

Redemption by Price, and Redemption by Power

Preached at Gower Street Chapel, London, on Lord's Day Morning, July 28, 1867

"For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he." Jeremiah 31:11

In reading the writings of the Old Testament prophets, two remarkable features seem to present themselves to an enlightened and reflective mind. The first of these is, their stern denunciation of the sins and crimes of Israel, accompanied by the severest threatenings of punishment on account of the repeated and aggravated transgressions of the people which God had separated unto himself. These stern denunciations spare neither rank, nor age, nor sex. The king on the throne, the priest at the altar, the prophet in attendance upon the royal court, the learned man with his pretensions to superior knowledge, and the poor man with his unlettered ignorance, the matron who made cakes to the queen of heaven, and the daughter of Zion that went tinkling and mincing with her feet, decked with her mantles, wimples, and crissing pins, and her changeable suits of apparel,—all come equally under the prophetic lash. Iniquity indeed seems in those days to have arisen to an enormous height, and a flood of sin to have overflowed the land. What a burst of indignation gushes from the lips of Isaiah: "Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores." (Isa. 1:4-6.) What extraordinary language

is that which comes from the mouth of Jeremiah: "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it." (Jer. 5:1.) Well might Isaiah compare Jerusalem to the ancient cities of the plain; for Abraham did not venture to plead for the preservation of Sodom unless ten righteous men were to be found in it. But in Jerusalem not one was to be found; no, not one Lot who vexed his righteous soul from day to day in seeing and hearing its abominations; nor was there one who "executed judgment and sought truth." Thus God himself came down to lower terms in saving Jerusalem than he would have taken, so to speak, in the case of Sodom, for had he found one righteous man in Jerusalem he promised to pardon it. And what a pregnant and pithy sentence is that uttered by the prophet at the end of the same chapter, which I have thought sometimes is one of the strongest marks of the last point of degradation, hypocrisy, and self-deception to which a people can sink: "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land: the prophets prophecy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so." (Jer. 5:30, 31.) The prophets who should have been mouth for God prophesied lies in his name; the priests availed themselves of the lying prophecies of the false prophets to rule the people; and the people, instead of seeing through the lying prophecies of the false prophets and shaking off the priestly yoke thus bound round their necks, loved to have it so. Gladly did they listen to those prophecies of peace and prosperity when war was thundering at their gates, and sword and famine were about to desolate the land; and willingly did they submit to every rite and ceremony imposed upon them by the priests, heaping offering upon offering and sacrifice upon sacrifice, on the single condition that they should not part with their sins or

mend their lives. Now what hope was there for a people who loved to be deceived to their own ruin? What hope was there of any reformation when the prophets were continually sounding in their ears, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we? God will never cast off his people; let us not therefore fear his displeasure; for he doth not behold iniquity in Jacob, neither doth he see perverseness in Israel." Thus were they rotten at the head and rotten at the foot, rotten in the prophet, rotten in the priest, and rotten in the people.

But were God's denunciations of their sins or his threatenings of punishment idle and vain? Had he spoken and should it not come to pass? Yes. They were all fulfilled, nor did God let one word spoken by the mouth of his true prophets fall to the ground. Jerusalem was destroyed and burnt by the Chaldeans and the people carried into captivity to Babylon. This was their first fulfilment; but they were more fully and terribly accomplished when their crimes having culminated in the rejection of the Messiah and the crucifixion of the Son of God, they were cast off as a people, and have become wanderers among the nations. Let none therefore presume to despise or think lightly of the denunciations of God against sin and sinners in the word of truth; for every one of them will be accomplished to the uttermost against all who live and die in their sins, or turn the grace of God into licentiousness. Doctrine is good, and sound doctrine the very foundation of faith, hope, and love; but the doctrine which does not lead to holiness of heart and life is a snare, a mockery, and a delusion. But what is the other feature not less strongly marked in the prophecies of the Old Testament? It is the restoration of this people, in God's own time and way, to a place in his favour which will not again be forfeited. Read the last chapters of Isaiah: read the chapter from which our text is taken, and see in them and in almost every page promises to the literal Israel of restoration, in what the Scripture calls

"the last days," to their own land, and to far higher and greater privileges and blessings than they ever enjoyed or could enjoy under the legal dispensation. I quite admit and indeed fully believe the spiritual fulfilment of all these promises in us believing Gentiles. But to my mind it is scarcely possible to read these ancient prophecies with an enlightened and impartial eye without being compelled to believe that they will be literally fulfilled in the literal Israel as well as spiritually fulfilled in the spiritual Israel. Have we not seen the literal fulfilment of the threatenings? Why then should we disbelieve the literal fulfilment of the promises? Why are the Jews preserved as a people to this day? Is there an instance of any other nation being preserved, as they have been, as a people separate from all others and retaining their ancient creed, their sacred writings, and as far as they can practise them, their appointed rites and ceremonies generation after generation? This, however, is too wide a subject for me now to enter into.

