

CHRIST, A REFRESHFUL SHADOW IN A WEARY LAND.*

SERMON XXII.

ISA. xxxii. 2,

And a man shall be—as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

THIS prophecy relates to Hezekiah, to his happy and pious government; but doubtless a greater than Hezekiah is here, and that is Jesus Christ, the king of saints. This world, before sin entered into it, had always a clear sky; there was not an air of pestilential wind to blow upon them that were travelling through it to Immanuel's land. But since sin entered, the case is quite altered; strong winds of trouble blow, tempests of heavy rain fall; there are inundations in the world, as the word is; it is a dry place; in respect of comfort, it is a weary land; but though a weary land, it is not altogether without some comforting prospect. A shadow and shelter is prepared for the weary traveller; for it is promised in the text, "And a man shall be—as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." In which words, there is observable,

1. What the world is spiritually to Christ's subjects, the people of God, a "weary land;" that is, a thirsty land, a scorching country, a stormy place, with many inconveniences, which make travellers weary and faint. It is a wilderness, wherein there is no water, but a vehement heat, which makes people weary, and long for shelter and refreshment.—Observe,

2. What Christ is to them there, "as the shadow of a great rock." How pleasant is a shelter in such a place to the weary traveller! Such is Christ to his people in the world. There are many shelters, there is even the shadow of created comforts; but, alas! they are unsubstantial shades; they are as the shade of a tree, through which the sun, wind, or rain beats. But Christ is as the shadow of a rock, which none of these can pierce; and as a great rock, which gives a large shelter; so that there they have a perfect repose, blow what weather will.—The text affords us this

DOCTRINE, That Christ is a suitable shade, and a refreshing shelter, for those to whom the world is a weary land.

For illustrating this doctrine, it is proposed,

I. To show what is implied in the text.

II. To inquire in what respects the world is a weary land to the saints.

* This and the following discourse, delivered August, 1715.

III. To point out in what respects Jesus Christ is a suitable and refreshing shade and shelter to them in a weary land.

IV. Conclude with a practical improvement.

We are, then,

I. To shew what is implied in the text,—It imports,

1. That the world is not our dwelling-place, but the place through which we are travelling. This world is but a thoroughfare to another, where we come in at our birth, walk through in our life, and go out again at death. Many imagine but two fixed points in the universe, the higher and the lower, and that bodies are revolving in continual motion towards one or other of these, heaven and hell. The godly are going out of the world in affection, Song iv. 8; the wicked, in action, though not in affection; none are abiding.—It imports,

2. That there is no correcting of the ill air of the world; a shade and shelter may be had in it, but to reduce it to its first temperature, that it may indeed be a pleasant land, is not promised, and therefore cannot be expected. The winds of trouble must blow in it while there are such treasures of sin in it to bring them forth. While our provocations against heaven gather into clouds, there will be tempestuous rains of calamities in it. The godly may lay their account with this: John xvi. 33, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." And the carnal world need not lay their account by it: Job. v. 7, "Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upwards."—It imports,

3. That, foul or fair weather, we must set out our heads, and through the weary land we must go; there is no other way but to take our share of what may be going on in it. He that would stop till the sky clear, may with as good reason sit down and wait till the water run out, that he may get through the river dry shod; the last may be sooner expected than the first.—It imports,

4. That the travelling through it will try our strength; take what way we will, we cannot miss sometimes to be entangled in the wilderness, and to be wearied in it, though the heart were so glued to it, as never to be wearied of it. The winds, the rains, and the storms, that blow there, will bear heavy on us, so as that we will need a resting, a refreshing place.—It imports,

5. That nothing less than the great rock will be a sufficient shelter in this weary land; no solid peace or repose out of Christ, more than there was out of the ark when the deluge came on. The winds and storms will blow down, or blow through, all other shades which men make to themselves in the weary land: Isa. xxviii. 17, "And the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall

overflow the hiding-place." Flying from one mischief, while they flee not to the great rock, they shall fall into another : Amos v. 19, "As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him ; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him."—It imports,

6. That Christ is a sufficient shelter, however weary a land the world be : John xvi. 33, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation ; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Be the storms or heats as great as they will, he is as a great rock ; and from him, though the troubles may be great, yet they may expect a great salvation. They will always be safe who are under the shade of the great rock, through which neither heats nor storms can pierce : Psalm xciii. 4, "The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters ; yea, than the mighty waves of the sea." It is impossible they can be greater than they have been ; nay, they can never be so great as once they were, when from heaven, earth, and hell, at once they blow upon Christ. Yet he bore them, bore up under them, bore them off his people ; even as the heats and rains fall on the rock, while those under its shade are kept safe.—It imports,

Lastly, That the weary world makes Christ more precious to sinners than otherwise he would be. If the traveller were not scorched with heat, or tossed with tempests, he would never look near the rock. Ease in the world, is the neck-break of many. But it is well for the church and people of God, that the world is a step-dame to them ; were they better entertained in the world's house, they would more seldom knock at God's door.—We now proceed,

