

THE MARKS OF GRACE

Preached at Zion Baptist Chapel, Bedworth on Tuesday evening, April 20th, 1852

"For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" 1 Thess.1:9,10

The churches in the New Testament differed much in gifts and grace: this may be gathered from the way in which the Holy Ghost was pleased to inspire the apostle Paul to write to them. The Romans, for instance, appear to have been much blessed with faith, for the apostle says, that "their faith was spoken of throughout the whole world." Eminent believers many of them; highly favoured with the faith of God's elect. The Corinthians, the apostle says, come behind in no gift; the Lord bestowed on them much utterance, and much knowledge, with which they were too much puffed up. It appears the Ephesians were led deeply into the mysteries of the gospel, for the apostle writes to them as those deeply instructed in the mysteries of Christ. The Colossians were not only led into the mysteries of the gospel like the Ephesians, but the apostle speaks of their discipline: "Joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ." The Philippians passed through much persecution, "having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me." The Hebrews were wavering, and, much tempted to depart from and give up the faith.

If we look at the churches in the New Testament, we shall see none were so highly favoured in the enjoyment of the things of God, as the church at Thessalonica. The apostle

writes to them, as being much favoured with the sweet enjoyments of the gospel: "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God: for our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake" (1 Thess.1:3-5).

Thus we find the churches in the New Testament were not all enjoying the same things. The Galatians were sadly tainted with a legal spirit, drawn after false teachers, turned their back on Mount Zion, had gone back to the weak and beggarly elements whereunto they desired again to be in bondage. The Hebrews were wavering continually, scarcely knowing, whether they should hold out to the end. Similar things are to be found in the church in our day; similar differences, not only in the church, but also in individuals. Some weak, others strong; some highly favoured, others all their life-time subject to bondage; with some it is spring, others summer, autumn or winter. The Lord is dealing, with different individuals as seemeth good in his sight, yet causing all things to work together for their spiritual good.

The words of the apostle before us point to two things, which are spoken of as being special marks of grace. He says, "For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God." That is one mark of a person being a partaker of grace: "Turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God."

The second mark which he gives as being a partaker of the grace of the gospel, is, "and to wait for his Son from heaven,

whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."

I believe we shall find these two marks in every child of God. If we set up a very high standard, many of the Lord's children cannot raise up their heads so high, but here is a standard of God's own raising. The apostle brings forward and points to two marks of grace in the souls of these Thessalonian converts, and if the Lord hath touched our heart with the same gracious finger that he touched their's, we shall find, if he is pleased to shine on our souls, these two marks. These Thessalonians, bear in mind, were a Gentile church, and therefore had worshipped idols in the literal sense of the word. They had bowed down before idols of wood and stone. What is the reason we have in the world so much outward idolatry? Wherever we look to, or turn to the heathen nations, we shall see something more or less of idolatry; worshipping gods of wood and stone. There must, therefore, be some principle in the human heart which brings it to worship wooden and stone gods. There must be something in man's fallen nature that teaches him to worship these gods. Say you, "We do not worship and never have worshipped gods of wood and stone;" yet all men's hearts are the same. There must be that in our nature which is idolatry. There is the nature of idolatry, though not outwardly seen, as in the case of these heathens.

Now what is idolatry? What is an idol? The bringing or meeting together in the human heart of two opposite principles. These are in every human heart, and are seen in various shapes and lusts, and mixed with natural religion. Idolatry embodies two things that are quite distinct and opposite. Idolatry embodies a false notion of God, at the same time it deifies some lust or corruption. These heathen idolaters had their god of war, of love, of murder, of wine,

and the god of death. Their idols were deified vices, lusts, passions, corruptions, and the wickedness of the human heart. These they deified, and made gods of. Such was the working of Satan on the human mind, that he brought forth an idol, representing two things apparently distinct, yet united, religion and lust, worship and devilism. The prostration of the body before a god that truly was nothing less than some deified lust and corruption.

