

The Patience and Faith of the Saints

Preached at Gower Street Chapel, London, on Lord's Day Evening, June 21, 1868

"Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."

Revelation 14:12

We have, as I observed this morning, a special blessing pronounced upon "him that readeth, and those that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein." (Rev. 1:3.) Now, a book which comes before us with such a recommendation from God, and carries on its very front his own promise that a blessing shall attend the man who hears, and reads, and keeps what is written therein, claims for itself our most earnest and deep attention. If we believe, as we are bound to believe, in the faithfulness of God to his own word of promise, and that the man whom he has pronounced blessed must be blessed, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, we cannot doubt that the man is blessed who reads, and hears, and keeps the sayings of this book. And yet, there is not a book in the whole Scriptures which to us appears, when we read its contents, more dark, obscure, and unintelligible; nor is there one which has more puzzled and perplexed learned men and unlearned men; able scholars armed to the teeth with all the apparatus of criticism, and simple people who seek to understand it by the special teaching of the Spirit. How can we reconcile these things? I think we can reconcile them thus. We must draw a distinction between the prophetic part of the book of Revelation and the instructive part. As far as regards the purely prophetic part, that always has been, and probably, at least till fulfilled, will always be a mystery. Commentator after commentator has written upon the subject, and with

much self-complacency, and apparently to their own full satisfaction, seem to have established grand points of truth; and thus they come out continually, like Dr. Cumming, with their commentaries and their expositions in neatly printed, nicely bound little volumes, almost like a Christmas Annual, fixing the exact end of the world, and explaining all the minutiae of these wondrous prophecies. Now I do not condemn those servants of God who, like Mr. Huntington and Dr. Gill, have written in a sober way upon the grand leading points, and traced out the general features of the book of Revelation. It is the attempt minutely to explain and definitely to fix the meaning of each prophetic symbol, and to assign to it its chronological place and order which I censure. For taking the general bulk of commentators on the Revelation, I believe we may say that when we have read and re-read all they have said upon the subject, we feel no satisfaction with their exposition. They give us long explanations of the seven seals, and the seven trumpets, and the sea of glass, and of the great red dragon with its seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns upon its heads, and fix the dates of all these events. They also explain the mystical number of the beast, and what the mark is that men receive on their foreheads; they bring out their arithmetical tables and calculate what is meant by the number 666, pronounce when Babylon is to fall, and the world to be destroyed, and settle the whole matter to their own satisfaction. But, as I said before, when we have read and re-read and examined all these learned explanations, we are just as we were. We have no clearer ideas who the beast is, nor what the mark is, nor what the number of his name, when he arose, or when he will come to his end. Let me not be misunderstood. No doubt there are certain grand outlines in the seven seals, and the seven trumpets, and that the Romish Church is represented as the woman sitting upon the beast. All this seems pretty clear, and is useful and

instructive as a warning that we may not partake of her sins and plagues. It is when we come to fill up those several outlines in a clear and definite manner, so as to fix times and periods, that we seem to sink back into darkness and confusion, especially as many of these assigned dates have been already falsified. Yet does God's word of promise on this account fall to the ground? Is there not a blessing in hearing, and reading, and keeping the sayings of this book? And may we not have all this without being able clearly to understand the minutiae of the Revelation, or exactly interpret the meaning and fix the date of every prophetic symbol? To make this point more clear, I will mention four special blessings, of which we should have been deprived unless we had been favoured with the book of Revelation.

1. First, the Church would have supposed that by the preaching of the word and the spread of the gospel, the kingdom of God would have been universally set up in the world, and that all men would come in as subjects and servants of Christ without difficulty and opposition. But the book of Revelation prepared her to see that anti-christian powers would arise who would set themselves against the Gospel, and never suffer, if they could help it, the truth to be established in its purity and power.

2. The next great lesson which the church learns from the book of Revelation is to prepare herself for suffering; that she is to endure trials and temptations, with great and hot persecutions; and, therefore, is not to look for a smooth and easy path.

3. The third lesson is to confirm the saints in their obedience, to assure them that God is faithful, that their path is to suffer and to obey, to hold fast what they have received lest any man take their crown, to oppose all anti-christian doctrines,

principles, and practices, and maintain the faith of Jesus.

4. And the fourth grand lesson is, that there will be a blessed and glorious end for the persecuted, distressed, and troubled saints of God: that they will stand one day before the throne with palms in their hands, shouting victory, will be called to sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb, and be for ever with the Lord. Thus, from this book, even from the prophetic part, we may learn most salutary lessons of heavenly wisdom, even though its minute details may be very obscure to our minds, and we may find in it much which we cannot understand.

But I shall now address myself, with God's help and blessing, to the words of our text; and in so doing, I shall endeavour to show you—

I.—*First*, what is the *patience* of the saints.

