin which dwelleth in us is no enemy that we can safely despise. Even in one single member of our fallen nature, namely, the tongue, there dwells a world iniquity: "It defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell." What poor creatures we are! The best of men are men at the best; and, apart from the work of the Holy Spirit, and the power of divine grace, hell

itself does not contain greater monsters of iniquity than you and I might become. Within the magazine of our hearts there is powder enough to destroy us in an instant, if omnipotent grace did not prevent. When this is distinctly perceived, we are troubled before the presence of the thrice holy God. Standing before the Lord, we cry with the prophet, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips." This is a true manifestation of God; but it is by no means a cause of comfort to us.

The Lord may also come to us, and lead us, by His light, to *a discovery of actual sin in our life*. We may sit here, and think ourselves very good; but if so, we are in the dark. If a beam of divine light is now entering our mind, our apprehension of our own character will be changed. The sins of a single day, if fully known in all their bearings, would drive us to despair, apart from the infinite grace of God. Apart from the divine plan of justifying the ungodly in Christ Jesus, any one hour would shut us up in hell. Beloved, think a minute of your omissions during the past week, how much you might have done, and ought to have done, which you have not done. It is on the side of omission that some of us are most vulnerable. Honestly looking down upon our lives, we may be able to say that we do not know of any overt offense against God, and for this we bless the divine grace; but when we come to think of what we have left undone, we feel like a traveler who, when crossing a glacier, suddenly sees an unfathomable crevasse opening just before him, and widening fast as he looks down into its blue depths of frozen death. Oh the sadness of that confession, "We have left undone the things which we ought to have done!" There is as much of lamentation in it as in the cry which precedes it "We have done those things which we ought not to have done." When we think of all our omissions, how can we stand before the Lord?

Think again of your failure in what you have done. Brethren, you have prayed this week. I only refer to this week; for seven days are more than enough for my purpose. You have prayed: you have kept your regular times for devotion. But how have you prayed? With fervency? With careful consideration? With concentrated mind? Brethren, have you prayed with faith? With importunity? Surely, each of these questions must cut into you like a whip of wire. If you are as I am, you cannot answer to this examination without wincing. Why, even in the one matter of prayer, the sins of our holy things may shrivel us up before the burning eye of the Lord, who searcheth the heart. Your Bible also: you have read your Bible, of course you have; but with what attention? with what intention? with what devout belief? with what resolve to feel its force, and obey its commands? Have we not sinned against this Book enough to cast us into the lowest hell in the space of four-and-twenty hours?

When the Lord begins to take a man to pieces by coming near to him, another matter will often trouble him, and that is his falseness, even were, in a measure, he is sincere. You prayed in public, and expressed most proper emotions and desires; but were they really your own emotions and desires, or did you steal the expressions of another man? You preached about the things of God; did your testimony come from your heart? Do you act in accordance

therewith? You, my Christian friend, expressed yourself strongly, but, in your heart of hearts, can you justify the expression? Do we not often go further with our lips than we go with our hearts? Is not this, to some degree, hypocrisy? Must it not be very displeasing to God that we should use words towards Him which we have not weighed, and which are not fully true, as we use them? O brethren, if the Lord sets out secret sins in the light of His countenance, we too, like Israel, shall start and shrink from the presence of the Lord.

If we add to these apprehensions of our own unworthiness *a sense of the divine glory*, then we cower down and hide ourselves in the dust. When a peal of thunder rends the heavens, and is followed up by a crash, as if the house would fall about your ears, while flames of fire blind you with their excessive brilliance, you feel that the Lord is terrible out of His holy places. God's nearness has inspired you with an awe which has been shaded with dread. The one attribute of power suffices to make the strongest believer feel that Jehovah is to be feared above all gods. But, my brethren, if properly apprehended, God's omniscience inspires an equal awe, while His goodness, His love, and His holiness are even more overwhelming when fully realized. One might possibly stand with unblanched cheek in the presence of divine power; but when the Lord reveals His holiness, a man might far sooner gaze into the sun than look into the face of God. Even His love is as the fire of a furnace to our unloveliness. At the sight of our God we say with Job, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." The nearness of God to sinful man is a killing thing, and those who have known it will confess that it is so.