Assuming, then, that the promises made to the literal Israel will have one day a complete, and, I must add, spiritual fulfilment, for they will be fulfilled spiritually in the Jew as they have been and are in the Gentile,—now comes a very important question. If the words of our text were spoken to the literal Jacob, and, as is clear from the context, will be fulfilled both literally and spiritually in God's ancient people in the appointed time, what right have I to take those words and preach from them this morning as if they belonged to us? What right have you to sit and hear words addressed to the literal Israel, to take an interest in those words, and believe that you can claim them as a portion belonging to you? This is a great mystery, and unless the Lord had himself thoroughly cleared it up, we could not of ourselves have unravelled it. I have called it a great mystery, for such is the language of the apostle concerning it: "How that by

revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel." (Eph. 3:3-6.) It is, then, because we poor Gentiles, who were strangers from the covenants of promise, having as such no hope, and being without God in the world, have been made nigh by the blood of Christ, who has broken down the middle wall of partition between us and reconciled both unto God in one body by the cross, that we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Thus in Christ the distinction between Jew and Gentile is done away, and in him there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female.

But besides this, the Gentile church is grafted into the olive tree, to partake of its root and fatness; because the natural branches—that is, the Jews—have been broken off on account of unbelief. (Rom. 11:20.) I wish I could enter more fully upon this point, as it involves so much precious truth and casts such a clear and blessed light upon both the Old and New Testament. But you will find it fully and beautifully opened in the Epistles to the Romans, the Galatians, and the Ephesians; and if you are able to read them with an enlightened and a believing eye, you will find in them a mine of deep and blessed truth able to enrich your soul with the treasures of wisdom and grace.

I shall therefore this morning lay aside all further mention of the literal Israel, and apply the words of my text to the Israel of God—the spiritual Israel of whom the literal Israel was a figure and type.

In opening up the words which lie before us, I shall endeavour to show what *redemption* is, and especially, as our text has laid it down in a very sweet and blessed manner, the *power* which attends it, as displayed in rescuing and ransoming us from the hands of those who are stronger than we.

I.—To understand what *redemption* is, it will be desirable to take a glance at man before he needed redemption. God made man in his own image, after his own likeness; and he set him at the head of his visible creation. We therefore read, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and, have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." (Gen. 1:27, 28.) If you will refer to Psalm 8 you will find there a striking and beautiful reference to this dominion given to man at his first creation. The Psalmist, walking abroad, it would seem, one starry night in that clear and beautiful climate, where the stars shine almost like little suns, is struck with admiration when he contrasted the magnificence of God's work, thus spread before his eyes in the starry heavens, with the apparent insignificance of man as set at the head of this lower visible creation: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained: what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." (Psa. 8:3-6.) Thus the whole of this lower creation was placed under man's dominion. Then man was stronger than all surrounding objects. He stood at

the head of God's visible creation, in all the strength of primeval innocence. He could look round and say, in all that dignity of power with which God had invested him, "There is none upon earth stronger than I, for earth and its inhabitants are all put under my feet." No doubt the Psalm has a spiritual and further meaning as opened by the Apostle, Heb. 2, in which he shows that the words were spoken prophetically of the second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ; but taking them as they stand, they are a beautiful comment upon the text which I have quoted from the book of Genesis, and bring before our eyes very vividly the original place which man occupied when he came forth in all the purity of his native innocence, and stood forth at the head of God's visible creation.

But this happy state did not last long. "Sin entered into the world and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men, in that all have sinned." And O what a change did this introduce into this world! What havoc and ruin did it work! What a hurling down of man from his place of supremacy! For now man, instead of being stronger than all, became weaker than all. Sin, horrid sin had spoiled him of all his primeval innocence, marred and defaced the image of God in which he was created, and stripped him of all the strength which he had as standing in the image of his Maker, having dominion over the things of earth. We know some of us by painful experience how sin weakens a man. We know from the way in which we have had to confess our sins before God when they have been laid with weight and power upon our conscience, and from the daily experience of what we are as sinners, how sin strips us of all our strength and brings us down before the Almighty in perfect weakness. We feel, and have to confess it with many bitter lamentations, that sin has mastered us, been too strong for us, overpowered all our resistance, and either by force or subtlety drained out of us

all ability to do anything but mourn, sigh, and confess what we are and have been before the eyes of infinite purity and holiness.