II.—*Secondly*, what it is to *keep the commandments of God*.

III.—*Thirdly*, what it is to *keep the faith of Jesus*.

I.—I have to show you what is the *patience of the saints*; and in so doing, I have first to explain who the *saints* are, and then what is the meaning of the word *patience*; for unless we get clear ideas into our minds who the saints are and what is meant by their patience, we shall not be able to enter fully into the meaning of the words, or know their blessedness and power.

i. By the *saints*—it is a scriptural expression, however much despised by man, we are to understand the people of God. But why are they called "saints?" They are so called for several reasons.

1. First, they are called saints because they were sanctified *by God the Father*; as we read in Jude: "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father." The proper meaning of the word "sanctified" is, being separated unto holy uses. In this sense, therefore, God is said to have "sanctified the seventh day;" that is, set it apart as a day of rest, that in it he might be honoured and worshipped. In a similar way, he said to Moses, "Sanctify unto me all the first-born." (Exodus 13:2.) And in this sense also he sanctified, or set apart for holy uses, the tabernacle and the altar, Aaron and his sons, the garments that they wore, and all the vessels of the tabernacle of which they made use. This act of God the Father, therefore, in separating a people from all the rest that they might be, as Peter speaks, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people," (1 Peter 2:9), is the foundation of all sanctification in time. They were "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before him in love," (Eph. 1:4); and thus by union with Christ, and accepted in him, the Beloved, they were ever viewed as holy as being partakers of his holiness. In this sense, therefore, all the family of God, even those who are at present uncalled, are saints, as set apart and sanctified in Christ by the Father, in his own eternal mind, and their state and standing fixed by sovereign decree. This may seem very hard to believe, and it is, indeed, a doctrine much fought against as very repugnant to the flesh. But only consider what a firm foundation is thus laid for the Church of Christ, and what a security it affords, that the storms and waves of time should never wash her off the Rock, on which she was thus eternally set. See, also, what a blessed source and fountain it opens for all sanctification to flow forth in time, and what a pledge it gives that all the purposes of God to bring unto himself a people perfect in holiness should be accomplished. When, too, we

look at the coming in of the fall, with all the horrid depths of sin and evil in which it sank the whole human race, what infinite wisdom, goodness, mercy, and grace do we see in the original sanctification of the church by the will of God, that, like the ark of old, she might ride out the deluge of sin, and be preserved spotless in Christ through it all. What a certainty also it affords that every one thus sanctified must be saved; for how could God cast into hell any one whom he has set apart for such a holy purpose, as the knowledge and enjoyment of himself, and whom he has united to his dear Son to be a member of his mystical body for ever and ever?

2. But they are saints also, as being sanctified *by the blood of Christ*. Let not the expression startle or seem strange to you, for it is the very language of Scripture: "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." (Heb. 13:12.) The highest and greatest benefits and blessings that we can enjoy, flow to us through the blood of Christ. By it we are *redeemed*, according to that immortal song: "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." (Rev. 5:9.) By his blood, also, we are said to be *justified*, according to those words: "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." (Rom. 5:9.) And by his blood also, we are said to be *sanctified*, as I have shown from the Scripture. Now this sanctification by the blood of Christ, is the expiation he has made of the guilt of sin, by bearing our sins in his own body on the tree. He thus sanctified and cleansed his people from all their sin, by making full atonement for it, and then presented them unto God as washed from all their uncleanness. Thus, the saints are said to have "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," that they might appear before God "clothed in whites robes" as a mark and emblem of their

sanctity and purity. They thus stand "without fault before the throne;" and Christ presents them to himself "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish;" even now as holy in him as they will be in the day of his appearing, when they shall stand "faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." (Eph. 5:27, Jude 24.)

3. But they are called "saints," also, specially and particularly, as sanctified by *the Holy Ghost*, who, by his sacred work upon their hearts, makes them partakers of that inward holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. By this they are made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light: and thus as they are sanctified by the will of God the Father in the original decree (Heb. 10:10), and sanctified by the blood of his dear Son, through the offering of his body, once for all, by which he hath perfected them for ever (Heb. 10:14), so are they inwardly sanctified by the Holy Ghost, in his divine influences and operations, and are thus conformed to the image of Christ. If you, then, are a saint of God, you are so by virtue of the Father's sanctifying decree, by virtue of the blood of the Lamb shed for your sins, and by virtue of a special work of grace upon your heart, whereby the Holy Ghost has made your body his temple. O what privileges are these! To have an interest in God's electing love, in Christ's redeeming blood, and in the Spirit's work and witness! O what blessings are these, and what can earth offer or give to be compared, for a single moment, with them! And surely, if so blessed and favoured, so separated unto God's honour and glory, so redeemed by the precious blood of the Lamb, and so regenerated, renewed, and made partakers of God's holiness, we shall have some discovery, manifestation, and evidence of it both in our own conscience and in that of others. Such signal benefits, such unspeakable blessings, such displays of sovereign grace and unutterable love and

mercy, cannot lie hid or buried in obscurity. They will, and must be made, more or less, manifest in our hearts, in our lips, and in our lives.