What, my brethren, if, in addition to this, there should come to you *a succession of alarming providences*? These Israelites not only knew that God was near, but they heard the thunder, they saw the lightning, they looked into the thick darkness, they marked the mountain altogether on a smoke, and by all this they were horror stricken. Has it come to pass that the Lord has laid many blows upon His servant? Has He taken away the desire of thine eye with a stroke? What if there be one, two, three little graves in yonder cemetery? What if love and friend have forsaken thee? What if thy business fail thee, and if thy health fail thee also? What if thy spirits sink? Oh, then, indeed I marvel not that thou art scared with forebodings of still worse calamities, and art ready to give up the ghost! Now art thou afraid because of the nearness of the great God, who is trying thee.

If to this be added *an apprehension of speedy death*, as in the case of the Israelites, who cried, "This great Fire will consume us"; then, indeed, it is difficult to remain calm and hopeful. It will be no trifle to stand before the face of the Eternal. Since heaven and earth shall flee from thy face, and rocks shall melt, and stars shall fall, and the moon shall be turned black as sackcloth of hair, who shall stand before Thee, thou great and glorious One!

Thus have I spoken to you upon the fact that our God does sometimes commune with His people in a way that fills them with overwhelming dread; let us advance to our next theme.

II. Secondly, ALL THIS ENDEARS TO US THE MEDIATOR. The Israelites turned at once to Moses. They had already murmured against him: they afterwards said, "As for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him"; once they took up stones to stone him; but now they are of another mind. Terrified by the presence of God, they cry to Moses, "Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the Lord Our God shall speak unto thee." The Mediator is everything to them now. They had found out by experience the necessity for an interposer; and they had not made a mistake either, for God Himself said they had well spoken what they had said. There is in God's esteem an urgent need for a Mediator. When we sang just now'

"Till God in human flesh I see,  
My thoughts no comfort find;  
The holy, just, and sacred Three  
Are terrors to my mind,"

we did not give utterance to morbid or ungrounded fear. It is so in truth; and the next verse is accurate also:

"But if Immanuel's face appear,  
My hope, my joy begins;  
His name forbids my slavish fear,  
His grace removes my sins."

It is a matter of fact that we need a Mediator; and these people were driven to see it. Brethren, be sensible of your sin, and you will no more attempt to approach an absolute Deity than you would walk into a volcano's mouth. You will feel that you need a sacrifice, a propitiation, a Saviour, a Mediator. Perceive the infinite difference between your nothingness and the divine infinity, and you will feel that there is no drawing nigh to the Eternal but by Jesus Christ. How can we, of ourselves, draw nigh unto God? It is wisdom to say unto the Well-beloved, "We pray thee, stand between the Lord and us." When your trembling is upon you, when your heart faints with awe, then you perceive how much you need an Advocate. Bless God that He has appointed one to be High Priest for you, who can safely go into the thick darkness, and stand in the presence of the Thrice Holy Majesty, and represent you without fail.

Moses was well fitted to be the type of the true Mediator of the gospel covenant. He was himself in great favor with God, so that the Lord hearkened to his voice. Behold his dauntless courage in the presence of God, and, at the same time, his intense tenderness towards the people. Mark his faithfulness Godward as a servant over all his Master's house, and then note his self-sacrifice for Israel, so that he once said, "Blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written." He offered himself to be a sacrifice for them. But, O beloved, consider Jesus Christ our Mediator. Where is the like of Him? He is man, like ourselves; in

all respects a sufferer, poor, needy, knowing even the pangs of death; and therefore He can lay His hand upon us with a warm, brotherly love. But then He is "God over all, blessed forever," equal with the Most High, the Well-beloved of the Father; and thus He can give His hand to the eternal God, and so link our humanity with God. I feel most safe in trusting all my concerns with that dear Advocate, that Interpreter, one of a thousand. O Jesus, who can rival thee?

"God, and yet man, thou art,  
True God, true man, art thou;  
Of man, and of man's earth a part,  
One with us thou art now."

Into the thick darkness our Mediator went. Forth from it He came. He interprets to us the language of the Eternal, and He takes our petitions up to heaven, and translates them into the tongue of the Holy One, so that God hears us and accepts us in the Well-beloved.

