

Peace, Tribulation, Victory

Preached at Providence Chapel, Eden Street, London, on Tuesday Evening, July 13, 1847

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world." John 15:33

There is one feature in the discourses of the Lord with his sorrowing disciples (as recorded John 14-16.) which has struck my mind; and which I may perhaps best characterize by one short sentence—*the entire absence of self*. Let us, for a few moments, consider the circumstances under which these discourses fell from the Lord's lips. It was upon that gloomy night when he himself was to be betrayed into the hands of sinful men, upon the very eve of those horrors of soul which he was to endure in the garden of Gethsemane, and immediately preceding those agonies of body and soul combined which he was to suffer on the cross. Should we not have expected that his soul would have been so occupied with what lay before him, that he could have had no thought upon any other subject? But we find the blessed Lord in these discourses with his mourning followers laying aside, as it were, all consideration of *himself*, and of what he was about to endure, and devoting all his thoughts and words—and, I may add, all his heart, to comfort and encourage *them*; as he speaks, "Hereafter I will not talk much with you" (John 14:30); as though he would say, 'Now I devote myself entirely to you; now I lose all thoughts of myself that I may speak all my heart to you! But when this is done, other work lies before me.'

Now, after the Lord had laid before his disciples what he saw fit in his own infinite and all-wise mind as suited to their

encouragement and consolation; and not to theirs only, but that of the whole church of God in all future time, he concentrates, so to speak, the whole in the words of our text, as if that were the substance of all he had said, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

Three divisions of our text seem to occur to my mind, corresponding with its three clauses; and these we may briefly characterize as *peace*, *tribulation*, and *victory*—peace in Jesus, tribulation in the world, and victory through Jesus over the world.

I.—"*these things* I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace." What are "*these things*?" Are they not what he had just laid before them? Every word, then, contained in the preceding chapter, I may say, is comprehended in the expression, "these things." We cannot indeed recapitulate everything which the Lord spake unto them in these three chapters. It would require not one sermon, but a long series of sermons to enter but a little into those holy topics of divine consolation. And yet, we must glance at a few of them; or we cannot enter into the meaning and fulness of our text. We shall, therefore, with God's blessing, endeavour to take a hasty glance at some of those things which the Lord spoke in their ears, that receiving them into their heart, and enjoying the sweet consolations that should distil out of there into their souls, "in him they might have peace." In so doing, I shall not follow the exact order in which the Lord spake them; but take them up as they occur to my mind, yet preserving, as the Lord may enable, some thread of connection.

1. One thing which the Lord laid before them, that "in him

they might have peace," was, the doctrine, or truth rather, (I prefer the latter word) of *their union with him*—their eternal, indissoluble union with his divine Person, as set forth in that parable, "I am the Vine, ye are the branches." (John 15:5.)

Now out of this eternal union with Christ flows every blessing. Only so far as we have an eternal union with Jesus have we any living union, or any spiritual communion with him. Only so far as we have a standing in Christ from before all worlds have we any interest in, or any title to, his atoning blood, justifying righteousness, all-sufficient grace, manifested presence, shed abroad love, and communicated favour. We receive nothing, we can receive nothing of a spiritual nature except by virtue of an eternal union with the Lord of life and glory. For as the branches receive their sap out of the stem only by virtue of their union with the stem; so can we receive blessings out of Christ only by virtue of union with Christ.

Now is not this divine truth blessedly adapted to bring peace and comfort into the soul? If we can in any way realize a union with Christ; if we have faith given to us to believe in his name, and through faith to "receive out of his fulness, and grace for grace," and find him from time to time supplying our wants, and communicating his presence, mercy, and love to our souls—it is, it must be, the foundation of all true spiritual peace and comfort.

2. But the Lord also told his beloved disciples that *he had chosen them in himself*. He says, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." (15:16.) He assures them in these words of their eternal election in him; that he had loved them before all worlds, and had chosen them that they might be partakers of his grace here, and see his glory face to face hereafter. Now when we can believe (God must give us this

faith) that we were chosen in Christ before all worlds, what can bring sweeter consolation to the soul? What can distil more solid joy and peace into the heart?