Now if we look at our own hearts, we shall see how exactly, in our fallen nature, we have these two opposite principles. Thus idolatry is the bringing together of two antagonistic principles, two things that in themselves are quite opposite. This is devilism, a false religion, worshipping some lust or corruption under the mask of religion; our natural corruptions under a profession; worshipping our pride, our respectability, our covetousness, or love of the world; all these are worshipped under the garb of religion, which is idolatry. And this is what every man does, except so far as he is delivered from it by the power and the grace of God. Men must worship something. All have a natural religion. When the mind is dark through sin, the heart ignorant, the old veil remaining on the heart, no teaching of God in the soul, we must worship something. As the Athenians of old had an altar to the "Unknown God," we must worship something; and if what we worship is not the true God, then we worship idols.

Some persons bow down before the great golden idol that Nebuchadnezzar set up; many, very many hearts are set on this golden idol: they give a little money towards religion, and if they appear to be liberal in the cause, then they think in other things they may be as covetous as they please; so that they have a religion just as the heathens: they worshipped golden gods, these worship their gold. They

imagine, by giving a little away, that it is sanctified, and therefore they can worship it. So a man worships his own righteousness under the mask of religion; worships this self-righteousness, falsely called holiness. He prides himself upon his gloomy and solemn countenance. Thus he indulges his pride, and makes his religion a mask to cover his sin. This is what the Lord's people do, more or less, until they are brought out by the Spirit of God. Some attend the means [of grace] constantly, go to the Sacrament as a means to wash away their sins; as a man once said, he could not commit sin so greedily, until he had said his prayers; so men, to pacify their conscience, will not go to rest, or rise in the morning without saying their prayers, then they can rush into sin with greater pleasure: this is idolatry, deifying their sins, worshipping their lusts under the garb of religion.

In order to know what idolatry is, we have no occasion to go to the heathen; it is not merely worshipping a wooden or stone god, but it is the lust and depravity in the human heart. If we dig down into the heart, deep down, we shall see the principle embedded there, like the coal in the pits at Bedworth; as the deeper you dig to discover the seams of coal, so it is with your heart, the deeper you go, the more you find: "Son of man, thou shalt see greater abominations." Our Saxon ancestors were idolaters; they worshipped the sun's day, or Sunday; the moon's day, or Monday; their Tuiseo's day, or Tuesday; their Woden's day; their Thor's day; their Friga's day; and their Seater's day, or Saturday. I merely name this to shew what idolatry there is in the human heart.

Now here is a mark of grace, a mark of the Spirit, that you have turned to God from idols. There is no real religion until God is pleased to touch the heart with his gracious finger. There is no spiritual light until the Lord is pleased to shine

into the soul. No spiritual life until life is breathed into the conscience. This light comes from God. Life is breathed into the soul simultaneously with light. Though before pleasing themselves with a religion which was nothing better than idolatry, when light and life come into the soul by the power and teaching of God, they turn to God from idols. Now when the Lord is pleased to work in the soul, one thing he shews to us is that we have been wrapped up in a false religion, in self-righteousness, that we have been deceiving ourselves, and trying to deceive him; that we have mocked him with prayers and pretences, in which there was nothing but hypocrisy; hypocrites, such as make a profession of religion, and yet destitute of a real work of God on the soul. Nothing cuts more deeply, when the Lord is pleased to lay his finger on the conscience, than the pretences we made, not having a reality, and we turn to God from this false religion, which is idolatry. Having turned to God, is a clear proof that we have had a manifestation of God to our souls, whereby his fear is put into our heart, so that we know him to be the only true God, by his shining into our soul, manifesting himself. Therefore the apostle says, Ye are "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God." See the contrast. The god they served before was a dead god, like Baal, or his priests, who, for the time, were more sincere in their way than many now; they cut themselves with lancets. We should not find many that would do this. There are not many so earnest in religion, not so zealous as to dig into their flesh with knives, until the blood streamed out: they wounded themselves, cutting themselves, yet Baal never heard, and the prophet, therefore, mocked them, saying that he was asleep, and must be awakened; but there was neither voice, nor answer, nor any regard paid to their cries: so, if our God is a dead god, there will be no answer. God has never spoken to the soul. There is no answer to prayer, no pardon of sin, no manifestation of mercy, no shining in of