I know that some of you imagine that you would believe the gospel if God were to speak to you out of the skies. Do not wish for it. The terror of His voice would overwhelm you, but it would not convert you. The Israelites were happy with a Mediator, and so will you be. If you hear not Jesus, neither would you hear though God should thunder. A Mediator is provided. Could you, with all your wit, suggest a better Mediator than Christ? I entreat you, accept the gospel in Christ, and come to God through Him. As there is no other way, so assuredly there could be no better way. If you had all wisdom and all power in your hands with which to make a way of acceptance with God, could you devise one more pleasant, more simple, more perfect, more adequate, more exactly what you need? Come, then, dear heart, come at once to God in Christ; and remember, Jesus says, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out"; "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

III. Now I come to my third point, upon which I would lay stress: THE MEDIATOR TEACHES US TO INTERPRET WISELY THE LORD'S DEALINGS. Moses became an interpreter of the Lord's terrible appearance to the trembling people, and he put a cheering construction upon it. You, to whom God has been speaking in a way of terror, and I know there are such here, for I have had to comfort them; you have a Mediator to explain to you the ways of the Lord. Be ready to learn the lesson which He teaches you: it is this "Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not." These rough dealings of God with your conscience, with your body, with your family, and with your estate, are not for your destruction, but for *your instruction*: not for your killing, but for your healing. As He came in tempest and thunder to teach the children of Israel, so has He come to you. If God is teaching you, He cannot mean to destroy you: the law does not provide a schoolmaster for a convict who is to be hanged tomorrow. The discipline in God's house, however severe it may be, is a sure proof of love. We educate sons, and not enemies. The Lord is teaching you what you are, and what He is. If He had meant to destroy

you, He would not have showed you such things as these, If a criminal must needs die, we do not put him through a rehearsal of the pains of death. No, no, there would be no use in such a course-it would be sheer cruelty, and depend upon it, the Lord will not show you His own greatness merely to make you miserable, nor reveal to you your own ruin merely to drive you to despair. He does not afflict willingly. Infinite love dictates the apparent severity with which He afflicts your conscience. You are being judged here, that you may not be judged hereafter with the ungodly; you are now made to abhor yourself, that the Lord may not abhor you in the day of the judgment of the wicked.

The Mediator here explains to trembling Israel that God had come *to test them*. We all need testing, do we not? Would you like to cross a railway bridge if it was reported to you that it had never been tested by a train? When the first Exhibition was built, I remember how they marched troops along the galleries to test them. Do you not desire to have your hope for eternity tested? The Lord draws near to us in ways which inspire our fears because He would test us. What is the result of the test? Do you not feel your own weakness? Does not this drive you to the strong for strength? You feel your own sinfulness; and you fly to the Lord Jesus for righteousness. Testing has a practically good effect in slaying self-confidence, and driving you to put your confidence where God would have it rest.

When God came to these people in cloud and storm, it was *to impress them*, to put depth into their thought and feeling. We are filled with fear at times on purpose that our religion may not be a flimsy, superficial thing. Our tendency is to slur spiritual work. We easily get to be trifling and careless. Levity in religion is an easily-besetting sin with many; but when we are made to see the plague of our heart, and the awful majesty of God, that fear of the Lord which endureth forever soon drives out the triflers from the temple. Fear plows deep, and then faith sows, and love reaps; but godly fear must lead the way. Godly fear makes prayer to be fervent prayer; it makes the hearing of the word to be quite another thing from listening to the chatter of the world's vanity. Holy awe of God makes preaching to me to be the burden of the Lord. It may be light work to your men of genius and learning; but to me it is life and death work. Often have I thought that I would rather take a whipping with a cat-o'-nine-tails than preach again. How can I answer for it at the last great day unless I am faithful? "Who is sufficient for these things?" When I have felt the dread responsibility of souls which may be lost or saved by the word they hear, the fact that God is so near has made my flesh creep, and made me wish that I had never ventured on so bold a life-work. How shall I give in an honorable account of my commission at last? Beloved, God, by such apprehensions as these, is deepening in us the work of His grace, making us more alive to our position, and better fitting us for it. It is all in love that He allows our awe of Him to darken into dread, our sense of weakness to deepen into faintness of heart.

