

## **IDOLATRY**

Preached at Bedworth on a Tuesday Evening in April 1852

"For they themselves show 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 wit 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 be much blessed with faith: for the apostle says, "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, came 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 stedfastness 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 of Thessalonica. The apostle writes to them as being much favoured with the sweet

enjoyment 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 our sake."

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 lifetime subject to bondage. With some it is spring time, with others summer, autumn, or winter. The Lord deals 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 show 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." One mark of a person being a partaker of grace is being 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."

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 we shall see 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 has touched our hearts with the same gracious finger, we shall find, if he be pleased to shine in our souls, these two marks. Bear in mind, these Thessalonians 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 or turn to in the heathen nations, we shall see something more or less of idolatry, worshipping gods of wood or stone. There must, therefore, be some principle in the human heart which brings it to worship wooden and stone gods: yet, as all men's hearts are the same there must be that in our nature which is idolatry. There are the nature and spirit of it, though not, as in the case of these heathens, outwardly seen.

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. 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. 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 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 the Spirit 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, they then think that in other things they may be as covetous as they please; so that their religion is just as the heathen's; they worshipped golden gods, these worship their gold. They imagine by giving a little away that it is sanctified, therefore they may worship it. A man worships his own righteousness under the mask of religion: worships his self righteousness, falsely called holiness. He prides himself upon his gloomy and solemn countenance: so he indulges his pride, and makes his religion a mask to cover his sin.

This is what the people of God do, more or less, until they are delivered from it by the Spirit of God. Some are constant in attendance on the means, and go to the "sacrament," as a means to wash away their sins. Just as a man once said, he could not commit sin so greedily till he had said his prayers. Some, to pacify their consciences, 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. We have no occasion to go to the heathen in order to find out what is idolatry. It is not merely worshipping a wooden or stone god, but it is the lust and depravity of 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 the heart of man; 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, the Moon, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, Mercury. Thus **Dies Soils**, or the Sun's day (**Sunday**); **Dies Mond(?)** Moon's day (**Monday**); Mars's day, **Tiwe's daeg** (**Tuesday**); Mercury's day, **Wodnes daeg** (**Wednesday**); Jupiter's day, **Thunres daeg** or Thor's day (**Thursday**); Venus's day, **Friga's daeg** (**Friday**); Saturn's day, **Dies Saturni** (**Saturday**) . (The above does not appear to be perfectly reported.)

I merely name this to show what idolatry there is in the human heart. Now, here is a mark of grace, a mark of the Spirit—that you have been 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.

When the Lord is pleased to work in the soul, one thing he shows to us—that we have been wrapped up in a false religion, in self-righteousness; that we have been deceiving ourselves and have tried 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 are 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, having no reality. Having been 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 hearts, so that we know him to be the only true God, by his shining into our souls and manifesting himself to us.

Look at 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 are now. They cut themselves with lancets: but we should not find many either so earnest or zealous as to dig into their flesh with knives until the blood streamed out. Though they cut and wounded themselves, yet Baal never heard. So with us; if our god is a dead god, there will be no answer; God has never spoken to that 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 of God in spirit and 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 is turned from idols to serve the living and true God; the living God who fills all time and all space, a God who knows all motives, a God who sees into the depth of our being. I do believe that no man living knows the everlasting God, until he is pleased, in some measure, to manifest himself and to shine in his soul. Then, then he knows the living God; as the psalmist says: "Thou compassed my path and my lying down

and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether" (Ps 139:3, 4).

This is 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 evil workings 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 with your soul, you will see there was living worship, that you could not rest satisfied with a dead religion. 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 that liveth and abideth for ever.

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; he is then 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 to us 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 worshipping a living God is alive, whereby he knows God; 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, going out of the 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; a mystery not only to others but also to himself. As every branch and member of the old man still continue within him, so among the members and branches of the old man is that one, idolatry. Remember this, 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 that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth; yet idolatry is still in the heart. Lusts, pride, self-righteousness, unbelief, and every member of the old man. Among these members is that of idolatry.

Now, what is an **idol**? Something my carnal mind loves. How may I know whether my carnal mind loves it? When it thinks of it, is very much pleased with it, we pet it, 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 hearts, by what our imagination, desires and secret thoughts are going out after. I do believe nothing is too small or too insignificant which, at times, may not be an idol; even a tulip or a gooseberry! What a wonderful large gooseberry! What a beautiful tulip! Some will walk up and down their garden on the Lord's day admiring their gooseberry trees, and praising the fruit, how fine and large it is; others their tulips or anemonies. They look at them and admire them, fearful the frost may have done them some injury. This is idolatry, because it is something, which, for the time, the mind is looking at before God.

