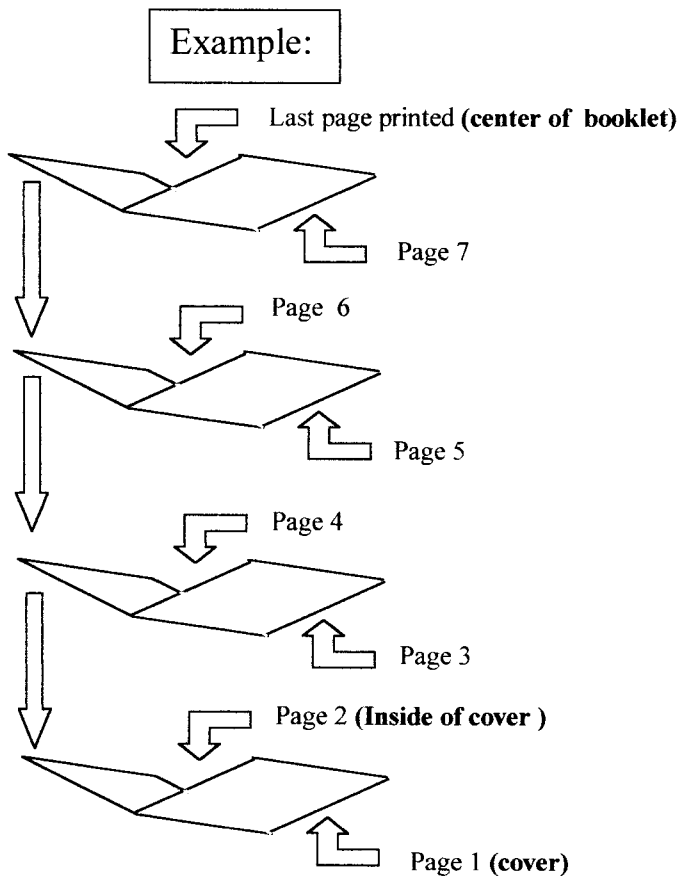


Instructions for printing ACM booklets from Adobe Acrobat Reader

(For booklets with Printed Text Inside the Cover)



Instructions for printing these documents as booklets.

(Please refer to your printer's manual for **double-sided printing**.)

- Print the first page (**the cover**) Then print page 2 (1st page of text) on the back of this sheet.
- Print page 3 on the next sheet, and then page 4 on the back of the same sheet. Do the same with 5 and 6, 7 and 8, etc, until complete.
- The last page printed will be the center of the booklet.
- Fold and staple.

Please note: The actual page numbers printed on the booklet pages, and the page numbers as far as the printer is concerned are two different things. Each single page printed by the printer (one side of a sheet) is actually two pages of the booklet. For example: in a twelve page booklet, page 1 will be front and back of the cover of the booklet, and page 2 for the printer will be page 2 and page 11 together on the same side of the sheet, etc, etc. (example only).

The
White-Robed
Multitude
John Kennedy

The
White~Robed
Multitude

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there. My progress seems only backward towards the world, sin and Satan. My progress is but to feel my utter need of finding Christ and of His becoming all and all in and for me." If there is as much life in you, dear friends, as to feel death, if there is as much light as to see your darkness, as much desire after Christ as not to be able to breathe freely without Him, don't fear that He will leave that faint desire unsatisfied. Don't fear that Christ will fail to help you. No, poor, witless, strengthless creature that you are, though you are weak as smoking flax, He will not quench you, He will make His great strength perfect in your exceeding weakness. Hear His blessed words, "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out." May the Lord help you to come to Him in whom "the fatherless findeth mercy," who will guide you and preserve you here, and give you a place with Himself at last—yea, even a place before His throne. Amen

John Kennedy (1819-1884), a Highland divine, fourth son of John Kennedy, minister of Killearnan, Ross-shire, was educated in the parish school of Killearnan, and about 1836 went to Aberdeen University. He graduated M.A. at King's College in 1840, and in the same year entered the theological hall of the established church, and was licensed in September, 1843. In February, 1844 he was ordained in a free church newly formed at Dingwall, Ross-shire. Dingwall was his only charge. In 1873 the University of Aberdeen conferred upon him an honorary doctoral degree in divinity. During the winter of 1869-70 Kennedy's health broke down, and he was forced to take rests in 1872-73 (when he visited America) and also in 1881. In the summer of 1883 he took an active interest in the Strome Ferry case, caused by an attempt, with which he sympathized, to forcibly resist the Sunday traffic on the Highland Railway. He died at Bridge of Allan, Stirlingshire, on April 28, 1884.