3. Further. He assured them that he would *lay down his life for them*. He says, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." (15:13, 14.) In these words he assures them that he was about to lay down his precious life for them; that his love for their souls was so great that he did not refuse to shed his own blood, that they might be washed in that holy fountain, and set free from all the guilt, filth, and shame of sin and iniquity.

4. He assured them further, that they were not "*servants*," but "*friends*" (15:15); that the tie betwixt them was no longer, as it had been, of master and servant; but a far nearer, a far dearer, a far closer, a far more intimate relation—that of *friend*; that, therefore, as a friend opens his heart's counsels to his brother friend, and they are thus knit together by the closest tie and most tender relationship; so to them, as to his friends, he would open the very secrets of his heart. He therefore was to them, not a harsh master exacting obedience as from servants, and marking every transgression to punish it; but a kind and tender-hearted friend, who could bear with their infirmities; yea, a friend who would stick closer than any earthly brother.

5. Again. He tells them that he was "*the Way*" whereby access was to be found to God; "*the Truth*," so that by following him they should be fully secured from all error; "*and the Life*," so that by believing in his name, life might flow into their souls, and revive them in every hour of drooping and bondage. He assured them, too, that there was no other way of access to God, for that no man could come

to the Father but by him. (14:6.)

6. He told them also, that he would *not leave them comfortless* (14:18); but that he would send the Comforter, who should comfort, by his holy influences and sacred anointings, their sorrowful and mourning hearts; that this Comforter should lead them into all truth, should take of the things that were his, and reveal them to their souls; should guide them also, and be with them even to the end. (16:13, 14.)

7. He tells them also, that *because he lived, they should live also* (14:19); that they should never be in that drooping state of soul out of which he could not or would not revive them by that life which they lived in him.

8. He assured them further, that he was going before them to *prepare mansions for them*, and would come again and take them unto himself, that where he was they might be also. (14:2, 3.)

These indeed are but a few gleanings of the ample harvest of consolation which is stored up in these blessed chapters. But the Lord, having laid before them these sweet and encouraging topics, tells them for what purpose he had spoken these things to them—"These things I have spoken unto you, *that in me ye might have peace.*"

But will the mere *speaking* of these things bring peace? How often have we read these chapters, and yet found no peace flowing from them! But when the Lord himself, all whose words are spirit and life (John 6:63)—when the Lord himself is pleased to speak any of these gracious promises with power to the heart, then his words bring with them peace. And what more blessed legacy, what sweeter or more suitable inheritance could the Lord leave behind him for his

sorrowing family than *peace*? Peace with God through the great atoning Sacrifice; peace in the court of conscience through the application of the blood of the Lamb; holy calm, divine tranquillity, produced by the blessed Dove brooding with his heavenly wings upon the soul. How far peace surpasses in soul feeling every other blessing! The child of God is not looking for ecstasies, visions, dreams, or wonderful discoveries to the bodily eye or bodily ear. Such things as these, visionaries, enthusiasts, and wild fanatics make their boast in. But to have peace dropped into the soul from the mouth of the Lord; to have peace proclaimed in the conscience by that blood which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel; to feel that serenity in his soul whereby he can rest upon the bosom of Jesus, and find anxious cares and troubled thoughts all lulled within—can he desire, can he enjoy a more heavenly legacy, a richer portion than this?

But the Lord says, "These things have I spoken unto you, that *in me* ye might have peace." Here lies the force of the whole. Peace in *self*! That never can be found. Peace in the *world*! That never can be had. Peace in *sin*! God forbid any of his children should dream of peace there for a moment. Peace in the things of *time and sense*! Are they not all polluted—all baubles, toys, passing shadows, smoke out of the chimney, chaff out of the summer threshing floor? Can an exercised soul—one tried, tempted, dejected, cast down with the difficulties of the way—can he find any peace in these things? His carnal mind may, to his shame, for a while be drawn aside by them; his wicked lusts and passions may be entangled in them; his fallen nature may grovel amidst these poor perishing day-dreams. But peace! there is no peace in these things; for God has said, "There is no peace to the wicked." And so long as our wicked hearts are going out after wicked things, if the conscience is really tender and alive in God's fear, there will be no true, solid peace within.