light, life, liberty and love; no application of God's truth, no sweet breathing of God's promise, no worshipping God in spirit and in truth, no power, no feeling in the soul, no work of faith, no labour of love, no patience of hope. It is a dead religion, addressed to a dead god. When the Lord is pleased to begin his gracious work, the soul turns from idols to serve the living and true God: the living God, who fills all time and all space; a God who reads all hearts, a God who knows all motives, a God who sees into the depths of our being. I do believe that no man knows the everlasting God, until he is pleased, in some measure, to manifest and shine into his soul; then he knows the living God. As the psalmist says, in the 139th Psalm, "Thou art about my path, and about my bed: and spiest out all my ways. For lo, there is not a word in my tongue: but thou, O Lord, knowest it altogether." 20 This is the beginning of true religion, to know the living God: a holy God, a sin-hating God, a sin-punishing God, a God who will not be mocked, a God before whose awful bar we must stand at the great day, a God who reads all hearts and knows all motives, a God who knows what sins are indulged in, a God who beholds all the evils working in the heart, and who drives us out of all the holes and corners in which we may take refuge, a God who lifts up the veil of unbelief from the heart, and whose awful prescience sees all our impurity at a glance, a living God who must have a living worship. A dead god may have a dead worship; but a living God must have a living worship. There is no living worship of a living God, until he himself is pleased by his Spirit to give it. He is a Spirit, and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

If you look back at the first dealings of God in your soul, much you will see of living worship. A dead religion would not satisfy you. Dead prayers would not do, you wanted living prayers, living sighs, living groans, and a living movement

towards God, a living feeling, a living religion, because it is addressed to him who liveth and abideth for ever. 20. Psalm 139:2,3. Philpot here quotes from Coverdale's Translation of the Psalms which appears in *The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments According to the use of The Church of England*. Philpot having seceded from the Church of England on 28th March, 1835 would still, no doubt be very familiar with that translation used in the Prayer Book. Now when the Lord would manifest himself to the children of Israel, he sends to them, by Moses, his great name "I AM hath sent me unto you." He was not known to them before as the great I AM, the self-existent Jehovah, whose awful majesty, terrible justice, universal presence, a solemn tremendous being, couched in the words, "I AM THAT I AM." He was not known to them by that name before, nor is he known to the soul now, until he is pleased to reveal himself as the great I AM, the self-existent Jehovah, a God of all power, who lives for ever and ever. And he is not known as such, until he is pleased to make it known to the soul. In the first teachings, in the manifestations of his awakening gracious presence, then he is known to be the living God, a God who is worshipped as the living God, a God before whom we tremble, a God who hears and answers prayer, a God whose law becomes a living law, whose threatenings are living threatenings, whose wrath is living wrath, whose displeasure is living displeasure, whose declarations are living declarations, who saith, "Because I live, ye shall live also." Thus a soul in worshipping a living God is alive, whereby he knows him, and just in proportion as we know him to be a living God, shall we have a living religion; in our approaches to him we shall know that a living God produces living feelings; we shall realize, from time to time, a living God, living desires, living prayers, living cries, living groans, feeling them go out of our heart with a living faith, living repentance, living sorrow for sin, living contrition, a living

turning to God from idols, a turning from a dead god to a living One, from a dead religion to a living one, from a dead faith to a living faith, as the Lord is pleased to raise up a spirit of hope. Thus we have instead of a dead hope a living hope, a man's religion becomes a living religion, coming from a living God, and leading to a living God.