Now this may serve as a key to the expression of our text, "*stronger than he;*" the force of the words being in this, that Jacob, of whom the words are spoken, being weaker than all his foes and opponents, the Redeemer came to ransom him from the hand of all who are stronger than he; and by redeeming and ransoming him from the hand of those stronger than he, gave him that victory over his foes which he never could have accomplished of himself.

In fact, without a knowledge of man's state by nature and practice, and, I may justly add, without a living experience of the state of ruin, misery, and wretchedness, to which sin has personally reduced us, we can never understand what redemption is, either in doctrine or in experience. Let me now therefore attempt to unfold it, that you may obtain some testimony how far you know what it is as made manifest in your own breast.

Redemption, as it stands clearly revealed in God's word, is of two kinds: redemption by *price* and redemption by *power*. And they come in the order in which I have named them, for redemption by price precedes and makes a way for redemption by power. Let me explain this; and I shall do it more clearly and experimentally by showing the various enemies which are stronger than we, and how redemption from them by price makes a way for redemption from them by power.

1. Let us first look at the *law*. May we not well say of the law that it is stronger than we? How strong the law of God is. It demands perfect obedience; it comes to us armed with all

the authority of omnipotence, sanctioned with all the claims of absolute holiness, and invested with all the demands of infinite justice. And what does it require at our hands? Nothing less than perfect love to God and perfect love to man. It takes no note of, it makes no allowance for man's state as a helpless sinner. It does not lower in the slightest degree its demands because man has lost the power to fulfil them, but with an awful curse it sentences to eternal ruin and misery all who do not perfectly fulfil it. This may seem very hard; but can God lower his law to suit the ability of man? If he is to lower it, what is the first step, and, I may well add, what is the last? If he once begin to lower it, how low must he go? Must it be so low as to come down to all the sins of the vilest sinners? Is there to be law at all? And is it not the very essence of law that it must stand, must prevail, must not be lowered? It is true that mercy may come in to pardon those whom the law has condemned. That is a different matter; but law itself must stand in all its integrity that it may be law. Is there, then, any man stronger than the law? Has any one who has ever felt the power of the law, felt himself stronger than it? Have not the requisitions of the law been stronger than all his ability to fulfil them? Has any one loved God with all his heart and soul and mind and strength, and his neighbour as himself? Has any one kept the law as the law requires to be kept? It baffles every attempt to keep it. Its tremendous curse enters into the conscience, as an arrow from the Almighty. No man ever has fulfilled the law; no man ever can fulfil it. It is meant to be stronger than we. It is intended to break down all creature righteousness; it is intended to bring us all in guilty before God. This is the express language of the Apostle: "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the

law is the knowledge of sin." (Rom. 3:19, 20.)

Now how are we to get out of the hands of this terrible law—this fiery law that comes with demands which we cannot perform, and yet attaches to their non-performance a curse, to be tied like a millstone round our neck before we are hurled by it into the depths of an unfathomable sea? Here then comes in the gracious Redeemer. Here is the blessed Goel—the near of kin who has a right to redeem. And why? Because he is near to us, "our next kinsman," as Boaz was to Ruth, in having taken the flesh and blood of the children. This gave him right to redeem. And as he has all the right, so he has all the power. If Boaz had been a poor man, he could not have redeemed the parcel of land which was Elimelech's; but he was "a mighty man of wealth;" and his heart was as large as his hand, for having fallen in love with Ruth, and being able to obtain her only by the right of redemption, he would not be in rest until he had finished the thing which was in his heart. Being then such a great and glorious Redeemer, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." But how redeemed us? By *price*; by paying the penalty; by discharging to the uttermost what the law demanded; by loving God with all his heart and soul and mind and strength, and by loving his neighbour as himself, aye, and better than himself, for he died for him. John therefore beautifully says, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us." (1 John 3:16.) "Greater love," said our blessed Lord, "hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13.) It was this love which enabled him to endure all the sufferings of the cross; for love in him was as strong as death; and his holy love for his people and his holy zeal for his Father's glory were as coals of fire which hath a most vehement flame, when he offered himself as a burnt offering and put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Here, then, was redemption by price, that price being no less than the

precious blood of Immanuel, God with us. I shall by and by show how he redeems with power those whom he has thus redeemed by price.