ii. But as this discovery and manifestation of the grace of God forms the prominent feature of my text, I shall not further dwell upon it, but go on to show what is the "*patience*" of the saints. If then we are truly and really, and not in name and profession only, saints; if God has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him; if we are sanctified by the blood of the Lamb, as shed for our sins, and regenerated and made new creatures by the work of the Holy Ghost upon our hearts, we shall manifest it by our patience; for our text points expressly to this mark as stamped by the hand of God upon the saints. "Here is the patience of the saints."

The word "patience" in the New Testament has two significations. It means, first, *endurance*; that principle, that gracious principle whereby he that is possessed of it endures to the end, is not overborne by the snares of sin and Satan, so as to sink under them, or perish in unbelief under the wrath of God. Whatever be his difficulties, his foes, or his fears, he endures unto the end and so is saved. But the word also means that Christian grace which is generally understood by the term "patience," as indicating that calm quietness of mind, that long and gentle forbearance, that humble and meek resignation under sorrow and suffering which is opposed to fretfulness, murmuring, peevishness, rebellion, and perverseness. It therefore signifies, as wrought in the heart by the Spirit of God—for there is a spiritual as well as a natural patience—that quiet submission to his will and word which distinguishes or should distinguish those who are under divine teaching and divine operation from the carnal, the worldly, and the ungodly. Hence John, writing

under divine inspiration, and holding up the saints of God to view, that men might read their character, puts his hand upon a certain spot to distinguish them from all others. I shall presently show what were the peculiar circumstances of which John spoke; but observe for the present how he says "Here is the patience of the saints." Can I also say "Here, here is the patience of the saints?" I have a large congregation before me this evening. Do I see saints before me? Am I preaching to saints, and can I say, as I look round upon this assembled body, "Here is the patience of the saints?" Are you, or any of you anxious to know whether you are saints, or have you received from God any evidence that you are? As then I trace out what is the patience of the saints, examine yourself by it whether you are a saint, by finding in yourself the patience of the saints. There is no use thinking or calling yourself a saint of God if you have no real claim to that title; there is no use ranking yourself among the highly favoured children of God, and then when you are weighed in the balance of the sanctuary not to have one real scriptural mark or evidence of belonging to the Lord. Thousands deceive themselves here, having a name to live when they are dead. May it not be so with you!

What is the first instance I shall bring forward of the patience of the saints, as signifying *endurance*?

1. Generally speaking, they have to endure *persecution*. There are few, speaking comparatively, whom the Lord calls by his grace, who have not, often at the outset, to endure persecution. In fact, the Scripture says, "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Therefore, if you have never suffered persecution, you have never lived godly. You may have talked godly, but not walked godly; may have had godliness on your lips, but not godliness in your heart and life. Sooner or later, but usually at the outset,

we have to endure persecution. But here is the patience of the saints, that they can endure it, and meekly too. For when the Lord in early days, what the Scripture calls "the days of our espousals," makes himself first known to the soul, and reveals a sense of his preciousness, it is a wonderful stay to support the mind under the heaviest persecution. What sacrifice can we not make if the Lord is felt to be on our side? If it be needful to give up what is near and dear to nature for his sake, how freely and willingly is the sacrifice made! And if we be called upon to endure losses, crosses, sharp and heavy persecutions for his name's sake, how meekly, cheerfully, and happily can we endure them, if we have a sense of the Lord's goodness and mercy felt in our souls. Here is the patience of the saints, to endure meekly the persecutions that spring from a walk and life of godliness.

2. But this is a small part of what the saints have to endure. When the Lord is pleased to call them by his grace, he lays for the most part great loads of *guilt* upon their conscience. He shows them light in his own most glorious light; and by the application of the word with power to their conscience, opens up to them the exceeding sinfulness of sin and of their sins in particular. Now comes "the patience of the saints" to endure these loads of guilt, and not have them removed in a legal way or any other than a gospel way. When men get under convictions of sin, and these convictions are not from grace, they will get rid of them as soon as they can, and any way to get rid of them is gladly embraced. Amusement, the public-house (if in a sphere of life where this is resorted to), reading worldly books, travelling abroad, getting into cheerful company, occupying and entertaining the mind with the various sports of the day,—by these means many seek to extricate themselves from the convictions they feel, and they often succeed. They long to be deceived and they are deceived. Their convictions wear off, and they are twofold