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The White-Robed Multitude

John Kennedy

"And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?"

Revelation 7:13

The questions here asked by the elder, John could not answer; and no wonder, for it would be with difficulty he would recognize—indeed, he might utterly fail to recognize—these arrayed in white robes, and standing before the throne, as those he had known on earth. He knew them in their temptation; it may be, in their sin, and above all, in their great tribulation. No wonder then that his recognition failed, and the answering of the questions was difficult. Let us notice: 1. Whence came these redeemed ones? 2. How came they hither? 3. Whither are they brought, to what home, and how are they occupied? On this latter point, I remark seven particulars:

- (1) As to position, they are before the throne;
- (2) as to occupation, they are serving;
- (3) they are enjoying the presence of Him who sitteth upon the throne;
- (4) they hunger and thirst no more;
- (5) they feel no heat nor light of the sun;
- (6) Jesus, the Lamb, leads them and feeds them as a shepherd; and
- (7) God wipes away all tears from their eyes.

In looking at the first main head, "Whence came they?" I remark that they came from the earth. They were of the race of Adam, and that race a fallen, sinful one. Not the whole of Adam's race are there. All are not forthcoming, nor ever will be; but many, very many of them are, and will be, before the throne, and those are from every land, and nation, and kindred, and people. Thanks be to God, there are many from our own land, from your county, your town, your congregation, and, it may be, your home and family. And if it be so, may you not ask yourself, "What if I am left behind?" They have got to that glorious throne, and what if you are the only one to be left behind? Let me tell you there is but one way of getting there—by the strait gate and the

narrow way. The fear of being left behind may well be a serious one; it may well rob you of rest; sleep may be refused to your eyes and slumber to your eyelids. Better far it should be so than that you should stand at last and see the door shut, while others go in.

Though there was so much diversity on earth among these redeemed ones, they having come from every nation, and kindred and people, yet in many particulars they were alike, and in none so much as in the state in which they were first found by redeeming grace. In what condition were they when found? They were lying under the curse of God's law in guilt and misery, having to account for a broken covenant. They were lying at the grave's mouth, on the brink of hell, without one thought of doing ought to escape it, with not one moment they could say belonged to them, between them and everlasting burning. The Lord knew they deserved to be cast into the grave's devouring mouth; He knew they deserved to be plunged into these burnings. It was not because He could not be independent of these worms of the dust that He resolved to save them. It would not have cast the least shadow of a spot on His justice, mercy or glory if He had left them to perish, but it pleased Him to save them; it pleased Him to raise the beggar from the dunghill and set him among the princes of His people.

Yes, He found them under the power of sin, entirely under its power. So completely was sin their master that there was not the least possibility of hope that they could be delivered, unless by the exercise of a power stronger, mightier than it, even the power of the Almighty. Besides, being under sin's power they were covered with its vile leprosy; so covered all over, so full of corruption, that hell seemed the only fit place for them. They had lost the image of God; it was entirely defaced. They were destitute of holiness, and had not the least desire after it. When their meetness for hell was complete, when they were on the very threshold of it—with as it were but the lifting of a foot between them and it—then saving grace reached them and redeeming love saved them. When I say they were in sin's power, under God's wrath, under Satan's power, leprous, corrupt, and vile, I have not said enough; I have not said that they were willing also to remain so, not caring to be delivered. But they were not willing to come under the punishment that their sin and vileness deserved, nor

to the gate, to the threshold, with moist eyes, but they were soon dried. God wiped them away—and forever. They who had known sorrow all their life on earth, who had bent under its weight, who for many a long day had carried a faint heart within them, who had reached the gates of the celestial city at last, ready to give up and footsore and weary—they are those whose tears God shall wipe away, and who have left sorrow and suffering behind them forever, God the Father will take away all sorrow, grief and care from His people's hearts, and all tears from their eyes. And as sure as He does this, He will place Himself, with all His infinite resources of happiness, love, and peace, between them and the possibility of any return of their sorrow and tears. And if He will do this, and if He has pledged His truth and love to them for the performance of it, what has He not done in order to complete and perfect the joy of the redeemed?