2. But I pass on to show another enemy that is stronger than we: *sin*. How have you and sin managed the matter when you came hand to hand in a life and death conflict? Have you mastered sin, or has sin mastered you? Admitting that you have not been publicly defeated and disgraced, been openly driven out of the field with shame and ignominy, and that sin has not waved its flag triumphantly over you before the face of the church and the world, though perhaps, you may seem in your feelings to have come half dead out of the terrible battle, yet may I not justly ask: Have you always resisted even unto blood, striving against sin? Have you always crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts? Has sin never entangled you in any secret snare? Has it never overcome you by force or fraud, never seduced, never allured, never got the better of you, never beaten down your defences? Who is there in this congregation, old or young, professing or not professing, but yet having a conscience to speak in his bosom, that can lift up his head before God, and say that sin has never mastered him, sin never entangled him, sin never carried him away, sin never broken through all his defences? Has your temper never mastered you, nor your pride, nor your covetousness, nor the lusts of your flesh, nor some besetting sin which again and again has foiled all your attempts to overcome it? Then sin, according to the verdict of your own conscience, if you will be but honest with yourself, has been stronger than you; and though you may hope or expect it may be better with you in time to come, or as years roll on, yet you will ever find, unless the grace and power of God come to your aid, that in the very next conflict you will be as much defeated as you were in the last. This is a very humbling feature of our experience, and one which we

are scarcely ever willing to acknowledge before man, however we are compelled to acknowledge it before God. Nay, I fully believe that there is not a saint of God now in his presence who if he would speak honestly would not acknowledge he has found sin stronger than his prayers, stronger than his cries, stronger than his resolutions, stronger than his vows, and stronger than all his attempts to overcome it. Do you not sometimes think yourself singular here? That there is something in you different from other men, and especially from all the people of God? Do you not often look at the favoured saints of God with a mixture of reverent admiration and poignant self-condemnation? How holy, consistent, godly, upright and tender do they seem compared with what you see and feel yourself to be. Measuring them by their outward walk and conduct, and comparing what you are inwardly with what they are outwardly, you can scarcely venture to consider yourself one of the chosen family of God; for sin seems to work in you in a way in which you cannot believe that it works in them. Well now listen to the experience and confessions of one of the greatest saints, if not absolutely the greatest, whose experience is recorded in the word of truth. What does he say about sin as felt in his own bosom? He says, "Sin taking occasion by the commandment wrought in me all manner of concupiscence." Sin then worked in him at a dreadful rate if it stirred up in him every vile and base lust. But now hear him again: "Sin taking occasion by the commandment deceived me, and by it slew me." Did not this man know something of the deceitful snares of sin? Did not he know something of its killing, slaughtering strength? Hear him again that we may see the man as he has painted himself, and learn what he is by his own description and by his own confession: "I am carnal, sold under sin. What I would that do I not, but what I hate that do I. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing; for the good that

I would I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do." Now are not these the simple, honest confessions of a man eminent for holiness? And why are they recorded in the word of truth but to comfort and encourage the saints of God who are engaged in the same conflict, that as they are able with him to cry out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" so they may be able to break forth with him, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." It is indeed this experience of the strength of sin which makes us value Jesus Christ and redemption by his most precious blood: for I shall hope presently to show how that the Lord Jesus has redeemed us from sin both by price and by power.

3. And is not *death* stronger than we? How death time after time takes away the objects of our dearest affections. How many widows do I see in this congregation. Was not death stronger than all your fears and all your hopes, stronger than all your nursing cares shown to the dear departed one, all your tender anxieties to prolong his life or ease his pain, and all your griefs already felt in the forebodings of your troubled heart? What power had you to repel the messenger of death when he came in God's appointed time and way? No prayers, no entreaties, no tears, no heart-rending sobs or sighs procured even a temporary respite. Death was stronger than either he or you, and when he came would not be denied. Nay if your loved one were a partaker of divine grace and the Lord were with him in that trying hour, he was willing to depart and be with Christ, which was far better than being even with you.