But how often are the souls of the Lord's people like the troubled sea, which casts up mire and dirt! How often are they far from peace! How many anxious thoughts, painful suspicions, trying doubts and fears, assail and harass their souls! In these temptations do they find peace? Does the Lord mean they should find peace in them? Are not these things intended to be to them what the floating carcasses were to Noah's dove—to drive them back to the ark? The raven, that foul bird of prey, could rest and fatten upon the floating carcasses, and never returned to the ark more; but the pure dove, that clean bird, could find no rest for the sole of her foot, but in, or upon the ark. So while carnal professors can find peace in self, in the things of time and sense, in empty notions, in a graceless profession, in dry doctrines, in a name to live while dead—there is that in the heart of a child of God which, like the dove, can find no solid rest—except in the ark, the Lord Jesus Christ; as he says, "*In me ye shall have peace.*"

But what is the import of the words "*in me?*" Do they not point, *first*, to the truth of *eternal union with Christ?* for out of this eternal union flows every blessing in time. Do not the words also point to *faith in Christ?* for it is only by faith in Christ that we can have peace in him; as the Scripture speaks, "peace and joy in believing." But is not the crowning point of "*in me,*" and that whence solid peace flows, *communion with Christ?* Not merely eternal union, not merely living union, but divine communion under the sacred influences and operations of the blessed Comforter.

Now the Lord designs that all his dear family should have peace in him; he therefore drives them out of every refuge of lies that they may find no peace in self. He brings them out of the world, that they may find no peace there. He hunts

them out of sin, that they may find no peace there. He sees fit also to exercise their minds, and to try them again and again, that finding no peace in anything else, they may come as poor broken-hearted sinners to the footstool of mercy, look unto Jesus, trust in his name, and find peace in believing.

II.—And therefore it is that *peace* and *tribulation* are so closely connected. "*In the world ye shall have tribulation.*" The Lord knows what our hearts are. He knows what a close affinity there is between our nature and a tempting, alluring world. And he knows that each one carries a little world in his own bosom. He therefore declares, that "in the world we shall have tribulation;" a promise as sure as that "in him we shall have peace." How glad we should be to separate these two things! How pleased we should be to have no tribulation in the world, and yet to have peace in Christ? How our coward flesh shrinks from tribulation! The very thought of it at times makes us tremble. Yet the Lord has so joined together these two things—peace in himself, and tribulation in the world, that they never can be put asunder; and so far from a possibility of their being severed, we may add, they bear to each other the closest and nearest relation.

The Lord, then, has promised, that "in the world we shall have tribulation." But how this staggers a child of God! He can understand, or seem to understand, what it is to have peace in Christ; but that his allotted path should be tribulation in the world, how it seems to cut deep, as it were, into the very fibres of his heart! And yet how needful, how indispensably needful it is, to have tribulation in the world; for how closely bound up our heart is in it. How glued and fettered our carnal heart is to the things of time and sense! What proneness, what daily; hourly proneness there is to go after idols; to amuse our vain mind with passing shows; to

take an interest in the veriest trifles which surround us; and thus forsake the Fountain of living waters, and hew out to ourselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that hold no water. What a veil of enchantment, too, is often over our eyes; and therefore, what a series of troubles—what days, and weeks, and months, and years of trial does it take to convince us that the world is not our home, not our rest, not our enduring habitation. We live in a fallen world; and, therefore, in this fallen world tribulation of some kind or another must be our lot. We are born into a sinful world, and carry about with us a sinful nature, which is intimately and closely connected with the world, and therefore all the evils which are entailed upon a sinful world are entailed upon us by rightful inheritance. The wrath of God rests upon the world, because it lieth in the "Wicked One;" and we therefore, as sojourners in this vale of tears, come under his chastening hand. But the Lord mercifully and graciously makes use of tribulation, in various shapes and forms, to bring us out of the world, that we may not be condemned with it, nor make it our rest and home. Thus he draws us to his blessed feet, that in him we may find that peace which we never have found, which we never can find anywhere else.