Another makes an idol of his 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 fearful of his barley: how much rain it wants. He looks at his beasts, his stock: how they are getting on. He goes into his fold-yard, looks at the sheep and dotes on them: therefore is an idolater, in so far preferring these things to God. Instead of being spiritually-minded, having his

heart and affections in heaven, he has something in his mind which it is going out after; something or other laying hold of the affections, that were we to drive 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—O so black, so filthy, that we should be more begrimed than the dirtiest collier?

The child of God has, more or less, all these propensities working within. There was a time I should not have believed it, if this had been told me. But I now know it, and it is from knowing what I have in my own heart that I can read others. I know your hearts by mine. From painful experience I know there is idolatry in every man's heart. But what a mercy it is to be turned to God from all these, from all these idols, to serve the living and true God. When is this? No man can turn till the Lord makes him. Then his prayer is, "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned." This was the prayer of the 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 so debasing, so unsatisfying, which makes a man thoroughly miserable, when he has been indulging in it, worshipping his idols, and his heart departing from the living God.

When the Lord, in mercy, by his gracious Spirit and presence, turns to us, then we are turned 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" (Rom. 1:9).

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 abomination. 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; serving him 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, 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!

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." Thus the saints in the Word of God 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 body and soul will be reunited. Their happiness will then be complete, and never will they be perfectly happy until they get to glory.

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 show, being turned 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, "the 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 the Son of God. 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, how can we be said to wait for him from heaven? 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 heart 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 filled with desires, longings, and breathings after a revelation, clearer views of a Saviour; deeper, clearer, and more powerful manifestations of the Son of God in heaven.

Let me illustrate this. A woman is married, has an affectionate husband; he leaves his home for a time upon business, saying he shall return home on 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 that 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. 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: "My sheep hear my voice, and they know it." Every shining in of his presence, every drawing near of his most gracious Person. every manifestation of his love, makes the soul long for his appearance: and when he hides his face the language of the heart is, "Why does he delay coming? Why delay the wheels of his chariot? O that the Lord would visit my soul, bless me with his presence, shine into my heart, and 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 vilely and basely; 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. This is turning from idols to serve the living God, to feel a living God taking possession of you, by the shinings in of his Spirit and grace in your souls, 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; so that you daily repent, grieve, and groan, because of these idols, because of this teraphim (Hos. 3:4) in the camel's furniture. (Gen. 31:34.) So waiting with the heart 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." Waiting 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," that you may be able to cast all your care upon him. This is a proof of the reality of the work upon your soul. If you are brought to a 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 the power and guilt of 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 sad idolatry in his heart drawing him aside. What a deal he suffers from this: how it plagues and tries him! Like the man in the fable that found the dead viper, at least dead to all appearance through the cold. What a pretty looking thing! He puts it into his bosom and warms it, when it revives and bites him. So it is with a man who plays with his lusts, indulging them; his carnal heart goes out after them, until at last, like the torpid viper, it turns to a living adder and stings him. What a deal of work for conscience this brings a man into, a man whose 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 may be a snare to him. So in many other things, as children, wife, family, and conversation. How soon may they degenerate 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 deep 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 that it should be our earnest prayer for God to deliver us.

If a man knows anything of the idolatry of his fallen nature he knows also the desire to serve the living and true God. He will also 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, or Christ with Belial?" There can be no communion between a dead soul and a living God. How these things make a man wince, to give up his idol, to be obliged 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 runs, and draws the threads around his victim, kills him, sucks his carcase, and leaves it.

Thus the devil may be compared to the spider working in his web, waiting, lurking, in reality to suck the very bones and blood of a child of God and cast him into 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, rending our hearts and not our garments; turn to the Lord with weeping and supplications. 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 the Lord delivers him, he then turns to God and says, "What a vile wretch I have been! What a monster to go after these idols, loving this thing, and that. A wretch, a monster of iniquity, the vilest wretch that ever crawled on the face of God's earth, for my wicked heart to go out after these idols!"

When the soul is brought down to a sense of its vileness and baseness and God's longsuffering 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. The Lord raises the poor soul up, raises him 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 the poor, his poor people, up from the grave of their misery and wretchedness, raising them from the dead.

"Delivered them from the wrath to come." Wrath 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. He 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.

What a mercy to be able to find these two marks standing up in your soul, though they are sometimes buried, like some old Roman relics. Suppose some antiquarians had information that at Bedworth there was a Roman milestone, they would soon come to the town, and when they had discovered the stone, though only just discernible, what a digging down to get at the inscription. So often the marks of grace, like the old Roman milestone, are buried in the earth. 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, may the Lord, under the operation of his Spirit, enable you to dig down, so that every obstacle may be removed out of the

way. I hope the Lord has enabled me this evening to clear away a little of the rubbish round this stone; so that you may be enabled 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 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 everything that is base and horrible, what a mercy it is to have some little evidence of a work of grace in the soul! Here is the milestone found, first being turned to God from idols; the man can read the inscription—besides, he can read another: that is, "to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who 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 Scripture marks in the soul, they will bless and praise God for his mercy and thank him for his unmerited favour.