But there is something in death more than the separation of soul and body. When, then, the gracious Lord came to redeem us from death, it was to redeem us from what follows after death, viz., the second death. From this he

redeemed us by price, and from the first death he redeemed us both by price and by power, as he himself speaks in the language of prophecy: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." (Hosea 13:14.) To those therefore who die in the Lord, death is not death. He himself by lying in the grave has perfumed it, and by putting away the curse of sin, has turned death into a sleep. May I not say therefore to you, ye mourning widows, who sorrow not as others which have no hope, that those loved ones whose remains you have borne to the cemetery are but sleeping there till the resurrection morn? For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. When, then, ye gracious widows get together to commune of your sad bereavements, do not give way to, nor encourage each other in that sorrow of the world which worketh death, but rather comfort one another with the words of heavenly truth.

But do not most of you, as regards your own experience, find death, in the fears that you have about dying, stronger than you? Are you not sometimes afraid how it will be with you at death? You know that it will be stronger than your body; but will it be stronger than your soul? stronger than your faith, stronger than your hope, stronger than your expectation, stronger than any experience which you have had of it in prospect, so as to become when it does come a terrible reality? You need then a Redeemer who shall be stronger than death.

4. And is not *Satan* stronger than you? Have you always resisted his wiles? Have his cunning stratagems never been too much for all your wisdom, your caution, and your strength? And were they not devised as secretly as they were

successfully, so that you were entangled and overcome before you were well aware either of the tempter or the temptation? We can look back sometimes with shame and sorrow and see how secretly Satan spread his snares and entangled us in this and in that direction when we were quite off our guard. We did not know at the time that it was Satan laying a trap for our feet, for it came from a quarter which we did not anticipate, and was laid so secretly and hidden so craftily that we were surprised into it before we were aware, nor perhaps knew that it was a snare till afterwards. But we now can trace it step by step, can see its beginning and end, how subtly it worked, how gradually it gained strength, until the chains were fastened on our hands, and the fetters on our feet. Did not Satan then in this case prove himself stronger than we? Is he not the prince of the power of the air? Is he not as an eagle or a vulture, ever looking out for prey, and watching his opportunity to steal it by fraud or seize it by violence? Was there then no necessity to be redeemed from the power of Satan, as well as from the power of death and the grave? We shall see by and by how this redemption was accomplished.

5. And is not *hell* stronger than we? Who can deliver his own soul from hell? Who can find a ransom of such sufficient value that he can say unto God, "Is not this enough to deliver me from going down into the pit?" And have not fears of hell often terrified and alarmed your soul, especially in the first dealings of God with your conscience? When these fears of hell pursued you perhaps night and day, were they not stronger than you, so that you could not bid them depart nor get deliverance from them?

6. Is not the *world* often stronger than we? Sometimes how its cares and carking anxieties, connected as they are with each man's necessary business and daily employment, prove

stronger than all our faith in the providence of God which has so often appeared on our behalf. At other times, how the alluring ways and insinuating charms, the customs, maxims, opinions, and, what the Apostle calls "the course of this world," prove themselves stronger than we in entangling our thoughts, desires, and affections, and gaining for the time a mastery over our mind.

7. Our *fears, doubts* and *apprehensions*, connected with our state and standing before God for eternity, do we not often find them stronger than we? Can we subdue them, overcome them, put them to flight, and get the better of them? When the Lord denies the light of his countenance, when we are pressed down with a sense of guilt on account of our grievous and manifold sins and blackslidings, can we deliver ourselves from the weight and pressure of dismal forebodings and many painful exercises? Who has not found, that knows anything of divine realities, that his unbelief is often stronger than his faith, his doubt than his hope, and the evidences against him than those which are for him?

8. But that I may not detain you longer on this part of our subject, have we not all our peculiar *foes external, internal* and *infernal*; and have we not found that all of them have been at various times stronger than we?

II.—But now let us advance a step further into our text. What is its main force, blessedness, and beauty? Is it not in this, that the Lord hath redeemed Jacob and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he? There is no blessedness in being bound and fettered, no comfort or happiness in being grasped by the hand of an enemy who has no pity or compassion, and rather glories in his strength over us. The blessedness is in redeeming love, atoning blood, and delivering power. I have already pointed out that the

blessed Lord came to redeem us from the hand of our enemies, first by price and then by power. Here we see the love of God in the gift of his dear Son. There being no other way of deliverance, God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all. Had there been any other way, we may well believe that God would have taken it. But there was no other way consistently with the perfections of God.

i. I shall now therefore take one by one the various foes which I have brought before you as stronger than we, and show how the Lord has redeemed us from them all—first by price, and then by power; thus fulfilling the words of our text, "the Lord hath redeemed Jacob and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he."