But what various sources of tribulation there are! If you and I could lay our hearts bare to each other; if we could compare our various sources of tribulation—how different they might be; yet each has his own suffering path; and each, perhaps, might think his tribulation the hardest to be endured. For instance,

1. *Our very connection with the world* is sure to entail with it tribulation. If a man has a business in the world, the very calling by which he lives will be connected with tribulation. There will be anxious cares, blighted prospects, disappointed hopes, bad debts, and a thousand painful circumstances so

connected with the very business that he follows, so intimately blended with the worldly calling whereby he earns his daily bread, that he cannot escape tribulation from the very source of his natural subsistence.

2. How, too, *the closest family ties* prove sources of tribulation! If we have beloved children, they may be taken away, or grow up to grieve us. If we have loving partners, they may be snatched from our fond bosom. Our keenest sorrows may spring from our dearest and nearest social ties. And from these things there is no escape. No wisdom or contrivance of ours can prevent them. They are so appointed by the Lord, they are so laid in our path, they are so fastened round our neck, they are so a part of our allotted portion, that escape them we cannot.

3. Again. Whilst in the world *we are continually entangled in some evil*. Well nigh every look is a means of conceiving sin in the heart. We can scarcely open our ears without hearing something to defile and pollute the imagination. We can scarcely think without that thought being a sinful one. We can hardly speak without something sinful, worldly, or selfish mingling itself with the speech. And out of these things tribulation comes. The sin of the eye, or the sin of the ear, or the sin of the heart, or the sin of the tongue, each brings tribulation in its train, for with a child of God sorrow ever follows sin, as the shadow follows the sun.

4. Again. If we are faithful followers of the Lamb, *we are sure to suffer persecution*. It may not come in those shapes and forms which prevailed in times of old. The law has extinguished fire and faggot; but "the scourge of the tongue," slander, calumny, detraction, are not silenced; and we may suffer inward martyrdom from the scourge of the tongue, as the blessed martyrs endured outward martyrdom

when their backs were scourged with whips, or their bodies burned in the flame.

5. But again; *our very intimate ties with the church of Christ*—if we come out of the world, as we are bound to do, and come into close connection with the family of God—this very uniting ourselves to God's people may be a source of tribulation. If we belong to a church, there may be divisions in it, and those often of a very painful nature. If we have spiritual friends, from them some of our sharpest sorrows may spring. If we have walked in close and intimate union even with the people of God, circumstances may arise to sever us from them, and we may rue the day when we first became acquainted with them.

Thus, on every side, without and within, there are sources of tribulation.

6. Nay, *the very bodies* in which our souls are lodged, what a little thing may make those earthly tabernacles the source of keenest tribulation! One tender fibre of the brain unstrung—what a source of tribulation may that be to a man all his life! How the Lord too has planted the seeds of disease and death in the very tabernacles of clay that we carry about with us! So that, from without and from within, from the church and from the world, from body and from soul, from friend and from foe, from sinner and from saint—from every source and quarter troubles and tribulations are all upon the watch to seize upon the children of God. Thus each has his appointed portion; for the most part as much as he can bear; for the most part enough to make him live a life of sorrow and anxiety—enough for the most part to weigh him heavily down, and to convince him that in the world he never can have, he never will have, anything but tribulation and trial.