Now that we have come to the conclusion of our subject, have seen the redeemed reach their eternal home, and have looked at those seven things we are told of them there, let each one of us ask ourselves the question, "Are we on our way to that place before the throne? Will we be among that throng arrayed in white robes and washed in the blood of the Lamb? Can we lay claim to an interest in that precious blood, and have we had any dealings with it? Or are we living in guilt and misery on destruction's brink?" Whatever state you are in, friends, one thing I am certain of concerning you is, you are on your way to eternity, your journey thitherward has commenced. Is it to an eternity of happiness and peace, or to one of woe and misery that you are hastening? There is a road leading to each, the broad and the narrow way. You have not much to choose between; either of these two roads you must take—yea, are taking. Unconverted man, who art wandering on the broad road, there must be a turning, a setting of your face towards the strait gate and the narrow way. You must be born of God and united to Christ—sanctified by the Spirit—before you can venture to hope that that house and these joys we have been speaking of can be yours.

Let me ask you, believer, you who profess to be such, "Is your salvation nearer than when you believed? Are you making progress Zionwards?" "Ah, that is a hard question" some person answers, "all the progress I make is but in finding out my unfitness for entering

effulgence, I would be utterly bewildered, and sink abashed with awe before the majesty of the glory, and be driven out again by the flood of brilliant light issuing from the throne and Him that sitteth upon it, if Jesus, He in whom I have believed on earth, were not there to meet me. But He will be there; Christ, my Savior, whom I have loved and trusted in my journey thither. He will be there to meet me on the threshold. He will take me by the hand and conduct me to the Father's presence. He will give me strength to endure the manifestations of Jehovah's beauty, of His love, and of His glory.

He leads them to fountains of living waters, in order to open up to them the beauty of holiness and the exceeding great riches of the grace that brought them there. He leads them to fountains of Jehovah's love and feeds them with pure fresh waters. He reveals to them day by day some new glory and divine excellency, and all this He does with a man's sympathy as well as a God's bounty. In Him is seen the wondrous union of perfect humanity with all the glorious excellency and beautiful holiness of divinity. In the wilderness He sometimes gave His people just as much food as kept them alive, just as much as kept them seeking more. But there, in the Father's house, He places before them all the resources of the Godhead, without stint or reserve. What better security could they have than that these resources are theirs for use, and that these reservoirs will remain inexhaustible forever, than that it is the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne, that leads them to these fountains, yea, that helps them there to drink? Ah! there is a holy mystery in the Lamb feeding and leading the redeemed in heaven, and friends, I think it is sweet to feel that I cannot understand it, that its glorious height is above my comprehension. Ah, yes, they will admire and adore, and their souls will be filled with a sense of the beauty of holiness as seen in the Godhead. They will feel now, in an incomparable measure, how lovely and how ravishingly beautiful is the Lamb, Jesus, in the glory of His purity and love. There is no end to His beauty. He is the altogether lovely one, the chiefest among ten thousand.

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." This last word, how wonderful! God, the Lord Jehovah, He who sitteth upon the throne, shall wipe away their tears. Surely, this is surpassing wondrous. Ah! there were tears through the journey. They came even

were they willing to be under the power of Satan as an executioner. They served him willingly, eagerly, as prince; they fancied themselves happy in their allegiance to him as such; but his subjects fear much the wages that their firm allegiance gets them. And might not God have let them get the wages they had so justly earned, and might He not allow the sentence of death to be executed—that sentence they had so truly earned?