I showed you from the word of truth and from the experience of the saints, that the law was stronger than we; for the law demanded what we could not pay, and then bound round our neck a terrible curse for nonpayment. Here then see the grace and the glory of the Redeemer, of whom it was prophesied, "The Redeemer shall come to Zion." (Isa. 59:20.) He came therefore to redeem us from the law and the curse attached to it, as the Holy Ghost testifies: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." (Gal. 3:13.) And what price did he pay? Those shall tell us who are ever singing his praises before the throne: "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation." This is "the new song which no man could learn but those which were redeemed from the earth." (Rev. 5:9, 14:3.) Having, then, first redeemed us from the curse of the law by price, he can then come and redeem us by power. But what is this power? What but the manifestation of his mercy, the application of his blood, the revelation of himself, and the

sealing home of his redeeming work upon the heart and conscience, by the breaking in of the light of his countenance and the shedding abroad of his love? This is redeeming by power; and we may be well assured that those whom the Lord has redeemed by price, he will sooner or later redeem by power. Let me illustrate this by a figure. Suppose there were a number of prisoners, insolvent debtors in the Whitecross-street prison; and suppose that the Queen's ministers took compassion upon them, and said to one another, "We understand that there are a number of poor insolvent debtors in the London and Middlesex prison. Would it not be well to pay their debts and set them free?" A bill to that effect is proposed. Parliament consents. The money is paid and the creditors are fully satisfied. But suppose that the city sheriffs, who have the government of the prison, should start up and say, "All this has been done without consulting us. The prisoners have been committed to our custody. We shall not let them go; we shall keep them there. It is nothing to us what the Government does. It is our prison." Now would not Government be warranted, if there were no better means, in sending a troop of soldiers, breaking open the prison doors, and taking out the insolvent debtors? Their debts are paid, their creditors satisfied. Have they not a right to their liberty? Apply this figure spiritually. The law has been satisfied by the perfect obedience and suffering death of the Son of God. If then the law refuses to give up the prisoner when the claim has been satisfied, surely he who has paid the debt may lawfully come, break open the prison cell, and take out the prisoner. Having redeemed him by price, he may now redeem him by power. But take the converse. Suppose that the Lord of life and glory had come to redeem by power when he had not first redeemed by price. There would have been no way then for the law to be satisfied, its claims honoured, the justice of God glorified, and all his attributes harmonised. Besides this

trampling down of the majesty, justice, and holiness of God, there would have been no coming down of the Holy Ghost to sanctify; for you will observe that the gift of the Spirit was dependent upon redemption by blood—as the Apostle speaks: "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ: that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." (Gal. 3:14.) What then would have been the consequence, assuming for a moment such a thing had been possible, that the Lord had redeemed a people by power but had not redeemed them by price? There would have been a company of rebels, unwashed from their sins, unsanctified in their souls, still alienated from the life of God, steeped in wickedness up to the very lips, without will or power to please God or serve him. And should these be taken to heaven in all their filthy rags and their still filthier souls, to stain the courts of Paradise, and make the very angels blush for shame? It was needful therefore first to redeem by blood, that sin might be put away from the sight of God, the law fulfilled, justice honoured, God glorified, and a fountain opened for all sin and uncleanness, that the redeemed might stand before God without spot or wrinkle, and that those whom the Son hath redeemed the Holy Ghost might sanctify. But blood having been shed, a price having been paid, then power might come upon the back of price and enforce what justice demanded when its claims were satisfied.

ii. But this redemption by price leads me to drop a few remarks upon the meaning and nature of redemption. Redemption under the law was chiefly in three things:—

1. There was the redemption of a prisoner from *captivity*. In those days, when captives were taken in war, they were not set free except under the payment of a heavy ransom. This custom is not practised now; but there is one in Italy almost

similar to it, when brigands carry off travellers to the mountains and will not liberate them unless a ransom, depending upon the assumed rank and property of their captives, is paid by their friends or relatives. Readers of English history will also remember how that our Richard I. was kept in prison by the German Emperor until a large ransom was paid him by this country. There is an allusion to a prisoner being thus ransomed by the prophet Isaiah: "The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed;" that is, by payment of a ransom. This is one instance of redemption by price.