more children of Satan than before. But where there is a real work of grace; where the Holy Spirit is writing the law of God upon the mind and setting conviction home upon the breast, there is no getting rid of the burden of sin and guilt; for the saint of God dreads to have his wound healed without the application of balmy blood, his bonds taken off by any hand but that of the Lord, to speak a false peace to his own conscience, or think himself in gospel liberty when his own feelings tell him he is in miserable bondage. He therefore endures; he bears the yoke in his youth; he puts his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope, and would sooner carry his burden all his days, hoping the Lord will take it off before he die, than cast it off his own shoulders, or let any man take it off for him. He will come with his burden to the house of prayer, and if a word of encouragement should be spoken to lighten that burden, he can take the comfort of it; but he must be well satisfied, from the power which attends it, that it is from the Lord, before he can feel his load sensibly lightened. He is also made very jealous of every mark and token, every testimony inward or outward in his favour, lest he should be deceived, take up with false comfort, and rest in a confidence which will not support him in a dying hour, or which he cannot plead with the Lord, as coming from his own gracious work in his soul. "Here is the patience of the saints;"—that they both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord; and though this may be long delayed, yea, for years, yet still they obey the admonition of the prophet: "Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." How we see this hoping, waiting spirit in David: "Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation." And what a solemn charge he gives his soul: "My soul, wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him." Compare this patient spirit of David with the hasty, rash spirit of Saul. Samuel had bidden him tarry seven days until he came to Gilgal; but Saul would not

wait the appointed time, and offered the burnt offering. And what was the consequence of his not enduring to wait? That "his kingdom should not continue, for the Lord had sought him a man after his own heart," even David, who would wait, and not be hurried into disobedience by a hasty spirit and an unbelieving heart.

3. But as the Lord's people journey onward along the path of truth and righteousness, they will find many *temptations*. And here they will find a special need of patience, and of that branch of it which is meant by endurance. To such, a special promise is made. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation." And why is he blessed? "For when he is tried (or rather, as the word properly means, "approved," as having borne and not been consumed by temptation) he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." (James 1:12.) We see, therefore, that there is a connection between enduring temptation and loving God; and thus, those who love not God, cannot endure temptation. There are many such, and they are described by the Lord as stony ground hearers, in whom the word, as Luke speaks, "falls upon a rock," and who, "when they hear, receive the word with joy, but having no root, for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away." (Luke 8:13.)

Now temptations are of two kinds: some are painful to the flesh, which may be called more peculiarly trials, and some are pleasing to it, which may be called more peculiarly temptations, the original word embracing both meanings. Poverty, persecution, contempt, loss of worldly goods, shame for Christ's sake, opposition of friends and relations, self to be denied, a daily cross to be taken up, the old man to be crucified, sin to be resisted even unto blood, the world to be given up, the dictates of conscience closely followed, precepts to be obeyed, and the word of God taken as our

guiding rule—these are trials which have to be endured. And to them we may add afflictions of various kinds both in body and soul, in family, in circumstances, painful events in the church and in the world, losses in business, and blows from professed friends or open enemies, with the daily exercises that spring from a wicked heart and an assaulting devil. These and countless other trials the saints have to endure, as we see all through the word of God; and it is their endurance of them which proves them to be saints. James, therefore, says: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." (James 1:2.) Is not this a strange matter of joy? But hear James's own explanation: "Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." (James 1:3, 4.) We thus see that "the trial of faith worketh patience," that is, endurance, the very thing of which we are speaking; and Peter, therefore, says, that "the trial of our faith is much more precious than of gold that perisheth." (1 Pet. 1:7.)

The other class of temptations are those properly called such, such as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. These are pleasing to the flesh, and are, therefore, more dangerous, because more ensnaring than trials. But some temptations are also distressing to the spirit, such as strong suggestions to infidelity, blasphemy, suicide, and despair, all which are very grievous to be borne, but which the saint of God has to endure, that his faith may be proved in the furnace, and be "found unto praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

4. Again the patience of the saints is manifested in their continually *waiting upon God*, in never giving up crying unto him, hanging upon him, and pleading his promises before the throne until he appear. "Here is the patience of the saints."