When the Lord at first approached them, as they were lying in the state I have described, I do not know, friends, but they might have thought He had come as an executioner and not as a deliverer, and that, when He came to rouse them, it was but to cast them forever from His presence. And, moreover, poor, befooled, silly ones as they were, they thought it safer and better to be left in peace on destruction's brink than to be wakened to a realization of their state, which peace would only have made them feel their fall into eternal misery all the more. Yes, they raised the sluggard's cry, and pleaded the sluggard's petition, "Yet a little more sleep, a little more slumber a little more folding of the hands to sleep," and turned them again with their face to the precipice. But God's love would not thus be set aside, nor His power be thus defeated. The time of the fulfilling of the eternal purpose had arrived, the time of effectual calling had come. He saw them lying in their blood, and then His time was a time of love. Why was it so? Is that your question? Because all He was then and thereafter to do was done to the praise of the glory of His grace. I wish here to remark before passing on, that the passage to hell along the course of this world is a smooth, pleasant voyage. The floating is easy. Many, the nearer they approach the end, the more they are assured of peace, and the more loudly they talk of safety. Such are drunk with the world's pleasures, never heeding warnings that seem to them but a blast of rudeness, till at length the end is reached, and they leap into everlasting perdition.

We come now to the second division of our subject, "How came they hither?" What were the means the Lord employed in conducting them to their place before the throne? As we previously saw, if any power could deliver them out of the state in which they were, it must be an almighty power, and so it was. The Lord Jehovah stretched His hand

from above, took them from below, and set them among the princes of His people. What mode did God take to accomplish His end?

I remark, they were washed in blood, the blood of the Lamb. None without this washing can stand in the New Jerusalem. The washing must be complete; they must part from all defilement; no spot or blemish must be found on them. Nothing unclean can go up on that way of holiness, not only nothing that is unclean but nothing that can communicate defilement. This washing, to begin with, is the washing of regeneration. There may be many differences in experience, but in this respect the resemblance is complete; they are all regenerated by one and the same Spirit. The washing never needs to be done over again. It is a washing that is kept by the power of the Lord unpolluted through time, till the redeemed take their place in eternity. A seed of all holiness was planted in the sinner's heart when regeneration took place. Not the seed of one particular grace, but the seed of all graces. Not one member was regenerated, but all the members; not one faculty, but all the faculties. When this washing was accomplished, it left behind it, then, a germ of universal holiness—a germ, not the full-grown flower, but yet a seed that is destined to bring forth fruit unto life eternal. There is often much need of reviving the grace in the regenerate sinner's heart but there is no need of the implantation of a new life. There is no possibility of destroying the life already implanted. It will be kept there in spite of Satan, sin, and the world.

After regeneration, I would speak of justification. The sinner is justified freely through grace, not on the ground of regeneration, but solely on the ground of Christ's finished work. The obedience and death of Christ are as much the groundwork of the one as of the other. It is because of this, and this alone, that Jehovah can without reflection on His justice be the just God and yet the justifier of the ungodly. The act of justification is as complete as it is free, and as sure as it is complete. It does not need to be revised or done over again, and it shall never be canceled. It is the perfect act of Him who is the Rock, whose work is perfect. In this act of justification all sins are forgiven; not only those known and remembered by the sinner, not only those felt and seen by him, when standing self-condemned and guilty, but those that the Judge saw, as He alone seeth; all, all were blotted out. It must be so, friends, in justice to Christ's righteousness.

are filled full of joy and peace and the love of God, though not to satiety. They are kept full, yet capacity remains. They are all vessels of mercy sailing in the ocean of Jehovah's love, yet not overwhelmed in its depths. There remains, after ages of sailing, an unfathomable ocean yet to be taken in. Yes, they are filled, kept full, yet ever filling. There is a great mystery, friends, in this fullness. They have enough; there is no painful longing, yet progression is made towards the infinite.

We are told that "neither shall sun light on them, nor any heat." No sun lights on them now with its painful scorching. No fierce trial nor bitter opposition of the world reaches them there. No, nor that which is more difficult still to bear, the unkindness and trouble they meet with from believers themselves—no trials, no afflictions, no grievous burdens now to bear! No heat now from Satan's temptations, no fiery trial, no heat from the Father's chastisements. They are free from all trouble—nothing to annoy, nothing to discomfort. They have reached the land where "the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest."

