

THE ONLY SAFE KEEPING

Preached at Zoar Chapel, Great Alie Street, London on closing his annual visit to the Metropolis, on Tuesday evening. July 13th 1841

"Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." 1Peter 1:5

This Epistle of Peter, like all the other epistles of the apostles, is addressed to the quickened family of God. The epistles were written to churches; and though there were in those churches then, just as there are in churches now, wheat and tares, sheep and goats, yet generally speaking, we find the apostles not taking direct notice of the chaff that was mingled with the wheat on the threshing-floor, but addressing them as what they professed to be—the children of the living God. Thus this Epistle of Peter is addressed "to the strangers that were scattered throughout" the countries mentioned, who, he says, were "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ;" and he thanks God, who according to His abundant mercy, had begotten them and him again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. Those, then only, who are elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, and who are begotten again to a living hope by a manifestation to their souls of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

The children of God and the mere nominal professors of vital godliness hold the same truths, but they believe them in a different way, and they get at them in a different manner. The nominal professor receives the doctrines because he sees them in God's Word; the living soul receives them because they are taken out of God's Word by the Holy Ghost, and are revealed with power to his soul. The nominal professor is quite satisfied with a dim, shadowy hope that he is interested in gospel blessings; but the living soul can never be satisfied with anything short of the witness of the Holy Ghost to his soul, that he is a child of God, and therefore is interested in every blessing with which God has blessed His people in Christ. And as they believe them in a different way, so they get at them in a different manner. The family of God get at truth through trouble, distress, affliction, temptation, and tribulation; they arrive at the banquet through sharp pangs of hunger; they arrive at the clothing through being chilled with cold and nakedness; they arrive at the cross after travelling through the pangs of guilt in their conscience; and they arrive at a knowledge of their adoption into the family of God after being exercised with many poignant doubts and fears whether God is their Father at all. Thus the living family and the nominal professor of religion not merely differ in the way whereby they believe the truth; the one believing it spiritually, the other believing it naturally; the one believing it with his heart, the other believing it with his head; the one feeling it in his conscience, the other having it merely floating in his brain; but also they arrive at the experimental knowledge of the truth of God by a totally different road. Thus, however they may seem to resemble one another in the doctrines that they each profess to believe, yet there is an eternal distinction, which the hand of the Holy Ghost has drawn, between the living and the dead in Jerusalem.

The nominal professor is quite satisfied with the doctrine of final perseverance as it is revealed in the Scriptures. He knows nothing experimentally of the dangers and difficulties of the way; he is not exercised in his own soul by any temptations, any distressing doubts, any agonizing fears; and therefore, gliding at ease down the smooth stream, he knows nothings of storms, gusts, winds, and waves, and thinks that this smooth stream will land him safe in the harbour of everlasting peace, when it is only like the river St. Lawrence, which glides the more smoothly the nearer it approaches the cataracts; the deeper it is, the calmer it flows, until the hapless navigator, once entangled in the rapids, is carried headlong down the falls of Niagara into the foaming abyss below. But all God's people arrive at the doctrine of final perseverance by feeling how necessary and how suitable the truth is to them. And they do not learn it once, and then for ever retain the knowledge of it; but it is a truth which accompanies them throughout all their pilgrimage here below, as being suited to those extremities in which they often feel themselves, and adapted to those temptations and exercises which they have to pass through continually.

What read we in our text? That the elect are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." The word **kept** is a very significant one. It means literally, garrisoned—kept as in a fortress, surrounded by bulwarks. And this is the way in which God keeps His people. They are garrisoned around by all the attributes of God; there is "a wall of fire round about" them, and they are surrounded by every attribute which God has in Himself, and which He has been pleased to reveal, that we may know it, and give Him the glory of it.

Now the very expression, **kept**, implies that they need keeping. A fortress is provided against an enemy. The very circumstance of a fortification being erected shows that there are enemies, who would fain destroy the lives of those persons whom the walls of the fortress are intended to protect. So when we read that the elect are garrisoned by God—shut up (**as it were**) in a strong city, of which God has appointed salvation as the walls and bulwarks, we gather that there are enemies ever on the watch, and that the object and aim of these enemies is to sweep them away from the land of the living. Before, then, a man can know anything experimentally of the sweetness of being kept of the almighty power and faithfulness which are exerted in his behalf he must have some personal acquaintance with those enemies, who are ever upon the alert, if it be possible, to destroy him utterly. This fortress is not like a fortified town where the officers can strut upon the parade and never see the smoke of an enemy's camp, and where the cannon are never fired but on gala days. This fortress is not like the Tower just below, where the sentinel walks round the battlements, and never sees an enemy to give an alarm. But this garrison, which contains the redeemed, is one in a state of siege, which the enemies are continually seeking to take. the walls of which they are continually endeavouring to batter down the inmates of which they are continually aiming to wound, and. if possible, to destroy.