Men under natural convictions may seem to pray; they may pour out a prayer when God's chastening is upon them; they may, as the prophet speaks, "howl upon their beds," and appear very anxious and distressed about their souls, and to such a degree that it would look as if there was in them a real work of grace. But let the affliction pass, let the trial be removed, let them be raised up from their sick bed and go again into the world, then they are just what, and just where they were before. It is with them as the word of God speaks: "But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." (2 Peter 2:22.) Not so the saint. He endures; he has eternal life in his soul, and what I may call immortal principles, such as the spirit of holiness, of truth, and of love. These immortal principles are planted in his soul by the gift and work of the Holy Ghost, and, therefore, his religion does not die away like that of nature; his convictions do not perish for want of moisture like the stony ground hearers; his prayers are not given up because they do not meet with immediate answers; he does not go into the world because he cannot find the presence and company and love of God as he could wish, shed abroad in his heart. There are certain principles communicated to his soul whereby he is made and manifested a saint; and these principles of truth and holiness, watered continually by the dew of God's grace, keep up the life of God in his soul. Here is the patience of the saints. If you turn away from the truth because the word does not always, nor perhaps often, come with power to your soul; if you neglect reading the Scriptures because you cannot always find in them sweetness and savour; if you withdraw your feet from the house of prayer because you cannot always get what you want, or forsake the throne because you do not always feel access, you will prove yourself not to be a saint. But here is the patience of the saints, that having divine principles of faith and holiness,

having spiritual and eternal life in their soul, they endure all that is laid upon them, live through all their trials, persevere in holding out and holding on; and by this they shew that theirs is not a religion that wears out and comes to nothing, but amidst a thousand difficulties, under the heaviest loads, sharpest trials, and keenest temptations, still lives however low it may sink, and is, from time to time, revived out of its deepest depression. O for a religion that is of God. The stoutest, strongest piece of earthly manufacture will wear out. If your religion has no deeper root than the work of man; has not been breathed into your soul and lodged in your conscience by the mouth of God, and planted in your heart by the hand of God, it will be plucked up; for our Lord said: "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." Here is the patience of the saints—the mark which God has stamped upon them, that they have a religion which can never be destroyed. They belong to a kingdom which cannot be moved; they have principles of eternal life in their breast; subject, indeed, to ebbing and flowing; subject to great darkness of mind and often much coldness and deadness of affection; subject to great and powerful temptations; subject to many severe and cutting trials, but with it all, built upon and consisting of immortal principles. Have you not, sometimes, wondered how the life of God has been maintained in your breast? How low it has sometimes sunk; how it has seemed, at times, to leave you almost without the shadow of a hope. When Satan has hurled in his fiery darts; when you have contracted guilt in your conscience by any act or word of disobedience; when great deadness of spirit and coldness of affection have seemed to freeze up every faculty within, have you not been ready to say? "All my religion is gone; if I ever had any, it is all gone now; I have not a grain left: O where is my religion? It is all gone; trampled under foot by sin and guilt, spoiled by my own disobedient acts or words, shot at by the devil until

he has set all my carnal mind on fire; and here I am a dying man without a grain of true religion, or a spark of real, vital godliness in my breast." Now this is a very low spot to come to; it is a very sad and gloomy place to be in. Yet very many are there; and I believe all are there, sooner or later, at some time of their experience. Now here is the patience of the saints, not to give it up. "It is a hard fight," you will both feel and say; "it is a desperate battle; it is a terrible struggle. Unbelief, infidelity, temptation, Satan's fiery darts, a guilty conscience, all press very hard; they all testify very powerfully against me; but I cannot give it up." Now in thus not being able to give it up, is the patience of the saints. Here they stand when others fall; here they rise when others sink; here conquer when others are defeated; and here they snatch the palm of victory when others perish under the destroyer.

ii. Now it is this endurance of trial and temptation which produces that other branch of patience which I have spoken of as also meant by the term. It is by trials and temptations, and by enduring them, that the grace of *patience*, as implying quiet and calm submission to the will of God, with a humble resignation to his dealings, is wrought out. This is, as it were, the crown of endurance, or, as James speaks, the perfecting of it. "But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." (James 1:4.) The "perfect work of patience," is, to have submission wrought out in the soul through the endurance of trials. We see this very clearly in the case of Job, as explained by James: "Behold we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience (or endurance) of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord" (James 5:11); that is, the end of the Lord in trying him so sharply, and yet that in the midst of all, and at the end of it all, he was "very pitiful and of tender mercy." Now Job at first was not patient, but very peevish

and rebellious, for he cursed his day; but at the end he said, "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." (Job 42:5, 6.) Then patience had its perfect work; submission was wrought in his soul; and he being proved a saint, as having endured temptation, has been ever since "taken for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience."

But I said I would make a few remarks upon the peculiar need which the saints had of patience as indicated in the text by the word, "here." It looked forward to the time when the beast was to be manifested, when he would "cause all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand or in their foreheads." Now I do not profess to be able to explain what the beast is, or what is his mark; but, as far as I have any insight into the word of prophecy, I believe we have not yet seen the beast, at least, not in his full manifestation. We may have seen his beginning in Papal Rome, but we have not seen his full development. I cannot but think that some infidel power has to arise of a far more dreadful and anti-christian character than any which has yet appeared, into which Popery may merge, and that when this comes to pass, then will be the time especially for the patience of the saints.