The sixth thing revealed to us is that "the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters." He is known as the Lamb even there, the Lamb "as it had been slain," the Lamb of Mount Calvary. Yes, and you also will know Him as the Lamb on whose very head you laid your hand in your bitter confession of sin; the Lamb whose blood flowed to cleanse you, whose chastisements got you peace, whose stripes brought you healing. You will not grudge Him His place of honor then, believer. You had a heart once in you that would have robbed Him of His glory and kept Him in the grave of Joseph. But there you will rejoice that His place is high in heaven, and it will fill you with happiness to see Him, the Lamb in the midst of the throne. Even in the Father's house, He will feed and lead His flock. Many a day did He lead them in the wilderness, and the leading does not end when they enter the promised land. In the Father's house He is still the Shepherd.

I could not bear the thought that Jesus were not there to lead me. If I thought such was the case, heaven would not be the same to me. When I stand at the gates of the New Jerusalem, and they are rolled back, and when the glory from within shines upon me in all its glorious

continually. Had they nothing to do but enjoy rest and repose they could not be happy. There are two classes of professors, apart from them, very common in the world. The first is the idle ones. They never do anything, either in the family, church, or congregation. They do no good either to themselves or others. Another class is the noisy professors. They are always busting about doing something all day long, making a great noise, but it is all "before men." Their religion is entirely one-sided; there is no "God side." They do much that men can see, but to one hour of closest communion they are strangers—they care not for it, and are perfectly indifferent to soul exercise. The serving of the redeemed is a joyous and cheerful service. Oh yes, when that glory from the throne shines upon them, and the love of God fills their hearts to overflowing, they long to respond to the manifestations of Jehovah's beauty, and desire to have an opportunity of letting out that love in serving Him day and night.

The third thing said of them is that "He that sitteth upon the throne shall dwell among them." Oh wondrous disclosure, marvel of marvels! Even here in the wilderness He did not leave them fatherless. He vouchsafed to them oftentimes His reviving power, giving them sweet foretastes of the blessedness they now enjoy. There will be an intimacy in communion above that which is unattainable here. We cannot venture far into this holy communion. We cannot tell how it is that each one among that throng will enjoy the delight of His ravishing countenance, as if that one alone was there; nor can we tell how it is that at the same time as they are enjoying the presence of Jehovah, they are receiving in their filled souls wave upon wave of the precious assurance of His love. This is beyond the tongue of man to tell, or the mind to conceive.

We observe of them, fourthly, that "they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more." There is hunger here; often craving, consuming hunger and panting thirst. Not that the carnal heart craves spirituality, but the cry of the new nature is ever after holiness; it has a never-sufficed desire for spiritual life. The body is no longer below in its weariness and weakness; corruptions no longer grieve. The fire of Satan's temptations is quenched; all defilement is removed. There was a void here ever to be filled up, a craving for something more, something better yet. But there, these washed, purified, glorified souls

The guilt of one idle thought, one vain word, as an infringement of God's law, will expose us to His wrath. Thus, if even a word or thought were left unpardoned, it would be, as it were, a reflection on Christ's finished work, as well as it would doom us to destruction. The believer's title to heaven is settled. There is no fear of its ever being shaken or his ever being deprived of it. God does not set sinners on the way and then leave them to themselves. He does not say, "I have given you a fair start; you must now make the rest of the way yourselves." No, the believer starts an heir of heaven, by virtue of a title God secures him, and He holds on his way by the help of the Lord till he reaches the threshold of eternity and there presents the title-deed written and sealed in the blood of the Lamb.

I observe the work of sanctification. Sanctification differs from either regeneration or justification. It is a work, not an act. Justification is an act done in heaven; sanctification is a work performed on earth. There is danger of placing the one for the other. Many in idle fashion trace their hope of sanctification to Christ's righteousness, and would fain believe that they personally had little or nothing to do with the matter. Such is not the right way of looking at it. Sanctification is a divine work of the Holy Spirit in the soul, distinct from Christ's finished work, and in connection with which the soul must be exercised. Others think—and alas, this class is large—that sanctification is something to be got at when the individual is a stranger to the corruptions of his heart and to the exceeding sinfulness of his sin. Fancying they have attained to regeneration and justification, and that these entitled them to sanctification, they think they can well afford to dispense with the Spirit, and can well afford to be indifferent to a life of holiness. Such, I much fear, are yet in the bond of iniquity. The work of the Spirit in sanctification is a work that must go on, not outside, but in the believer's heart. Others again dream of holiness only after death, and look upon sanctification as a thing quite unattainable in this life. But friends, sanctification is a work that is to be completed at death. And if this is not the case, there is no hope of it after. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still, and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still."