For instance, there is the world. A man knows not what an enemy the world is, who has not in some measure been separated from it. To a professor of religion, who has the doctrines of grace in his head and is devoid of the feeling power of truth in his soul, the world is no enemy, for he is no enemy to the world. He has no tender conscience that feels how liable he is to be entrapped by the baits and allurements which the world scatters in his path; there is no struggling

with him to have communion with the Lord, which, the world intercepts; there is no endeavour to withdraw his spirit from being carried away by the business that he is needfully occupied with; and therefore the nominal professor of religion feels not the world to be his enemy, because the world and he are agreed upon matters. His religion is not a religion that offends the world; and his heart has not been touched by the finger of God. so as to feel the world to be his enemy, because it is the enemy of God. It is the child of God who feels what a heart he has, and how this heart is continually being carried away by the temptations set before him; it is he who has some insight into the character of God as a heart-searching Jehovah, and knows that He abhors evil; it is he who desires to be in reality what he professes to be—a follower of Jesus, and to have the image of God stamped upon his soul and to walk as Jesus walked when here below—it is he, and he only, who really knows that the world is his enemy. And a living soul does feel, and most painfully feel too, that unless he is kept by the power of God through faith, from the baits and allurements of the world, he will surely and inevitably be entangled thereby.

Again, Satan is another enemy, that is continually on the look out, ever watching to entrap or harass the souls of God's family. Sometimes he comes as an "angel of light," casting his magic delusions over the eyes, so that, under the influences of this wonderful magician, we are prompted to "call evil good, and good evil, put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter, darkness for light, and light for darkness." Sometimes he comes in all the garb of holiness, endeavouring to draw us away from the righteousness and sanctification of Christ, in order to set up some creature holiness of our own. Sometimes he comes to us with base antinomian injections, as though because the doctrine of election is sure, and because we have some evidence that we

are the children of God, sin could not damn us, nor harm us, and secretly suggesting that this gratification is innocent, and that pleasure allowable; and thus, by casting these antinomian principles into our mind, he hides that trap which he is secretly preparing for our unwary feet. Sometimes he will come upon us "as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour," opening his mouth of blasphemy, raising up everything which is hateful and dreadful in our carnal mind, even tempting us to "curse God and die." Sometimes in a hidden unperceived manner, he stirs up the base lusts and passions of our carnal mind, tempting us to believe that there is no harm in their gratification, and then, perhaps, turning round upon us as hypocrites. Thus does this crafty and powerful enemy seek sometimes to carry the city by storm, sometimes to take the city by mine—sometimes to creep in under the garb of a friend—sometimes by open violence to break through the gates, if he may by assault or stratagem carry off the soldiers that are under the banners of Immanuel.

It would not so much matter if there were not a worse enemy than these; the enemy within, the traitor within the walls, the renegade, the deserter within the camp. Oh! friends, when we call to mind our slips and our falls, when we look back upon our lives, the many base declensions of our soul from God, the many snares in which we have been entangled, do we not see that our own base heart, our own vile nature, has been a worse enemy than all? Who knows the strength of sin in a man, but he who has in some measure been carried away by it? Who knows the power of these gusts, except the mariner, who has been well nigh shipwrecked upon the shoals and sand-banks by having his poor shattered bark blown from the right course by them? Who is acquainted with the hidden shoals of this intricate navigation, but he who from time to time has felt the keel of

his vessel just graze upon them, and yet by the grace of God has not been shipwrecked? Who can put down the buoys to mark the right channel, but the navigator who, with the lead in his hand, has sounded the reefs and quicksands of his own heart?

Those then that have an experimental acquaintance with these enemies of their salvation, with those external and internal foes that "war against their soul," will be glad when the Lord drops into their hearts some testimony that He is keeping them; they will be glad to feel that hand which has been outstretched on their behalf. They cannot boast with the proud Arminian that they have kept themselves; they cannot sacrifice unto their own net, nor burn incense to their own drag, for they know feelingly and they know bitterly, that when the Lord's arm was not under them but for a single moment, they were not able to stand. When He has left them but for an instant to the lusts of their own vile heart, to the allurements of the world, to the baits of Satan, they were no more able to resist the temptations that beset them, than the babe that is put down by its mother upon the ground, is able to stand alone. Those, then, that are kept, are kept by God. All others, sooner or later, will make shipwreck.