The more he knows and feels the presence, power, majesty, and glory of a living God, the more his soul will be living near to God, and the more a living religion will be felt in his heart. The child of God is a wonderful paradox, is a mystery to others, and he is a mystery to himself. Every branch and member of the old man still continue within him. Therefore among the members and branches of the old man, is that member, idolatry. Remember, that though a child of God has a living God for his God; and that this living God will have living service and worship; that those who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth: yet idolatry is still in his heart, lusts, pride, self-righteousness, unbelief and every member of the old man is still in you. Among these members of the old man, is that member, idolatry. Now what is an idol? It is something my carnal mind loves. How may I know whether my carnal mind loves it? When it thinks of it. If my carnal mind loves it, then it is very much pleased with it; we pet, love, and fondle it, dallying and playing with it, like a mother with her babe: see how she takes the little thing and gazes at it; her eyes are fixed on it, she dotes upon it, because she loves it, and it too often becomes an idol. Thus we may know an idol, if we examine our own heart, by what our imaginations, desires, and secret thoughts are going out after. Most men have some idol or other. I do believe nothing is too small or too insignificant, which at times may not be an idol. A man may make an idol of even a tulip or a gooseberry. What a wonderful large gooseberry, what a beautiful tulip? I know this is the case in Lancashire: one

walking up and down his garden on the Sunday morning, looking at his gooseberry bushes, how fine and large the fruit is! Another may dote on a tulip, or an anemone; he looks at it, he admires it, fearful the frost has done it some injury: is not all this idolatry? Something which the mind prefers to God. Instead of reading the Bible, he goes into his garden, to see whether the frost has hurt his cauliflower, or done the broccoli harm: is not this idolatry? Thinking more of these things, than the things of God; his mind running after tulips, more than the blessed Jesus or the Scriptures of Truth. Another man has a shop: he comes to chapel, to hear the minister and the preaching, but instead of this, he is thinking what customers he has missed, what he has lost by coming to chapel: his heart is therefore in his shop. That is his idol! The farmer makes the farm his idol; he thinks of his wheat, he is afraid of his barley; how much it wants rain; the barley will come up twice. Then he looks at his beasts, his stock, how they are getting on. He goes to his fold-yard, looks at his sheep, his cattle; he dotes on them, and is an idolater: he prefers these things to God. Instead of being spiritually minded, having his heart and affections in heaven, he has something in the mind which it is going out after, something or other laying hold of the affections, that were we to dive deeper, to go down into this coal-pit, and bring up these lusts, obscenities, this filth, this devilism, that works in the carnal mind, would prudence allow us to mention, this baseness, this vileness, oh, so black, so filthy, that we should be more begrimed than the dirtiest collier.

Now, I say, the child of God has all these propensities working in him. At one time I should not have believed it, if this had been told me; but I know it, and it is from knowing what I have in my own heart, that I can read others. I know your heart by mine. From painful experience I know there is idolatry in every man's heart. One has one thing for an idol,

another something different. What is my idol, may not be yours; I know it by the thoughts and affections of the mind, which most run after. But what a mercy it is, that we turn to God from all these, turn from all these idols to serve the living and true God. When is this? No man will, until the Lord makes him. Then his prayer is, "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned." This was the prayer of the ancient prophet Jeremiah. When the Lord is pleased to turn us, then we shall be turned. Something like our blessed Lord, when he turned and looked upon Peter, what was the effect? It broke Peter's heart; he went out and wept bitterly. As the Lord is pleased to turn the king's heart as rivers of water, which way he will, so he turns the heart of his children. What a blessed thing it is, now and then, to be turned to God from these idols; to feel the misery, wretchedness, and dissatisfaction which these idols cause. There is something in idolatry which is so debasing, so unsatisfying; it makes a man so thoroughly miserable, when he has been indulging in idolatry, worshipping his idols, and his heart departing from the living God.