Above all, it is explained to us that the dealings of the Lord are meant *to keep us from sin*. What does David say? "Before I was afflicted, I went astray: but now have I kept thy



word." Does not Hezekiah tell us that by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of our spirit? We are so worldly, that we need our nest to be stirred to keep us on the wing. Six days we are taken up with business, mixing with those who despise heavenly things; and we should come to think lightly of them too, were it not that God comes to us in His dread majesty and makes us think, consider, and fear. This holy trembling drives off the shams which else would grow over us like mold on decaying matter. Our inward tempests clear the air, and keep us from stagnation and the pestilence which breeds in it. God's love will not suffer us to settle down in mere pretenses, and so glide into gross sins: He empties us from vessel to vessel, and thus discovers our evil sediment, and cleanses us from it. Many people, when they hear a sermon, say, "How did you enjoy it?" If you always enjoy sermons, the minister is not a good steward. He is not acting wisely who deals out nothing but sweets. God's people need that the word should at times be medicine to them, and we do not enjoy medicine. The word is as fire, and the iron does not like the fire; yet it is needful to its melting. It is as a hammer, and the rock does not love the hammer; yet it is needful to its breaking. Experiences which are painful may be therefore all the more profitable. That which makes us hate sin is a thing to be valued. I pray you, after this manner read the dispensations of God with you. When He chides He loves; when He chastens He shows fatherly affection; and when He scourges He receives into peculiar familiarity. Do not therefore run away from a chastening God. If fear drives thee away, let faith draw thee near. He means thy highest good. Never doubt it. Steadfastly believe that His heart loves even if His face frowns.

IV. I close by asking you to PRACTICE THIS ART OF SACRED INTERPRETATION. Whensoever thy Lord speaketh with thee in thunder and writeth bitter things against thee, by faith read between the lines, and after the example of Moses, the mediator, put a comfortable construction upon rough words.

Faith sees many reasons for refusing to read as fear would suggest: here is one of them. When the Lord spoke to these people with the voice of trumpet and thunder, He did not speak in anger after all, but in love; for His first words set the key-note. Here they are: "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of Bondage." What gracious words! What happy memories they arouse! What loving-kindnesses they record! It is true that your Lord has taken your wife or your child away, or has made you sick, or has tried your soul by the hidings of His face; but it is not an enemy who has done this. It is your God who has done it, even the same God that delivered you from the power of sin, and made you free in Christ Jesus. The Lord of love has chastened you, and chastened you in love. Learn Job's philosophy, and say from your heart, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Think of His former loving-kindness. Consider what He has done for you through the Lord Jesus and His death on your behalf. He brought you out of the bondage of your natural depravity, and He set you free from the Pharaoh of your evil passions. He has washed you from your sins, and brought

you through the Red Sea of your fears by His own right hand. Can you not believe that He means well to you? What if He does speak roughly; may He not do so without being distrusted? He is the same God: He changeth not, and therefore you are not consumed: can you not rely on His faithful love? Will you take good from His hand, and will you not also take evil? He who humbles us is our covenant God, bound to us by His promise and His oath. He gave His Son to redeem us, He cannot now do us a displeasure: let Him do as seemeth Him good. We give Him *carte blanche* to do what He wills, for His love is beyond dispute. He died that I might live, and now it is impossible for Him to mean anything other than good towards me. I sometimes think that if I never had a gleam of love from His face again, I would live on that one text: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Salvation from sin and death and hell should make us interpret every trying revelation, and every afflicting providence, and every painful experience, by the key of His ancient love; and so interpreted, every sorrowful line is sweetened.

Notice next, dear friends, in your process of interpretation, that God cannot mean to destroy us, since this would be contrary to His word. He hath said, "He that believeth in him hath everlasting life." Can "everlasting life" be destroyed or die? How, then, could it be "everlasting life?" Can God declare it everlasting, and yet end it? Yes, He has given us everlasting life in His dear Son; and, what is more, He has laid up that life in Christ; for "your life is hid with Christ in God." Can He destroy the life which He has hid in His own immortal Son? Does not Jesus say, "Because I live ye shall live also?" What are you afraid of, then? God cannot destroy you. He has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." What if He speaks severely to thee, it is that He may deliver thee from sinning. Wilt thou not bless Him? He will not curse thee, for He hath blessed thee in His Son, and "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Bow thyself, and take from thy Father's hand whatever He appoints.