It is something like that allegory which I have read in Addison, "The Vision of Mirza," where he compares life to a bridge of a hundred arches, that extended over a river, and as he watched, he observed a number of travellers passing over this bridge; and ever and anon he saw one drop in through some secret hole, and then before he could pass over another arch another dropped in, until before any passenger came to the end of the bridge, the whole had fallen into the river that flowed beneath. So spiritually, all travellers but those that are kept by God will sooner or later drop through these pitfalls into eternal perdition. Some may

continue for a shorter, and others for a longer time; but all who are not kept by the power of God, all under whom the everlasting arms have not been placed, all who are not wrapped up in the embraces of Jesus, and held firmly by Him, will drop, sooner or later, through these pitfalls into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. But God has covenanted to keep His people; when He gave them to Jesus, He gave them to Him that He might redeem them by His own blood, that none should be lost, and that none should ever pluck them out of His hand. Therefore, the elect are kept by the power of God, and they are sure to be preserved blameless until the day of Christ's appearing.

Mark the way in which God keeps them. They are kept "by the power of God **through faith.**" God does not keep His people, as a mother keeps her child from the fire by putting a tall iron fender round it. God does not preserve His people from falling into the river, by putting up a high balustrade upon the bridge. God does not keep His people from harm, as in lunatic asylums they confine maniacs with chains and fetters and strait-waistcoats. Such is not God's way of keeping His people. God's people are not steam engines, that are worked by mechanical power, and operated upon without any feelings or sensations in their own bosoms. God keeps His people through faith. "Who are kept by the power of God **through faith.**" There is then that grace in the soul, which is made an instrument of their being kept. God does not keep His people from sin, by tying up their legs so that they shall not go into the world, as a mother may tie her child's leg to the table, to keep her truant from running out into the street; but the Lord keeps His people from sin, by implanting that grace in their hearts, which forms a link between Himself and them. He keeps them, by breathing that faith in their souls, whereby in times of trouble and distress and necessity they have recourse to Him. He keeps them, by opening up a

channel of communication with Himself, a channel through which grace is bestowed, strength imparted, wisdom given, and love shed abroad; so that God keeps His people from evil, not in a mechanical manner, but He keeps them spiritually and experimentally by raising up that grace in their souls, whereby they are enabled to take hold of His strength.

One shall say, How does faith act in the matter? What connection is there between being kept from evil and faith as a grace in the soul? The connection is this. Faith is that eye of the soul, which realizes that which God presents to it; faith is that ear of the soul, which hears the instruction that God communicates; and faith is that hand of the soul, which takes hold of those promises that God reveals to it. If you saw a man deaf and blind, walking in a road which ended on a precipice, all your warnings would be thrown away upon him; he could not see the danger, he could not hear your warning voice; before you could save him from the precipice at the end of the road, you must give him an ear to hear your warning, you must give him an eye to see the danger which threatens him. This then is that which faith does. God, when He keeps His people by His mighty power, communicates to them eye-sight, by giving them faith; and imparts to them hearing, by opening their ear, for faith is "the evidence of things not seen," and "how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" Faith then acts in this way: our eyes being opened, we see the danger; we see the world presents allurements, baits, and charms, which are suited to our fallen nature; we see Satan stirring up the pride of our heart, infusing his own cursed presumption, entangling us in his own dreadful hypocrisy, hardening us **(or endeavouring to harden us,)** into some measure of his own impenitence, inflating us with some of that arrogance which dwells in him, as "king over all the children of pride." Faith sees,

recognises, feels, is alive to these suggestions, that Satan is casting in.

When flattery comes before the heart of a hypocrite, he feeds upon it eagerly; but when flattery comes before the heart of a child of God, he often sees under the flattery the cloven foot. When a gust of presumption comes in the way of a hypocrite, it takes him off his legs, because he has no ballast in self whereby he can stand against it; but when a gust of presumption blows hard against a child of God, he has that inward ballast of suffering, condemnation, tribulation, and temptation, whereby he is kept from being blown away.

When Satan is permitted to open his mouth in the heart of a dead professor, and to blow into it the blasphemy with which he himself is infected, he makes use of that mouth as a vent for his own enmity against God, and he thrusts that soul into the wretched state in which he himself lies; but when he would breathe his own enmity into the heart of a child of God, there is a tender conscience, there is a principle of godly fear, there is a crying unto the Lord, there is a secret abhorrence of soul, whereby his temptations are rejected.