The Lord in mercy does sometimes by his gracious Spirit and presence turn to us; when he turns, then we turn from idols, and serve the living God. What is it to serve the living and true God? The apostle says, "Whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son." First, to serve God in spirit, not with our bodies; because we may be serving God with our bodies, and serving the devil with our souls. There is a great deal of wickedness committed on a man's knees: a man may be on his knees, and his heart in all manner of wickedness; a man may sit in a chapel hearing a sermon, and his heart practising all manner of abominations. That is serving God with the lips, but not with the spirit. In other words, being made partakers of that blessed Spirit; serving him in spirit, from a feeling, believing, affectionate heart; serving in the

newness of the Spirit, not in the oldness of the letter, with some manifestations of mercy and love to the soul; this is to serve in the Spirit in the gospel of his Son.

See how much is contained in these words; what marks of grace the apostle here sets up: to turn to God from these idols, to serve the living and true God, because the living and true God is served with the spirit in the gospel of his Son. If God is not served with the spirit in the gospel, it is merely bodily exercise; it is not evangelical obedience, not gospel obedience, but obedience in the letter, an obedience according to the beggarly elements of the law. What a mercy then to be able to serve God in spirit; to have the proud heart brought down, willing to serve God. The greatest privilege God can give a man, is to make him his servant, to bow down before him, to walk in his ways. The greatest privilege God bestows on a man, as the Church of England well says, is perfect freedom. What is freedom? If the truth makes us free, we are free indeed; free from slavish fear. Another sweet and blessed mark of grace is, to "wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." Now this waiting for his Son from heaven, is not to be considered here in its primary signification: no doubt it means, waiting for the second appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall come the second time without sin unto salvation; then shall he appear with all his saints in glory. Thus the saints in God's Word are represented as waiting until then. Their happiness will not be completed until they see him as he is, until he comes the second time; when the body and soul will be reunited: their happiness will then be complete, and never will they be truly happy until they get to glory. "To wait for his Son from heaven:" waiting for a manifestation of the Lord Jesus, who is now in heaven, at God's right-hand. Here then are the two marks: the state of a child of God, and the marks

of grace in the soul. One is, as I have endeavoured to shew, turning to God from idols to serve the living and true God; the other, waiting for his Son from heaven.

Why should a soul wait for the Son from heaven, unless he knew God had a Son in heaven, unless he had some life, feeling and desires towards the Son of God in heaven. How do you know that God has a Son in heaven? Well, say you, God's Word says so. That is good, but have you no other evidence? If God's Word says so, how do you know the Word of God speaks the truth? That is shocking, say you, to doubt of that. So it is: but this I believe, we cannot know in our own souls that God has a Son in heaven, until he is seen by the eye of faith. There is no seeing the Son until he is revealed by the Spirit. If we do not have a manifestation by the Spirit to our souls, we do not know God's Son. We must see him in some measure as Stephen saw him. If we do not know for ourselves, in the court of conscience, whether God has a Son in heaven or not; when the blessed Spirit is pleased to set Jesus before our eyes as the Son of God in heaven, we see him by the eye of faith, as the Lord is pleased to manifest him to our hearts, as the God-man, the glorious Immanuel, God with us. Then we know for ourselves that God has a Son in heaven. When we know, by the Spirit's teaching, God has a Son in heaven, then the thoughts, desires, and affections of the soul, go out after the Son of God in heaven. The soul is all filled with desires, longings and breathings, after a revelation, clearer views of the Saviour; deeper, clearer, and more powerful manifestations of the Son of God in heaven.

Let me illustrate this. A woman is married, and has an affectionate husband. When he leaves his home for a time upon business, saying he shall be back at a certain day, when the time arrives, she is waiting for his appearance; she

knows his step, knows the very way he turns the handle of the door. So it is with a soul who is married to the Lord. There is a spiritual union between Christ and the soul. He is absent, does not come, but he will come; the soul is waiting for his appearing. "To wait for his Son from heaven." The soul knows his touch upon the handle of the lock, how he puts in his hand by the hole of the door, and makes the very bowels melt. The soul knows his voice: "His own sheep know his voice," and every shining in of his presence, every drawing near of his most gracious person. Why does he delay coming? Why delay the wheels of his chariot? Oh, that the Lord would visit my soul, and bless me with his presence, shine into my heart, speak the promise home to my soul. So we talk with him, so we have sweet communion with him, "waiting for his Son from heaven."