Don't wonder, aged Christian, you who have wandered in the wilderness many a day and have tried to serve the Lord these many years, don't wonder now, when you are drawing near death, when

your journey cannot now be much longer, if you feel you have more need of holiness than ever, and you find yourself saying. "Surely I am not meet for heaven, I who am seeing so much of my own increasing defilement, and those sins and corruptions becoming more powerful; no prayer, no utterance of mine that is not steeped in this defilement. Ah! how unlikely it seems that ever I shall set foot in the New Jerusalem!" Dear friend, look less at yourself and more at blessed Christ. Take the Lord at His word. He that hath begun the good work, will He give it up now, do you think? He will not leave thee at the end of thy journey; even when the last step is to be taken, when in the death throes you may feel the presence of the old man in all his entirety, yes, as strong as ever. But even in death the Lord is worth trusting. You may depend upon it, that trust will not be betrayed. He will be as good as His word. When you have passed through the valley, crossed the river and parted with the old man, nothing will appear more astonishing to you, not even the first great change of being made spiritually alive, than this wonderful parting with the old man forever.

Again, I wish to remark that this washing we have already spoken of is a washing in the blood of the Lamb, Christ. It is only through the blood of His Son that God can extend His hand to sinners. It is only through the right of His blood that the Spirit can give them His everlasting blessings. It is a wondrous sight—that of the Spirit bringing the sinner into God's presence and claiming sanctification through the right of Christ's righteousness. Think of Jesus putting in His claim on behalf of His blood-bought ones! Think of Jehovah's response and of the settling and sealing the sinner's title. This is indeed an amazing sight. All washing, all justifying, all sanctifying, is at the expense of the blood of the Lamb. Naught outside of or away from this precious blood—all things in it. All, from the first moment of effectual calling till the believer reaches heaven, is done at the cost of Jesus' blood.

It is well, friends, to understand the connection between a life of holiness and the cross of Christ. How sin can be subdued, how lust can be weakened, how a soul cleaving to the dust can become heavenly, panting after the Lord and the enjoyment of His service—all this is only to be obtained by dealing with the blood of the Lamb. If I knew more of the life and death of my blessed Savior, and were I less

them at last? Yes, it is even so. They are basking in the effulgence of the glory issuing from the throne and Him who sitteth upon it. I know not how it is, friends, but we cannot tell anything of that glorified body they now wear, nor how it is that they are so strengthened as to be able to endure the showing forth of that glory, nor do we know the exercise of soul they experience which prevents their being struck down before the majesty of Him who sitteth on the throne. All of us can know little of it, and all our talking is but poor babbling at the best. But this I venture to say with John, "It does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." What a wonder, we exclaim, that they were ever brought there! Yes, it is a marvelous thing, but it would be a greater wonder if they were not there. If we look first at the wonder on Mount Calvary, our surprise will be less at this latter wondrous manifestation of God's love. When I see the Son of God pouring out His blood on the cross, and when I think of Jehovah's marvelous love in the gift of His Son, my wonder would be great indeed, if the love that gave such a Son to shed His blood would not bring those cleansed in that blood to Himself at last, even to a place before His throne. The wonder on Mount Calvary is the wonder of wonders. Nowhere is the glory of Jehovah's love and justice combined more manifest than in the cross, and where can the objects of this love get a more fitting place than that which they occupy before His throne above? Kings are desirous to show forth and exhibit the trophies of their power and skill. These arrayed in white robes are the trophies of Jehovah's power and the specimens of His skill. Where can they be shown best but in that glorious place He has given them? In them is manifested, as in nothing else, the glory of His love. The reflection of that glory is cast back again from them in songs of praise and thankfulness towards the throne and Him that sitteth upon it and the Lamb.