But is not all this for wise purposes? Dare we say, dare we even think, that the Lord is unwise or unkind in ordaining these tribulations? Was it not the will of God that his dear Son should endure suffering before us? Did *he* not drink the cup of sorrow to the very dregs? Was he not baptized with a baptism of suffering? And was he not the Forerunner, that in all things he might have the preeminence? If, we then, are to walk in his footsteps, and to be conformed to his image, must we not suffer with him? The word of God declares that we *must* suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. It is therefore necessary, indispensably necessary, that we also should pass through tribulation; for if we are out of the way of tribulation, most certainly we are out of the way altogether.

But what is the effect, the merciful effect, of these troubles? Is there not a voice with them? When the ear is opened, tribulation speaks. Are there not fruits and effects of a most salutary kind that flow out of tribulation? For instance. Is not our heart by nature very much glued to the world? Do we not naturally love and cleave to it? As we watch the varied movements of our hearts, are they not perpetually going out after something idolatrous—something to gratify and amuse, to interest, occupy, and please our carnal mind? Can we walk the length of the street without the carnal mind going out after some food? It is in order, then, to sever this union, to bring us out of the world, and make us feel it is not our abiding place, and that no happiness is to be found in it, that the Lord sees necessary to lay tribulation upon us; and tribulation of that peculiar nature which will separate us from the world in good earnest. When we are passing through tribulation, what a poor vain thing the world appears to us! We want inward consolation; the world cannot give it. We want balm to our conscience; the world, instead of pouring in that balm, rather tears the lips of the wound asunder. We

want an assurance of the love of God to our souls; the world, so far from helping forward that assurance, interposes to shut out the manifested lovingkindness of God. We want sacred, internal peace spoken to our souls by the voice of the blood of sprinkling; the world intrudes betwixt that blood and us. So that we need—aye, and sometimes *feel* that we need, tribulation after tribulation, trial upon trial, affliction upon affliction, stroke upon stroke, grief upon grief, sorrow upon sorrow, to cut asunder that close union which there is betwixt us and the world, and to convince us in our very heart and conscience that there is no rest, no peace, no happiness, no consolation to be found in anything that the world presents.

Now when we are thus exercised with tribulation in various shapes and forms, the Lord is often pleased to lead us into himself, and from time to time to bring us with earnest desires and breathings that he would speak that peace to our souls, which the world can neither give nor take away. We are for instance, made to feel that we live in a dying world. We see men dropping down as it were before our eyes upon every side. We see the scythe of death mowing down thousands and tens of thousands; and we fear, perhaps, lest we carry the seeds of death in our own body. Now under these exercises, we look round. We see nothing in the world that can give us a moment's peace; all, all is marred, polluted, defiled; nothing there that our eyes see, or that our ears hear, which can bring one moment's solid peace into our hearts. But when we behold, as the Lord is pleased to give us a view by faith, who Jesus is, and what Jesus is, and his words begin to drop with a measure of sweetness and power into the soul, and we can believe what he says to be unalterably true; and as we come to his feet, and cast ourselves before him, if he is but pleased to apply his precious word to our heart, then there is peace—peace in him, though tribulation in the world.

But these two things ever go together. Directly we are out of tribulation, directly affliction is taken off our necks, directly trial and temptation cease—what becomes of us? Away we go into the world. No stone let loose ever rolled more rapidly down a mountain's side, than we run headlong into the world, headlong into evil, headlong into carnality, headlong into security and fleshly ease, when the hand of God, through affliction, trial, or temptation, ceases to hold us back. Such is the bias of our hearts, such the corruption of our fallen nature—sin, dreadful sin—evil, horrid evil, being its very food, its very breath, its very life. Our carnal minds are altogether one mass of sin: the very moment, therefore, that God ceases to restrain us, our carnal mind hurries off into the things of time and sense. There it grovels, there it buries itself, there it seeks to lie down and wallow as the sow in the mire. But this never can be. There is that tenderness of conscience in the child of God, that godly fear of his sacred name, that anxious desire to be right, that trembling fear to be wrong; there is that aching void, that crying and sighing after the living God; and blended with all this, that dissatisfaction with self, that though the carnal mind may for a time be amused and interested, there is that in his bosom which speaks a different language, and tells a different tale. The first breath, therefore, of tribulation—the first angry stroke, the first thread of the scourge, (for "the rod is made for the fool's back,") makes him feel how guilty he has been in lusting after the flesh-pots of Egypt, in plunging his affections into the world, in being so engrossed and taken up with its business and anxieties. He is thus made to feel what a wretched backslider, what a filthy idolater he has been, in suffering the world to get so fast a hold upon his affections. He comes, therefore, full of guilt and shame, once more to the footstool of mercy, begging the Lord to reveal himself to his soul, to speak peace to his conscience, to seal home his