See what sweet and blessed marks they are: marks of grace in the soul. Do not be contented or satisfied with yourself, unless you find, more or less, these two sweet and blessed marks. You know what you have been, what a wretch you have been, how in time past you have acted vile and base; but the Lord worked on your conscience, and turned you from these cursed idols to serve the living and true God to bow down before him, worship him in spirit and in truth, fear his great name, tremble at his law, at his almighty displeasure; to feel a living God taking possession of you, by his shinings in your soul by his Spirit and grace.

This is turning from idols to serve the living God, worshipping him in spirit, desiring his favour, having all this living religion wrought in the soul by the living God. This is the way the Lord is pleased to work in your soul, so that you daily repent, and grieve and groan because of these idols, because of this teraphim in the camel's furniture (Gen.31:34, cf. v.19 mg): so still with the heart waiting for his Son from heaven,

waiting for the word of peace, pardon and mercy, waiting for a smile, some testimony of an interest in his precious atonement. "Waiting for his Son from heaven," with earnest prayer. "Waiting for his Son from heaven," in hearing the word upon your bed at night, to have a secret persuasion that he will appear. "Waiting for his Son from heaven:" to be able to cast all your care upon him. This is a proof of the reality of the work upon your soul, to bring us to the knowledge of the living God, to know this living and true God as the Son in heaven. To wait for him, here is the mark of a believer; to wait for him, not like a presumptuous professor, as the poet tells us: "Who rushes in where angels fear to tread."

But waiting, longing, hoping, expecting; sometimes drawing back, sometimes moving on. "Waiting for his Son from heaven:" looking upward and inward, in hope Jesus will hear, will reply, speak the word, will dispel the cloud, will remove the burden, deliver from sin, and appear for the soul's good and the Lord's glory. This is to wait for the Son from heaven.

The man that has these two marks in his soul, will have a deal of work between God and conscience, because he finds continually this idolatry in his heart drawing him aside. What a deal he suffers from; how it plagues and tries him. Like the man in the fable, that found a dead viper, at least dead to appearance through the cold, what a pretty looking thing it is; he puts it in his bosom and warms it, when it revives and bites him. Thus is it with a man who plays with his lusts, indulging them; his carnal heart goes out after them, until at last, like the dead viper, it turns to a living adder, and stings him. What a deal of work for conscience this brings to man that lets his thoughts, desires and affections wander from God. In this way, my friends, things in themselves, to use a common expression, innocent, things in themselves quite

allowable, when indulged in often bring guilt on the conscience, and great grief to the soul. A man may have a hearty appetite, but if indulged in to excess, it may be a snare to him. So in many other things, as children, wife, family, and conversation. How soon may they deteriorate into idolatry, occupy the thoughts and affections, and turn the soul away from God. Like David who idolized Absalom, Eli with his sons, or Samuel, that great and good man, who made his corrupt sons judges in Israel. How this idolatry is rooted in a man's heart, how it steals upon his soul. Whatever is indulged in, how it creeps over him, until it gets such power that it becomes master. What work for conscience to get out of this snare; how the conscience is defiled when these idols become an object of worship.

There is something so detestable and abominable in an idol, from which it should be our earnest prayer for God himself to deliver us. If a man knows any thing of the idolatry of his fallen nature, he knows also the desire to serve the living and true God. He will know that he never can blend these two things. He may try to do it, while serving idols to serve God, but he cannot "for what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial?" There is no communion between a dead soul and a living God. The only way is when the grace of God is in operation. How these things make a man wince, to give up the idol and to part with it. How he pleads so hard, just this time. What work it makes, especially if the conscience is tender, struggling with the idolatry of the heart, the lust, concupiscence, and devilism of our fallen nature. I have compared it to a spider watching a fly. The poor little fly has just been caught in the extremity of the web; the spider lies in a hole, as soon as he sees the web shake, down he flies, and draws the threads around his victim, kills him, sucks his carcass, and leaves it. Thus the devil may be compared to the spider lurking in his

web, waiting in reality to suck the very bones and blood of a child of God, and cast him to hell: and so he would, were it not for preserving grace.