And thus Satan, who prevails in a moment over the man destitute of faith, who casts him down and sweeps him into destruction with a breath, when his arts and arms are levelled at a child of God, finds that invincible grace in him, that faith which was received from God, which strengthens him and supports him in the hour of trial, and stands up in the power of God against those onsets which would carry him away, had he had no inward support. So, when our heart rises up with all its base desires, when this filthy puddle is stirred up, and sin is presented as something sweet and delicious and alluring to our carnal appetite, the eye of faith sees the hook concealed beneath this bait; the ear of faith hears the footfall of the enemy behind the bushes, trampling upon the leaves; and the mouth of faith begins to cry to the

Lord, that He would deliver the soul from these traps and snares.

Faith is like the modesty of a chaste virgin, that recoils from any look or gesture that would seek to draw her aside into anything improper or unbecoming; for she has a chaste principle in her bosom, which turns away immediately from the least approach to what is immodest; but the street-pacing harlot courts that which the modest woman recoils from. So, a heart which is unrenewed, one which is in all its natural enmity to, and alienation from God, woos sin, lusts after sin, delights in sin, courts, and is ready to embrace the first sin that comes in the way; but in a living soul there is a secret recoil, a holy fear, a godly awe, a crying out to the Lord **(as a damsel against her ravisher,) De 22:27** that He would deliver us from the violence of sin, that He would not suffer us to be overpowered and defiled by it.

Faith also acts in another way. It not merely discovers, being "of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord," the baits, the gins, the traps, the pitfalls, that are spread for the feet of the unwary traveller, but faith knows what it is to have recourse to a throne of grace for help, strength and direction; faith knows what it is in some measure to realize the strength of Christ made perfect in weakness, and when it is utterly helpless in self, and cannot resist the temptation, to flee to the Lord and to hide itself in Him. Thus faith has recourse to the Lord in seasons of extremity and distress; and in this way a poor, trembling child of God, who has a spirit of faith and godly fear in his heart, is preserved whilst presumptuous professors are cast away.

Again; it is through the medium of faith, that the Lord communicates all strength to the soul. Have we not found it to be so? When our faith was weak, we were like Samson

with his locks cut; we went forth as at other times, and lo! all our strength was gone; we could not stand up against one temptation. But when the Lord was pleased to succour us, to strengthen us with strength in the inner man, and to minister grace out of Christ to our souls, through the medium of that faith which He Himself had kindled, then there was a power, a wisdom, and an ability, communicated to the soul, to stand up against temptation, and not to be overcome and carried away by it.

One shall say, "Do the children of God always stand in these trying seasons? Are they never carried away by any temptation? Oh, if this be the case, I am no child of God at all" says he "for I am continually carried away; if I am not overcome by sin openly and outwardly so as to disgrace my profession, I am often carried away inwardly, and I feel that I have no more power to stand up against the least sin, than I have power to raise the dead." Now faith comes in here also. When you have been thus entangled, are you easy? Do you feel no guilt? Does conscience tell no dreadful tale? Is your mind perfectly calm and unruffled? Is there not inward distress, poignant suffering? Are there not tears rolling down your cheeks, heavings and gaspings of your groaning soul under a load of self-condemnation and self-abhorrence, on account of your base departures from God? "Yes," say you, "when I have been entangled in sin **(and I confess I have often been entangled in it, base wretch that I am)**, I felt that I could not roll it under my tongue like a sweet morsel; I could not act the part of the adulteress that is spoken of in the Proverbs, who eateth and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness. Oh, it was a hell to me to have been entangled in sin; it broke my bones, it troubled my spirit, it filled me with self-loathing and self-abhorrence before God." Whence arose those feelings? Was it not through faith that you realised the eye of God in secret upon

you? Was it not through faith that you realised the hatred of God against the sin you were entangled in? Was it not by faith that self-loathing and self-abhorrence were kindled in your soul? Was it not through faith that you were enabled to make confession of your sin before God? Was it not through faith that some balmy drops of atoning blood fell upon your conscience? Was it not through faith that you received some testimony that, base as you are, God had not given you over to a reprobate mind, a hardened heart, and a seared conscience? Then you perceive that faith is as necessary to bring back a soul that backslides from God, as to prevent a soul from backsliding from Him; and he knows little of his own heart, little of the temptations of sin, and little of inward slips and falls, who knows not what it is to groan and sigh before God as a base wretch, that has been continually entangled in things hateful to God, and in his right mind hateful to his own soul.