pardoning love and atoning blood, and so give him that peace which passeth all understanding.

Thus we find there is so close, so intimate a relation betwixt tribulation and peace, that they never can be severed or dissociated. I am sure that we should go, I know not where, were it not for tribulation. Some of us would go headlong into the world, and be swallowed up in its cares and anxieties; some would rush headlong into the lusts and pleasures that everywhere surround them; some would be satisfied with an empty, graceless profession, or a form of sound doctrines in the head; some would take the chair of the scorner, and be filled with pride and self-righteousness. But trials, exercises, troubles, sorrows, in a word, "tribulations," in various shapes and of various kinds, drive us home, and bring us, in the hands of the Lord, to that only safe spot—the feet of Jesus, the footstool of mercy, the throne of grace, that we may there find and feel that peace which his blood alone can impart.

But the Lord has said to his disciples, "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace." It is, then, by believing "these things," by receiving "these things" into our hearts, and feeling the blessed power of "these things" in our soul, that peace is communicated. If I can believe that I am a branch of the living vine; that I am a friend of Jesus; that he shed his precious blood for my redemption; that he has given me his blessed Spirit to guide me into all truth; that because he lives, I shall live also; that he will come and manifest himself unto me; that he is "the way, the truth, and the life," and that through him I find access unto the Father; that he has gone before to prepare a mansion for me, and will come again and receive me unto himself—if I can believe "these things," and feel the sweet fruits of faith flowing forth, must I not, shall I not, find peace

in him?

But how often are we in a kind of middle state! No peace in the world, and little peace in Christ! The world a blank, little else but tribulation and sorrow without and within; and yet, through the workings of unbelief and infidelity, through the weakness of our faith, through the carnality of our minds, through the temptations of Satan, through various inward suggestions, through barrenness and darkness of soul, though we come to Jesus, call upon his name, endeavour to believe what he has revealed in his word, yet we do not find that peace which he has promised. But does not the Lord thus teach us that he himself must create peace in our consciences by himself speaking peace to our souls, and mercifully and graciously shedding abroad his love in our hearts? Of one thing I am very sure; if ever I have found one moment's peace, it has been "in him." It may have been very transitory, very fleeting; but while it lasted, it was peace, and that peace was "in him;" not in self, not in sin, not in the world, but "in him"—by union to him, by communion with him, by receiving out of his fulness grace for grace; and through some manifestation of his mercy, goodness, and love.

But when we compare these two things together, how long are the seasons of tribulation! how short are the seasons of peace! How enduring the affliction, how transient the joy! How many rolling waves and billows of tribulation! how few moments of real solid, enduring calm! Yet enough to shew us that peace is to be found nowhere else but in Jesus, enough to give us something of a foretaste of eternal peace, and make us desire to receive it more substantially, more fully, more feelingly, that our hearts may be wholly bathed with it, and our peace, according to his gracious promise, may flow like a river.