But these points I wish to leave, as I told you before, on account of the great uncertainty which rests at present on these prophetic declarations. When the time of the end comes, both the beast and his mark, and the number of his name, will be so clear that the saints will know who he is, and will show their patience in not receiving his mark, but endure his wrath by keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

II.—I pass on, therefore, to show what it is to *keep the commandments of God*. And may I repeat my words again? Looking around upon this congregation, may I say, "Here are they that keep the commandments of God? If you would see a church and people that keep the commandments of God, you must go to Gower Street?" Could *I* say that? could *you* say that? Might it be written upon a tablet outside and inside the walls of this chapel, "Here is a people that keep the commandments of God?" And yet, if you, as a church and people, do not keep the commandments of God, what right have you to call yourselves children of God? For only they that keep the commandments of God are the children of God. If a man keep not the commandments of God, he does not belong to God; he is not one of God's saints; he is not one of God's servants. It is a most certain truth that he must keep the commandments of God to be manifested as one of God's saints. But you will say, "I thought we had done with the commandments." So we have, if you use the word "commandments" in the strict sense—the ten commandments—that is, in the letter though not in the spirit; for though we now have a new and better rule, even the precepts of the gospel, it is still true that the law is fulfilled by love, and that the "righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." But, apart from this, are there no other commandments than those which were written by the finger of God on tables of stone? Are there no New Testament commandments? Has God ceased to command? If so, why should John his servant write these words in this blessed Book? "Here are they that keep the commandments of God."

But, perhaps, the matter will be a little clearer, if I show you what are the commandments of God, and what it is to keep them, as God would have them kept.

Let me then show you some of them, for I cannot point out all the commandments of God and how we keep them.

1. One commandment of God was that the Gospel should be preached, according to those words—"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." This commandment the apostles obeyed when they went forth after the day of Pentecost. They set forth the Son of God in his blood and righteousness, in his death and resurrection; and told the people that faith in him was God's appointed means of receiving the blessings that were in him. This commandment is still kept by the servants of God in preaching the gospel, and kept also by their believing hearers. Now when this word of grace and truth comes with power to our souls; when Jesus is held up before our eyes in his Person, work, blood, righteousness, and what he is as the Son and Christ of God, and we are blessed with a living faith to embrace him as revealed in it, we keep the commandment of God. He says, in a preached gospel, "Believe in my dear Son." When then I believe in the Son of God, as thus "evidently set forth," to use Paul's strong expression, "crucified among us" (Gal. 3:1), I keep the commandment of God.

2. So when Jesus says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," I keep his commandment by coming to him for this blessing, for "his commandments are not grievous," but full of mercy and love.

3. In a similar way, when I repent of my sins and feel godly sorrow for them; when I am favoured with true contrition of heart and brokenness of spirit, and have that godly sorrow which needs not to be repented of, I am keeping the commandment of God, who bids me in his word repent of my sins; for he commanded repentance to be preached to all

nations, beginning at Jerusalem. When, then, my hard heart is softened and melted; when my eyes give forth their tears; when my bosom vents its sighs and groans; when I bow down before the throne in deep humility under a sense of my vileness, I keep the commandment of God which calls me to repent, and tells me that "He has exalted Jesus with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel and forgiveness of sins."

4. So when we love the family of God; when our heart goes forth in tender affection to those in whom we see the image of Jesus, we keep the commandment of God. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another." And if you manifest your love by suitable words and works—not loving in lip only, but also in heart and hand—then you keep the commandment of God.

5. When you seek the Lord's face for every blessing, watch his hand in every movement of life, live to his glory, come out of the world, and separate yourself from all evil to be his saint and servant; you keep the commandment of God, for he says, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor. 6:17, 18.) When, then, we come out from the world, join ourselves to the people of God, and to the Lord in a perpetual covenant, we keep the commandment of God.

6. In the same way, also, when we set his word as the rule of our conduct; desire to know his will and do it; seek to please him and not ourselves or one another, but make his will to be our will, and his word our guide and monitor, then we keep the commandments of God. And if surprised, as all are liable to be, overtaken and entangled, and drawn aside from the

path in which only peace is to be found, when we return at the Lord's invitation: "Return, ye children of men; return ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings;" we keep the commandment of God, who would have us come back from where we have wandered, who would have us resort to the fountain to be washed and made clean. Then we keep the commandments of God. So that the more we believe in Jesus to the saving of our souls, the more deeply we feel the evil of sin, the more we hope in his mercy, the more we love his name, the more we cleave to him with purpose of heart; the more we forsake the world and the things of the world, and set the will of God as our guide, all the more we keep the commandments of God.