2. Another is that of the redemption of a *slave* liberated by his value being paid. A freeborn Jew could not be made a slave to any of his brethren, for that was expressly forbidden; but he might sell himself to a sojourner or a stranger. But there was this merciful provision, that if he had so sold himself, he might be redeemed by any one that was nigh of kin to him paying the price, calculated according to the year of Jubilee.

3. But there is also a third case, viz., the redemption of *mortgaged property*; for an Israelite was allowed to mortgage, but not to sell his land out and out. This last instance we see very clearly in the case of Boaz and Ruth, where Boaz had to redeem a mortgaged property, and according to the provision that the land should not go out of the family, had also to marry the widow. In all these cases there was a redemption by price, and the money must be actually laid down and paid before the redemption was effected. The poor captive prisoner could not return home before the ransom was sent; the slave could not be liberated before his value was paid; the land would not revert to the possessor until the mortgage was fully cleared off. In all these cases there was a necessity to pay the price to make

the redemption complete. But suppose that the warrior retained the captive after the ransom was paid; suppose the foreign master kept the Jewish slave after being paid the full demand; suppose the mortgagee would not give up the land when the mortgage was taken up. Then there was a way opened for redemption by power. Justice being satisfied, it was perfectly legal to send an armed band into the land of the conqueror to deliver the captive whose ransom had been paid, or take by force the Jewish slave, now no longer such, from his heathen master, or regain possession of the mortgaged estate. So it is in the things of God. Had not the justice of God been satisfied, there would have been a tarnish upon the holiest of his perfections. But the ransom being fully paid, power can come in to carry it into execution. Now let us see how this acts and works.

1. Observe, first, how this opens a way to rescue us from *sin*. I have pointed out that sin is stronger than we. There are five particular points connected with sin, from all of which we need redemption both by price and by power. These are, the guilt of sin, the filth of sin, the power of sin, the love of sin, and the practice of sin. The guilt of sin we must be delivered from by the application of atoning blood to the conscience; the filth of sin we must be washed from by the sanctifying operations and influences of the Holy Ghost; the power of sin we must have broken in us by the power of Christ's resurrection; the love of sin overcome by the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost; and the practice of sin destroyed and broken up by the fear of God planted deep in the soul. It is through the blood of the Lamb, that is, redemption by price, that each and all of these blessings are granted, and thus manifested blessing is redemption by power. Now assume that you had been redeemed by price, but were not redeemed by power. Could you stand before God among his glorified saints without your nature being

renewed by his heavenly grace—without the sanctifying work and influence of the Holy Ghost upon your soul? Would you be fitted for heaven unless a new and heavenly nature had been raised up in you, to make you meet for the inheritance of the saints in light?

But look at this point even as regards our present state and standing. I have spoken just now of the power of sin, and I went at some length into the nature of this power in the first part of my discourse. But how is this power to be broken? And just contrast the contrivances of men with the wisdom and power of God. Since I was last in London, a convent had been erected near where I am now staying. Now how many devices will be set on foot in that convent, assuming it to be like others, to overcome the power of sin. What fasting, confessing, praying, telling of beads; and will any succeed? They will all prove ineffectual remedies. Sin never was weakened or destroyed by devices of human contrivance. The hermit in his cell, the monk in his hairy shirt, the nun upon her bended knees, never overcame sin by all their attempts; and if they did so, it would not be a remedy God approved of. But view God's way; view the Person of his dear Son; see Deity and humanity meeting together in one glorious Immanuel; see by faith the bleeding wounds of the Son of God, and on every drop of blood Deity stamped. What efficacy to purge the guilty conscience; what power to renew the soul; what motives to holy obedience; what an influence upon a God-fearing heart; what a constraining power to overcome and subdue the strength of sin. For this is the beauty and blessedness of atoning blood and redeeming love, that it sanctifies as well as justifies, gives strength and power as well as communicates salvation. So redemption being effected by price, upon it follows redemption by power.

2. Take another enemy, *Satan*. We read that the ancient

martyrs overcame Satan by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death. These were the three weapons with which the ancient martyrs overcame the accuser of the brethren. Satan laughs at shield and spear; he smiles derisively at human attempts to cleanse and purge the conscience. He knows well what the human heart is; that nothing but blood can purge a guilty conscience, and nothing but grace sanctify the soul. But Christ having redeemed his saints from Satan by price, saves them also from his hand by power. Through death he has destroyed him who had the power of death, to deliver them who through fear had all their life been subject to bondage. He has put his foot upon Satan's neck; he has overcome principalities and powers. Satan is a conquered foe, overcome by blood and vanquished by death and resurrection.