III.—But the Lord adds—"Be of good cheer, *I have overcome the world.*" Does not this show that the world is an enemy to the Lord, and to the Lord's people? and never so much an enemy, never to be so much dreaded, as when it comes in the guise of a friend. When it steals upon your heart, engrosses your thoughts; wins your affections, draws away your mind from God—*then* it is to be dreaded. When we can see the world in its true colours; when we can pass through the world as *in* it, but not *of* it; when we can be sweetly lifting up our hearts to the Lord, meditating upon his word, or sighing and crying unto him—there is little fear then of the world getting the conquest. But, when our eyes begin to drink it in; when our ears begin to listen to its voice; when our hearts become entangled in its fascinations; when our minds get filled with its anxieties; when our affections depart from the Lord, and cleave to the things of time and sense—*then* the world is to be dreaded. When it smites us as an enemy, its blows are not to be feared: it is when it smiles upon us as a friend it is most to be dreaded. But the Lord has said, "I have overcome the world." You may be much entangled in the cares of business; the very vocation, the necessary vocation, whereby you earn your daily bread, may occupy much of your thoughts; but the Lord has said for you, "I have overcome the world." The anxieties of business, the cares of this life, shall not be your master, if you are one of the Lord's; he has overcome the world for you. But you shall have such tribulation in business, such cares and anxieties in the very calling whereby you live, that you shall not idolize it, nor have your affections wholly glued to it. You shall not have a path of prosperity; it would not suit you; you would embrace the world with both arms, and your affections would depart from the living God. Therefore, though the Lord will give you business enough to provide you sufficiently with the bread that perisheth, there shall be mingled with that business so many anxieties and cares, so many distracting

thoughts, so many troubles from every quarter, that you shall not idolize it; you shall see it in its true colours, as the means of passing through this life—nothing more; you shall see that you are not to rest in it, and not to worship it, but to use it thankfully for the short time you are in this vale of tears. So, too, with all our domestic ties. We are such sad idolaters, and these very domestic ties so steal upon our hearts, that the Lord may suffer them to be sources of pain and grief that our affections may not be drawn away from him, and altogether fixed upon the things we naturally love. And so with what are called the pleasures of the world—"the lusts of the flesh and the pride of life,"—those things that are continually enticing us and drawing us aside. But the Lord says, "I have overcome the world:" it shall not overcome you. We may be drawn aside, we may be entangled, we may go out after the most vile and abominable things; but we shall have so many painful feelings, so many cutting convictions, so many distressing sensations, that we shall say with Ephraim, "What have I any more to do with idols?" (Hosea 14:8.) There shall be a coming to the Lord, and a cleaving to him once more with full purpose of heart. We may have to undergo much opposition and persecution, or be under the power of masters and superiors, and dread their frown. Yet the Lord has said, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." He has subdued it by his cross. It shall never become the conqueror or master of his disciples.

Do look at these words. Are they not the words of Truth himself? And do we not in some measure find there is a divine reality in them? What has been your path? Has not this been your path, more or less, since the Lord was first pleased to turn your feet into the narrow way? Tribulation in the world; sometimes opposition and persecution from ungodly men; sometimes troubles connected with our various stations in life; sometimes the scourge of the tongue; and

much more often the inward sufferings produced by a heart deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. The sources of tribulation may have been very various, very different, very multiplied; yet no one child of God here present has been free from tribulation in the world, nor will be free as long as he lives in it.

But let us pass on. Have we found, do we ever find, peace in Jesus? Do we desire to find peace there? Do we look for peace, do we expect to enjoy peace, from any other quarter? Dare we think, for a single moment, of peace in self, peace in the world, or peace in sin? Is our heart so fixed upon Jesus, our eyes so up unto him, the desires of our soul so after the manifestations of his mercy and love, that we are sure there is no peace worth the name except what is found in him? Our seasons of peace may not have been long—they may have been transient, very transient; yet sweet while they lasted, sufficient to shew what true peace is, sufficient to give us longings after a clearer manifestation of it, and make us desire a fuller enjoyment of it. And yet the Lord winds it all up with the solemn and blessed declaration, that though our appointed path, our allotted path, is one of tribulation in the world, yet he has overcome it; sin shall not be our master, the world shall not be our conqueror, the things of time and sense shall not gain a victory over us. May he give us a sweet assurance that he will fight our battles, and bring us off more than conquerors.