What conscience work there is, between the idols struggling for mastery and for the grace of the Spirit of God; groaning, crying, and sighing continually to cast these idols out. Then we turn to God with weeping and lamentation; turn, as the prophet Joel says, rending our hearts and not our garments; turn to the Lord with weeping and supplication; yes, weep tears of blood for these idols. A man does not know himself, if he does not know what power this idolatry has over him. None but God can make the man know it; and when he is delivered, he turns to God from these idols. He says, What a vile wretch I have been, what a monster I have been; I have gone after idols, I have loved this thing and that thing, and let my imagination go after it, a wretch, a monster of iniquity, the vilest wretch that ever crawled on the face of God's earth, to let my wicked heart go out after these idols. When the soul is brought down to a sense of its vileness, and its baseness, and God's long-suffering and forbearance, it turns to God from idols to serve the only living and true God, waiting for his Son from heaven, who pardons the idolater, heals the backslider, and communicates special mercy to his soul. He restores the poor idolater, he brings him back once more to "worship God in spirit and in truth;" he is raised from the dead to life. "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection." The Lord raises the poor soul up; he is raised from the dead.

What a blessed doctrine is the resurrection of Christ; what a glory there is in it. The resurrection of Jesus is my triumph over death, sin, hell, and the grave, lifting his poor people up

from the grave of their misery and wretchedness, raised from the dead. When we experience the power of Christ's resurrection, our souls are raised from the grave of our lusts and corruptions, and stand in the presence of God, raised from the dead, delivered fully and freely, eternally, perfectly, and everlastingly "delivered us from the wrath to come," which we find drawn down upon our guilty heads through these idols; delivered us from the wrath to come, by interposing his body and blood; waiting for his Son from heaven; triumphing over death, hell, sin, and the grave; delivered his people from wrath, the tremendous displeasure of God's hand that will be poured out upon a guilty world, upon all idolaters who live and die in their idolatry, upon all false professors, false religionists, upon all that are not turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God. Jesus died to deliver us from the wrath to come; God raised him from the dead, and he is at his right hand. "To wait for his Son from heaven," for his smiles, his mercy, his deliverance. What a mercy to be enabled to find these two marks standing up in your soul, though they are sometimes buried.

Suppose some antiquarians had information that at Bedworth there was an old Roman mile stone; they would soon come to the town, and as soon as they discovered the stone, though the head might just peep out of the ground, what a digging down to find the inscription; they would dig and dig till they cleared away the rubbish that they might be enabled to read the inscription. So very often the marks of grace, like the old Roman mile stone, are buried in the earth; if the top is just seen of this stone, antiquarians dig down to get at the inscription. Thus if God has put this blessed stone, this Ebenezer in your heart, and the inscription is covered up with mud, mire, filth, and earth, if you want to have the inscription read, you must dig down. May the Lord, under the

operation of his blessed Spirit, enable you to dig down, so that every obstacle may be taken out of the way. I hope the Lord has enabled me this evening to clear away a little of this rubbish round this stone, so that you may be able to read the inscription, and tell how many miles you are on the road to heaven, and to tell me that you have some reason to hope that the blessed God has caused the corruption, sin, and the devilism of your heart to flee away, that you have a mark that you are a child of God. To a poor soul sunk into carnality and sin, with every thing that is base and horrible, what a mercy it is to have some little evidence of a work of grace on the soul. Here is the mile stone found; first turning to God from idols. The man or woman that has turned to God from idols, can read the inscription; "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;" besides that, he can read another, that is this, "to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which hath delivered us from the wrath to come." Whoever can find these two marks, written with the finger of God in the soul, let the devil and unbelief say what they may; if they have these two scriptural marks in the soul, bless and praise God for his mercy, and thank him for his most unmerited favour.