Thus God keeps His people through faith; He does not keep them through presumption, nor does He keep them through vain confidence, nor does He keep them through unbelief, nor does He keep them through doubts and fears, but He keeps them through the exercise of that blessed grace which He Himself has implanted in their soul. And if you and I, brethren, have been kept up to the present day, since the Lord was first pleased to quicken our souls into spiritual life, we can trace up every act whereby we were kept, and every act whereby we were restored when we fell, to the operations of living faith in our souls; and were it not for the operations of living faith in our souls under the influences of the Holy Spirit, long ago should we of faith made shipwreck.

"But," say some, "I do not understand this sort of keeping; the keeping I want is never to have anything to do with trouble, and exercises, and temptations, and sufferings."

Now God never did keep His people so. We read that they shall "glorify Him in the fires;" that He hath "chosen them in the furnace of affliction;" that "when they pass through the waters He will be with them, and through the rivers they shall not overflow them;" that He "brings the third part to pass through the fire," and that "through much tribulation they must enter the kingdom." That man, then, and he only, knows what it is to be kept by the power of God through faith, who in his own self is continually prone to fall, independently of that keeping. He only knows the mercy of being kept, who feels that he falls every moment when the everlasting arms are not sensibly under him. He only knows the mercy of being kept who has been ready to weep tears of blood, because he has inwardly or outwardly fallen. He only knows the happiness, the blessedness, the privilege of being kept, who knows that if God did not hold him in by His powerful hand, he should launch at once into the vilest of sins, and bring disgrace upon his profession altogether. He only knows what it is to be kept who has to cry, and sigh, and groan unto God to preserve him from the base workings of his own heart, from the awful temptations and ensnaring delusions of Satan, and from the baits and allurements that the world is spreading in his path. And none but he can know what it is to be kept by the power of God through faith who is not deeply and inwardly persuaded that were God to leave him for a single moment he should fall out of the arms of God into a never-ending hell.

The children of God, then, receive the keeping of God, not as a dry doctrine, as spoken by the mouth of Peter, but they receive it as a most blessed privilege when God is pleased to indulge them with the sweet persuasion that He has kept them, is keeping them, and will keep them evermore. And oh! friends, what happiness or pleasure can there be equal to feeling the everlasting arms underneath? Oh, it is not resting

on the dry doctrine that God's everlasting arms are underneath His church that will satisfy a living soul, but it is to feel those arms spread underneath us; to lean with all our weight upon those arms, and to find daily that those arms are sufficient to support and hold us up, however weak, and helpless, and feeble we be in ourselves. It is thus that "the lame take the prey;" that the feeble Jacob wrestles and overcomes; and that whilst the youths faint and are weary and the young men utterly fall, those that wait upon the Lord renew their strength, mount up on wings as eagles, run and are not weary, walk and do not faint. God will powerfully convince all His dear family of their weakness and helplessness, that He may teach them sweetly and experimentally that all their strength is in Him, and may thus bring them to know by blessed teaching the sweetness of being kept by feeling that nothing but the hand of God could keep such rebellious wretches as they feel themselves to be.

If I were to go through this chapel and put my hand upon the first person who would fail, I will tell you who the man is: he who thinks he can stand in his own strength. And if I were to go through this chapel and put my hand upon him that is least likely to fall, it would be he who is so deeply sensible of his own weakness, his own helplessness, and his own impotency to keep himself, that he fears he shall fall before this night comes on, and yet is secretly crying and groaning to the Lord that He would not suffer him to be tempted beyond what he is able, but would with the temptation make a way to escape, that he may be able to bear it.

Thus, then, all the living family are kept by the power of God. The Lord has enlisted all His attributes in their behalf. If we want a person to be our friend, we want to know what means he has of befriending us. If we are deeply in debt, and he comes forward to be our surety in order that we may not go

to gaol, the inquiry will be as to the length of his purse, the amount of his property; and if it is found that he has property far more than would pay our debts, then his bail is taken. Now the Lord has engaged all His power, whereby to hold up His people from falling; implying these two things, that they need all His power to keep them, and that all His power will be exerted on their behalf. But if the temptations, and dangers, and difficulties that stand in our way to glory, are so great and pressing, that **(so to speak)** it takes all the power of God to keep a man from being overcome by them, what can that man know of being "kept by the power of God," who has never felt himself such a headlong wretch towards evil, that nothing but the arm of God could possibly hold him in? But the case is proportioned to the remedy, and the remedy is proportioned to the case. The weakness of man is so great, that he needs all the power of God to keep him; and the power of God is so great that it is never exerted ineffectually.