Remember, that you are not, after all, in the same condition as Israel at the foot of Horeb. Though I have drawn a sort of parallel this morning, yet there remains a wonderful difference. "Ye are not come unto the mount that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest." Ye are not come to a terrible voice which mortal ears could not endure. "But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels. And to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." You are come to the land of pardon, peace, and promise: you are in the home of life, love and liberty. You have come to the Lord of adoption, acceptance and glory. Wherefore, do not, I pray you, construe the acts and dealings of God with your soul after the mean and slavish manner which unbelief suggests to you, but believe your God in the teeth of all you hear, or see, or feel. The Lord hath come to prove thee, to put His fear before thy face, and to keep thee

from sin; wherefore look for sweet fruit from the bitter tree of thy present grief, and flee not from thy God.

Again, dear friend, here is our great comfort: *we have a Mediator*. When God dealeth with thee by the law, or by His rod, or by His searching Spirit, thou art apt to say, "How can I endure His hand?" Hide behind the Mediator. Let Jesus be thy shield, even as He is the Lord's Anointed. Beseech the Lord God not to look on thee as thou art in thyself, but to see thee in Christ Jesus. Say

Him, and then the sinner see,

Look through Jesus's wounds on me.

Take care that thou lookest through Jesus' wounds on God; and if thou dost, thou wilt see in Him infinite love and boundless kindness. The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ is unutterable love. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him", and when they fear Him most, His pity goes out to them in streams of tenderness. If thy God use the knife on thee, it is to cut out a deadly cancer. If thy God break thee, and grind thee, it is to get away thy bran, and make thee as the fine flour of the meat-offering. He may seem to slay thee, but by this He makes thee live. Though He slay thee, still trust thou in Him. Never believe anything which would militate against the truth of His love, or the wisdom or the tenderness of it. Cling to Him when He frowns. The closer thou canst cling the less thou wilt feel the blows of His hand when He chastens. A faith which believes when it smarts will soon have done with the rod. If thou wilt have nothing but good to say of God, He will take thee out of the fire, for it is evident that thou dost not need more of it. A full and firm belief in God when He seems to be against us, is a grand mark of sanctification. To be able to spell out "love" when it is written in cruciform characters, shows a high state of spiritual education.

And now, beloved, if you can take the Lord in this way, henceforth and forever believing in His love, and never staggering through unbelief, thou wilt glorify thy God and get good to thyself in every way. If thou believest, then thou wilt be strong; for faith is the backbone of the spiritual man. If thou believest, thou wilt love, and love is the very heart of the spiritual man. Believing and loving, thou wilt endure with patience, and thy patience shall be a crown to thee. Believing, loving, and enduring, thou shalt become equipped for every holy service, and in that service thou shalt acquire more and more of likeness to thy Lord, till when thou hast endured to the full, thou shalt be in all points a brother of Him who is the Firstborn. Like Him, thou shalt be able to go into the thick darkness, and have that communion with God which only they can know who have felt the consuming fire passing through them again and again, and burning up that corruption of the flesh which makes God to be a terror to men. Like our Mediator, may we be made to plead with God for men, and with men for God. May we go up into the mount and see God and eat and drink; and then come down with faces shining with the heavenly light. God give us thus to have a Mediator, to interpret

our God through a Mediator, and then to grow like our Mediator by the work of his own Spirit.

I have said a great deal that must be very terrible to ungodly men, since it even tries the holiest. O my hearers, if you are unconverted, I do not suppose that the terrors of the Lord, even though they make you fear, will work any lasting good in you; for I remember that those very people who trembled at Sinai were found, in a very few weeks, madly dancing before a golden calf, and saying, "These be thy gods, O Israel, that brought thee up out of Egypt." Fear alone will work no saving or sanctifying effect on the heart. It plows, but it does not sow. In the child of God, mixed with faith, fear becomes a holy tonic, a salutary medicine; but, as for you who have cause for fear, there is something else for you. Flee to the Mediator, trust in Christ Jesus, who stands between man and God, look unto Him at once, and looking you shall live. To our adorable Mediator be glory forever and ever. Amen, and Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON' Exodus 20:18-21; [Deuteronomy](#)  
5.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"<sup>92</sup> (Part 1), 433, 281.