And these, be it observed, are not harsh, rigid commandments, thundered into our ears and conscience by a condemning law. They are sweet commandments; and carry with them their own blessing. Is it a hard command to believe in the Son of God when he gives us faith? Is it a hard commandment to be sorry for our sins, when we feel at what a price we were bought, even by the sufferings, bloodshedding, and death of God's dear Son? Is it a hard thing to come out of the world, God's enemy, and range ourselves on the side of godliness? Is it a hard thing to deny ourselves and crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts, when we know the bitter consequences of gratifying sin and self? Is it a hard thing to love the dear family of God, when they are made to lie close to our heart? You may as well say it is hard to believe an honest man when he tells the truth; it is hard to be sorry for having done wrong; it is hard to love one's wife and children; it is hard to be a faithful friend; it is hard to walk in the paths of uprightness. Do you find all these things hard? And if you say, "I must lie a little because it is hard to speak the truth; I must sin a little because it is hard to be always walking in morality and rectitude; I must cheat a

little, I must flatter a little, I must walk with the world a little, I must go to amusements a little, because it is hard to be deprived of our youthful pleasures and enjoyments;" will this stand with a tender conscience or on a dying pillow? How then will it stand in the eyes of God? Should a man say to God, "Thou hast asked a hard thing of me when thou biddest me to believe in thy dear Son; thou requirest something too hard when thou tellest me to repent of my sins and be sorry for them? Let me find an easier way; let me live in sin and then go to heaven when I die. Let me lie and cheat and flatter and dissemble, and then upon a death-bed have all the consolations of the most highly favoured saints." Will the Lord do all this just to please you? No. Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God; and no other have a name or place in the book of God, so as to warrant us in believing they are the saints of God.

III.—*And the faith of Jesus.* This is the third point which I said I would consider from our text. Let me repeat my words. Can I say, "Here is a people that keep the faith of Jesus? You must go to Gower Street Chapel to find a people that keep the true faith." Does not the colour rise up in your face when I ask this question? And are you not, individually and personally, when you think what is meant by the words, ready to hang down your head with shame and confusion, from a guilty conscience, or at least, in secret, to ask yourselves, "Lord, is it *I*? Do I keep the commandments of God? Do I keep the faith of Jesus?"

Now, to bring this point to bear more closely still upon your conscience and to search and examine your heart, let me endeavour to show you what it is to keep the faith of Jesus. Let me not trifle with immortal souls; let me not deceive you or myself in these solemn matters, for we stand before him whom we cannot deceive, and I hope would not willingly or

wilfully mock.

"The faith of Jesus" may mean the faith of which he is the *object*, or the faith of which he is the *author*, and to keep it is, first to possess it, and then to hold it fast. We will take both meanings.

i. Jesus is the *object* of faith. His Person is set before our eyes in the word of truth, and especially in the ministration of the gospel, as the object to which our believing eyes are to look. Now, if we have never seen anything of the Person of Jesus, as revealed in the Scripture, or revealed in our heart from the Scripture, or under a preached gospel, we have no object for our faith to look at. We may have heard of him by the hearing of the ear, but we have never seen him by the eyes of our spiritual understanding, or had any such personal discovery of him as makes him spiritually and experimentally known. The veil is still upon our heart, unbelief still reigns supreme in our mind, and we know nothing as we ought to know, and must know, if we are to be saved. Speculative knowledge, or a mere belief in the letter of the word, will avail us nothing here. But if the veil of darkness, ignorance, and unbelief has been taken off our heart, and we have seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; if he has been revealed in us and unto us as the Son of God, then our faith has an object to look at, and we have One in whom we can believe, worship, hope in, and love. It is in this way, as the blessed Spirit is pleased to glorify him in us by showing him unto us, that we obtain a living faith in him. This is the faith of God's elect, the special gift and work of God, and a fruit of the Holy Spirit. (Titus 1:1, Eph. 2:8, Gal. 5:22.) Now, the difficulty is, to keep this faith of Jesus; because, if ever our soul has been blest and favoured with a view of, or a visit from Jesus, we cannot keep the faith which we have received from it by our own unassisted strength. We can no more

keep the faith of Jesus, than we could give ourselves the faith of Jesus. "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber or sleep." "I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." "He keepeth the feet of his saints." It is true that we are bidden to hold fast what we have received, keep the faith and so on; but these biddings imply God's enablings, and to be done in his strength, not our own. He that gave must keep. This, then, is the great difficulty and the chief trial of faith. The Lord, therefore, in his message to one of the churches, commends her for "keeping the word of his patience," and gives her a promise: "I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation;" but he adds, as if to stir up her diligence, "Behold, I come quickly; hold fast that which thou hast that no man take thy crown." (Rev. 3:10, 11.) To another church he says, "But that which ye have already hold fast till I come" (Rev. 2:25); and to another, "Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard; and hold fast and repent." (Rev. 3:3.) We see, therefore, that faith is as hard to keep as it is to get; and that the same power which first gave it, must maintain it. Many a young believer thinks that if he were once blessed with a manifestation of Christ, and had a sure evidence of pardoned sin, he would never doubt again. But you, who know what it is to have been so favoured, find that it is very different; and that to keep the faith of Jesus, to believe the Lord is yours, and you are the Lord's in spite of everything that tells you to the contrary—in the midst of unbelief, infidelity, guilt, doubt and fear, a trembling heart, an accusing conscience, an assaulting devil—is as much out of your power, as it was at first to believe in his name. Yet here is not only the trial, but the work of faith with power. In spite of every difficulty to keep the faith of Jesus; never to let go your hold of what God has put into your hand or dropped into your heart, but to keep it as the apple of your eye, will be, more or less, a matter of daily exercise and conflict; for to