The second thing we are told of them is, They serve Him day and night in His temple." They serve Him. Observe, they are not idle. There is rest, but no idleness in heaven. Idleness would be no rest to them. I do not know, nor can any of us tell, what this temple is in which they serve God. We are told they are always there day and night. Not that there is any night in heaven; it means that they serve

this world, but God breaks them and leaves us no other resource but to go to Himself. Rest assured, you are greatly the better for the troubles that send you often on errands to the throne of grace. All furnaces are good that hem you in to blessed Christ. When your journey is over, believer, will not the home seem sweeter to you, when looking back upon all the dangers and griefs and fears you have passed through? I think it will.

Two vessels left the harbor together. One of them had a pleasant and speedy voyage. No storm assailed her for even an hour of the voyage, but the sea was quiet, beautiful and calm. She entered the port in safety. The other, from the moment of setting out, was stormed and in danger. The wind blew fiercely, the waves raged, the hurricane roared, the waters rose like mountains; she was almost engulfed. When at last she did reach the harbor, with shattered mast and tattered sail, and hardly got in—"was scarcely saved"—which of the crews do you think felt their spirits happier, or the haven sweeter? Was it they who had a pleasant voyage and an easy entrance, or they who had endured terrific storms and been in fearful dangers and had been scarcely saved? I think it would be the latter, friends. Their hearts would be more full of thankfulness and the repose to them would be sweeter. And just so will it be with those entering the haven above—vessels of mercy, brought "out of great tribulation."

I must confess I shrink from the third point—"Whither are they brought?" It is too much, even a glimpse of this glory, for flesh to bear, unless accompanied by unction from the Holy One and unless spiritual eyesight is given. If we push aside the veil in an irreverent manner, and if the fleshly prevail over the spiritual in our view, we shall at last come to regard those most holy things, a glimpse of which we have here vouchsafed us, with utter indifference. With becoming awe and solemnity, let us approach and look at these seven things that are recorded in connection with those redeemed, justified and sanctified ones.

1. They are "before the throne." And is this the goal they have reached at last? They who were lying in their guilt and misery on the brink of hell, who suffered in the pangs of the new birth, who passed through the wilderness fainting and weary, who so lately trembled in the death throes on the threshold of eternity—has it come to this with

a stranger to His precious blood, I would have less cause to complain of hardness and death. The more dealing I have with this blood, the more will I experience the blessedness of the man who enjoys sweet and uninterrupted communion with God. The truest believer, the most advanced Christian, can never afford to be independent of the blood of the Lamb. When the finishing stroke is given, when they are going down to the Jordan, never were they more dependent, and you may hear them saying with the aged Paul, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."

We have now come to another point of our subject, namely, to remark that these washed, justified, and sanctified ones are brought "out of great tribulation." Some may ask, "How can this be? We have known many go there out of great and manifold tribulations, out of much sorrow and suffering, out of the pains of martyrdom, but others have entered peacefully, having had a pleasant, and it may be, a speedy journey." It may be so, friend, but if we knew the story of each of these redeemed ones, and if we took the accumulated stories in the aggregate, we would see how very great was the tribulation they were brought out of. But again it may be urged, "Have not some had scarcely a journey at all? Have they not just breathed, and then been carried hence?" Yes, that may be the case too; but, friend, did they not open their eyes upon a world of misery, blighted by sin? Did they not draw one breath in a polluted atmosphere? Were they not surrounded by a sea of troubles, exposed to the powers of hell and the fiery trial of Satan? In this sense they came out of great and manifold tribulation. The smallest of these troubles they passed through was great, contrasted with the joys and happiness of their present glorious home.

This question may suggest itself to many of you, and how often it has been a hard question to some of us, "Why does the Lord expose His children to so many sorrows and trials, and when they meet them on their way, why does He not give them wings over these troubles, or why does He not lead them by a more peaceful path? He, who loved them so much as to give up His well-beloved Son to the death, and who washed them in the blood of the Lamb, one would think He would do otherwise." I cannot answer your questions, except in this way. I

am quite sure that the path by which the Lord leads them is the best, and another thing I am sure of is that He will draw glory to Himself and good to them out of what appears to us a grievous affliction and a tedious delay. If it is my Father's will that He should be glorified in me in His particular way, dare I murmur? Far be such a thing from me!