Again, we want something more than power, we want **love**. Look at the mother, all whose affections are fixed upon her offspring; she often lacks power to keep them, to preserve them from danger, but does she ever lack love? And if her power were equal to her love, would not her offspring be preserved from every danger? You that are spiritual mothers, and have ungodly children, what would you not, if the love of your bosom could speak, and you were armed with power as well as love, do for the preservation and salvation of the fruit of your womb? But in behalf of the elect love is enlisted, as well as power; for the Lord has loved His elect with an everlasting love, and all the affection of His heart is engaged to keep them as much as His power.

Again, there is the **faithfulness** of God. If a friend has passed his word that he will afford me relief when I go to

him, if he has bound himself by a solemn promise that I shall not apply to him in vain, and if I know him to be a man of uprightness and integrity, I am sure that he will not break his word, but that when the time of need comes he will afford that help which he has promised. So the promise-keeping Jehovah has covenanted His everlasting faithfulness to His word, as well as His power and His love; and if it would be a disgrace to a mortal man, to a fallen sinner, who had passed his word, not to adhere to it, will the faithful truth keeping God ever suffer one of His words to fall to the ground? Has He said, and will He not do it? Has He spoken, and shall it not come to pass? The elect of God, then, are garrisoned by all the power of God, by all the love of God, and by all the faithfulness of God; they are kept in this city which hath walls and bulwarks, fortified by God Himself against every foe.

The elect are kept "unto **salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time**". This may apply to that "salvation" which will be revealed when Christ "comes a second time without sin unto salvation." But I think also it may well be applied to that salvation which is revealed in the soul; as we read a little lower down, "Be sober and hope to the end, for **the grace** that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Now the revelation of Jesus Christ at the end of all things does not bring grace, it brings glory; but the revelation of Jesus Christ in the soul, under the manifestations of His Holy Spirit, does bring grace with it. I think then, without wresting the word, we may say that this "salvation ready to be revealed" is the salvation which is manifested to the soul by the revelation of Jesus Christ. Those who are kept by the power of God through faith are often in their minds troubled and anxious, and fearing whether this salvation will ever reach their souls, whether they may not prove castaways; whether the work upon their

heart is genuine, whether they are under divine teachings. But the Lord says they are kept by His power, through faith **unto salvation,** " shut up unto the faith which is to be revealed," kept as in this garrisoned city, until salvation shall come in all its glory, and sweetness, and bliss, and blessedness into their heart, preserved and encompassed by all the attributes of God from making shipwreck of faith, until "they receive the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls."

Well then, poor doubting, distressed, fearing, guilty sinner! This promise is for thee. Thy soul is bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God; thy character and thy name are contained here. And it is a promise suitable to you; yea, it is a promise suitable to us all. Suitable to us when we meet together, suitable to us when absent from each other; suitable to those who stay, suitable to those who go; suitable for town, suitable for country; suitable for the busy metropolis, suitable for the retired country fields; suitable for a child of God in a state of trial and temptations, and suitable when he enjoys a temporary respite from them; suitable for him at ease, suitable for him in distress; suitable for him at war, suitable for him at peace; suitable for him when the cannons roar and the earth trembles, and suitable for him when he seems to have no enemy near, for the enemy then may be approaching by stratagem. Yea, friends, could you point out a single moment when this promise is not suitable to you, that moment would be the very moment in which the promise would be wanted by you most. Could you ever arrive at such a spot as to say, "Now I want the promise no more," that very feeling would show that you were on the brink of a fall, and therefore never needed the promise so much as then.

It is our mercy, if God has quickened us by the Holy Spirit, and raised us up to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to have an interest in this precious word—"kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." And what better wish can I now leave with you at the close of my present visit, than that you may be "kept by the power of God;" kept from evil that it may not grieve you, kept from the errors of the day, kept from the wiles of Satan, kept from the deceits of your own hearts, kept from the thousand snares, known and unknown, seen and unseen, hidden and discovered, that are spread before your feet? What better wish can I leave behind me or take with me than this, that we may realize in our souls that we are personally and individually interested in these blessed words, in this sacred promise from the mouth of God Himself—"Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation?" If really we are interested in these words, the Lord will keep us during the few remaining days or years of our pilgrimage; He will hold us up that we shall not fall, and will present us before His face in glory.