keep the faith of Jesus, is not to lock it up as if in an iron chest, but to keep it warm and active, living and moving, fighting and wrestling, praying and praising, in a believing heart. To keep the faith of Jesus, is to keep it, so to speak, in the same state as it was when God first lodged it there, that is, alive and living, tender, warm, and affectionate, united with hope and love, and above all things, with a good conscience. Now, if it were so easy to keep the faith of Jesus as some tell us it is, who say, "If once blessed always blessed; no more doubt or fear, darkness, guilt, or bondage, after a full and clear deliverance," how could John say, "Here are they that keep the faith of Jesus?" as if he would point our eyes to special characters; as if he would say, "Let me show you a sight: come with me in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I will take you, and show you a peculiar people;" and as you look at them I will say to you, "Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Do you see that poor tried woman? Do you see that poor afflicted man? Could you look into his bosom, you would see great trials there, great difficulties, great perplexities, and a very strong inward conflict between faith and unbelief. But he keeps the faith of Jesus; he will not let him go; he reminds him of his promise; he pleads with him his own word; he says, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." Here is one that keeps the faith of Jesus.

But the faith of Jesus often calls upon us to make great sacrifices; to cut off right hands, or pluck out right eyes. Now, who are they that keep the faith of Jesus? You profess to have the faith of Jesus, you desire to keep the faith of Jesus. Are you prepared to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth? If the Lamb lead through fire, will you walk through fire after him? If through flood, will you walk through the flood after him? If he lead you through a path of trial and

exercise, will you follow the Lamb, as he goes before you, in it? Or will you say, "Thus far, Lord, and no further; I have followed thee up to this point; I can go no further with thee? I will follow thee if it do not cost me anything; if I have no trials, temptations, or difficulties to endure; if I have no cross to take up, no lust to mortify, no self to deny, I will follow thee. If it do not cost me money, nor cost me character, nor cost me idols, I will follow thee. But the moment it costs me anything, money, or suffering, or the frowns of my relations, family or friends, or to part with cherished idols, I can go no further; I stop then." If such be the secret language of your heart, for you dare not make it the language of your lips, you manifest yourself to be a hypocrite; you prove you are not one of those that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. You are half-hearted: your profession is hollow; your religion is not real; you have only the faith of man's giving; you have not the faith of Jesus. If you have the faith of Jesus, you will never leave him, as he will never leave you; you will never forsake him who will never forsake you. You will cleave, you will cling, you will hang, you will never let him go; even if he thrust you away, you will fall down at his feet and cleave closer to him. Here are they that keep the faith of Jesus!

2. And as the faith of Jesus signifies the faith of which he is the *object*, so it signifies the faith of which he is the *author*. I might set you a hard task, if I told you to keep this faith in your own strength and power. I set no such task before you. I preach his word and tell you what the people of God are; but I don't tell you the faith for which I am contending is the gift, or work, or maintaining of man. I read in the word, "Christ is the author and finisher of our faith." Now, here is the mercy, that if he has wrought the grace of faith in your soul, he will keep that faith alive in your bosom. This is our comfort; this our encouragement, and this our hope. And will

not this make you say? "Lord, I cannot keep faith alive in my own breast; I could not give it myself, and I cannot keep it myself; but if thou hast given me a little faith in thy blessed Majesty, keep that faith alive in my soul. Water it continually with the dew of thy grace; revive and draw it forth with the visitations of thy word and thy presence; smile upon it and make it fruitful in every good word and work.

May I lay my hand upon you and say,—"Here is the patience of the saints; here is he or she that keeps the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus?" "O," you say, "Don't put your hand upon me: put your hand upon somebody else. O I wish I were such as you might safely lay your hand upon." "But," says another, "Bring forth your hand and lay it upon me: I have no fear." Then I should fear for you. I am most afraid of those who are never afraid of themselves. But you that have fears, O that a word from my lips would disperse them, and you might find and feel you have a faith of the Lord's own giving—the end of which will be the salvation of your soul.