3. And *death* also. How did those whose loss we mourn meet death? Under a sense of pardoned sin, having had atoning blood applied to their conscience to take away the sting of death. Death can only be overcome by the application of atoning blood and dying love, the manifestation of pardon and forgiveness through the blood of the Lamb. Every one is weaker than death, till the word comes: "Son or daughter, thy sins are forgiven thee." Then he can look death in the face and depart in peace. And as death was overcome by blood, so it will be overcome by power. In the resurrection morn, the saints will rise from their dust and shout aloud, "O grave, where is thy victory," as they before shouted, "O death, where is thy sting?"

4. And *hell* too. The Lord has closed the mouth of hell against his saints, by enduring a hell in his own bosom; and as by the power of his blood he has closed the gates of hell, so by the power of his grace he gives the soul a sensible

knowledge of it; thus redeeming by power those whom he has ransomed by blood.

5. So it is with *foes*. We have all our foes: need we fear them? I will tell you the greatest foe you have to fear: *self*. Never mind your foes: who shall harm you if you be followers of that which is good? Conduct yourself consistently, act uprightly, live a life of faith in the Son of God, walk in the fear of the Lord, have a good conscience toward God and man: what foe can hurt you? But you can sadly hurt yourself. You can do yourself more harm in five minutes than all your foes in fifty years. One incautious word, one heedless footstep, one wrong action, may lay you crippled and wounded at their feet. Fear not your foes; fear God, and you need not fear the face of man. The Lord will fight your battles; you have no need to fight them. "Be still and know that I am God." The Lord will fight your cause if it be a right cause. He has redeemed you by his blood from all your foes, and he will redeem you by his power from anything they may do to harm you.

6. And your *fears*. How strong your fears have always been. What doubts have chilled your soul; what apprehensions have pained your spirit. Perhaps many here have had little else all their days but doubts and fears as to the reality and genuineness of the work of God upon their soul. And these fears you still find too strong for you. You fain would master them; you would not be in bondage; you would come forth into the liberty of the gospel; you would have a manifestation of pardoned sin, and of your acceptance in the Beloved; you would not doubt your interest; you would see your signs and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. But your faith is weak, your hope feeble, and your love but faint. Many things try your mind, cast down your spirit, and seem to breed continual apprehensions how the case may end. But if the

Lord has redeemed you by his blood, he will surely redeem you from all your fears by his power. He has but to speak to your soul. Are you not waiting for that speech to come? Are your eyes not looking up to him, that he would commune with you from off the mercy seat, and drop a sweet promise, apply a word, give a touch, breathe a whisper, manifest himself, and come over all your sin and shame to dissolve you under a sense of atoning blood and dying love? What has made you thus wait, thus seek, thus ask? I may say, what has made you thus doubt and fear? Because you know that you have a soul to be saved, sins to be forgiven, a conscience to be purged, and the love of God to be enjoyed; and feeling your deficiency in these matters, it fills you with doubts and fears as to your state and case before God. But if the Lord has redeemed you by his blood—and these are, as far as they go, favourable signs, gracious marks, and intimations of divine life—He will redeem you by power. One word will do it; one smile, one touch, one manifestation, or one soft whisper, will in a moment remove every doubt and fear, and land you in the liberty of the gospel.

O what could any of us do but for this Redeemer? How highly we should value him; how we should ever cleave to him with purpose of heart, and be determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified. How good it is to lay aside all human strength and righteousness, and cast our poor, needy, naked souls upon the blood of the Lamb. Many are exercised all their days with doubts and fears, from looking too much to self. There is a secret legality, a Pharisaic self-righteousness, so that they cannot come out of themselves to trust in the Lord and the Lord only. And this looking with double eye, sometimes to themselves, and sometimes to the Lord, keeps them all their lives in bondage and torment. Never will you get real liberty of soul till you come out of yourself, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as he reveals

himself in his word, in all the fulness of his blood and righteousness. And then as you come out of self, and come into the glorious liberty of the children of God, you will see what a fool you have been to be looking to yourself nearly all your life, trusting to your own righteousness which is but filthy rags, and putting away the only righteousness in which a soul can stand accepted. But the Lord is very pitiful and very gracious. "He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust;" and having redeemed Jacob and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he, he will never leave his work incomplete; he will go on and fulfil it, that he may have all the praise honour and glory.