I shall now point out four ways in which the Lord has an opportunity of manifesting His glory in His people's afflictions. He manifests His faithfulness, His power, His wisdom, and His tender mercies. First, His faithfulness. How often when the Lord's people are bowed down with sorrow, assailed with many and great temptations, struck to the ground by heavy afflictions, when it seems they are surrounded on every side by a very sea of troubles, when their heart grows faint within them, and they are ready to be engulfed, when they cry, "Hath the Lord forgotten to be gracious? Is His mercy clean gone for ever?"—how often does He come mightily to their deliverance and give them cause to sing to the praise of His faithful Word! And when, after all delays, trials, fears and suspicions, how the glory of His faithfulness shines forth in their triumphal entry into glory! Then that dark cloud of trial and tribulation will appear but as a background to show off more clearly His glorified faithfulness. The promises of the Lord are yea and amen in Christ Jesus. The Word of the Lord endureth forever.

Secondly, the power of God will be glorified in the affliction of His people. Satan is the great enemy of the believer. All his powers and artifices are employed, and all the blandishments of the world are used by him for the accomplishment of the believer's destruction. The more Satan molests, the more he aims his fiery darts, the more numerous the hosts he calls into the field, the more is the power of God glorified in beating back and defeating him. Had the Lord always made the journey of His people a short one, Satan might say, "Had He left them longer here, I would have easily defeated them, but I got no opportunity of trying them." But Satan has not this to say. The Lord gives him a chance of doing his worst. He leaves them forty years in the wilderness. Satan, with all his hellish hosts, tries every plan, and puts forth his utmost strength, but all to no purpose; he is vanquished. And after all, God's power triumphs, and His Israel arrive at the promised land, singing, "Is there anything too hard for the Lord?"

Thirdly, God's wisdom is glorified in His people's afflictions. What has not the wisdom of the Lord to do in defeating iniquity and in giving a way of escape to His people from the wiles and deceit of Satan! When the believer is oftentimes in darkness and cannot see the need or wisdom of a mysterious providence, yet in the time of his deliverance he comes to see that in all the intricacies of the wheels of the machine there is written, "Glory to God in the highest" and good will to Israel. I must see Jehovah's glory to be the first and great end, and that the way He takes to accomplish this end is worthy of Himself. Seeing this, it is surely my calling to be contented and to bow meekly to His wisdom saying no longer, "Why did He do this or that? Would it not have been better if He had taken such a way or such another?"

Lastly, I remark that the tender mercies of the Lord are glorified in the afflictions of His people. The flesh likes an easy way—it would have no troubles, no sorrows, no wounds, no fears. But had God's way been such an easy one, there would be no gracious relieving, no sweet sense of His power and love in deliverance, no precious drop of comfort in the flames. The Lord takes His children's hearts away from the loved things of earth, and must have nothing coming in between Him and them. When they are crushed under affliction, there is more cause for entire dependence on Himself. Were it not for troubles, friends, we would have little knowledge of the tenderness of our Lord's loving kindness. It is those who are laden with sorrow, those with open wounds, faint hearts, moist eyes, to whom Jehovah has an opportunity of showing His tender mercies. It is they who know how to get draughts from the fountain of His love. It is a blessed tempest, dear, tried child of God, that casts you into the bosom of Jehovah!

What good may also be got from tribulations in the way of coming to know ourselves a little better! The heat of the furnace throws up the dross and corruption of our vile hearts. Hard though the heat be, scorching though the fire be, yet the Lord brings great things to you out of it all. Some poor tried one here may be saying, "I have been in the furnace, yes, in a hot fire, but what good has it done me?" It has at least done you this good, it has shown you how much dross and corruption and defilement there is still in you, and don't say that is a small thing. There are some of us, my friends, who would like now and then to get a little pleasure and satisfaction out of the cisterns of