II. To shew in what respects the world to the people of God is a weary land.—It is so, because,

1. The wind blowing in the traveller's face makes any land a weary land to him ; and in this world, there is a wind of ordinary trouble, that is seldom if ever down, but blowing especially in the face of the travellers to Zion ; Matth. vi. 34, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Sometimes it blows away the man's ease, blasts his reputation, blows away his worldly goods, his health, his relations, &c. It blows so that he is sure of nothing he has, unless it be Christ in him, the hope of glory. And the travellers must lay their account with this. This cannot fail but make the world a weary land. But the soul may find a calm under Christ's shadow, as Hannah did, when she poured out her soul before the Lord, 1 Sam. i. 16. Praying in faith is a great ease to a heart uneasy under trouble : Matth. vii. 7, "Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Christ is

an anchor that can keep the soul sure and steadfast amidst all the tempests of a weary world. He has an open ear to their just complaints, and a soft hand, under which the uneasy heart and head may repose themselves.—It is a weary land,

2. Because sometimes there are terrible tempests of common calamity, threatening to sweep all away before them, blowing in this world, which makes it a weary land. There are no tempests in the upper region, but in the lower region, where we are, they are very frequent, whereby nations, churches, and families, are thrown into the utmost confusion. David speaks of such, Psalm lv. 8, "I would," says he, "hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest." These often make a most miserable face on the places where they blow, and make the land a weary land indeed. But even in this case, there is found peace under Christ's shadow: John xvi. 33, "These things I have spoken unto you, that ye might have peace; in the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." In him believers have a peace the world cannot rob them of. He has hiding-places for his people, where he will hide them, if not from trouble, yet from the evil, the sting, and hurt of it: 1 Pet. iii. 13, "And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" He will hide them, if not under heaven, yet in heaven; and they have no reason to complain who get there, though in a fiery chariot. Our Lord holds the winds in his hand, and they can blow no more terribly than he permits them; so that in the worst of times it is good news; Isa. lii. 7, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" And these that make Christ their friend, may bid defiance to all their enemies.—The world is a weary land,

3. Because the wild beasts in it make it a weary land. The scripture calls wicked men so, especially in their opposition to, and treatment of the people of God, and the world is the place of their abode: Song iv. 8, "Come with me, my spouse, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards." And therefore, while they are travelling through the wilderness, they are often put to that prayer, Psalm lxxiv. 19, 20, "O deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove unto the multitude of the wicked, forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever, have respect unto the covenant, for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty." No wonder the world be a weary land to the people of God; for the wild beasts are often heard roaring there; Psalm lxxiv. 4, "Thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregation, they set up their ensigns

for signs ;” threatening to devour, and to swallow up, and to make the name of Israel no more to be remembered ; as the Egyptian beast did, *Exod. xv. 9*. But while these roarings make the hearts of God’s people to tremble, the voice of the Lion of the tribe of Judah, terrible to his enemies, is comfortable to his friends : *Psalm xciii. 4*, “ The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.” This moderated the roarings of the Assyrian in Hezekiah’s days, *Isa. xxxvii. 22*. These beasts are often heard yelling in the world : *Jer. ii. 15*, “ The young lions roared upon him, and yelled, and they made his land waste.” Dreadful is that yelling they make when they are got together, uttering their blasphemies, curses, and reproaches, against God, his people, and his cause in the world, as if hell was opened, which is the den of the great lion. This makes the world a weary land, and it is most heavy and distressing to the people of God : *Psalm lxxiv. 10*, “ O God, how long shall the adversary reproach ? shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever ?” But there is refreshment and shelter under Christ’s shadow in this case, while the soul sees that he will close up at length the blasphemous mouths, and bring them to the city above, where they shall hear no more of any such thing. But again, these beasts are often seen tearing and devouring in the world the men that are more righteous than they : *Hab. i. 13*, “ Wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he ?” God has his times wherein he lets them loose, to make havoc of the church, and shed the blood of his saints. But under Christ’s shadow there is refreshing in this case. He can break out the teeth of the great lions with a touch ; and while they are at the worst, he says to his people, “ Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul,” *Matth. x. 28*. It was the way they treated Christ himself when in the world, but he rose upon them to their confusion ; and so shall the church in like manner, and according to their measure, *Psalm xxii. 12, 13*.

4. Darkness causeth weariness, and a dark land will always be a weary land to the children of light. The world at best is but a dark land, in comparison with heaven : *1 Cor. xiii. 12*, “ For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face.” But sometimes the darkness increaseth mightily. We have had a long sunshine of gospel-light, but men have loved darkness rather than light. And now God is rising up to plead with the generation ; and we may say, with Jeremiah, “ Woe unto us, for the day goeth away, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out.” Do ye not see the darkness come, and coming on the land more and more ? There is a

dark cloud already cast over the ministers and professors of Scotland; so that they have now been like a company of travellers in a mist; some crying this, and others that is the way; while many are at a stand, not knowing what hand to turn to. Hence there are an alienation of affection, divisions, and separations, amongst those who all profess that they are travelling to the same place, but cannot agree about the way. Terrible this, at all times, but now especially, when the common enemy is at our gates, which should make us cease from these feuds, as it is said the beasts did, hare, dog, sheep, cat and rat, in the inundation of the Severn. Some pride themselves in these, but they will make the world a weary land to those that are led by the Spirit of truth and peace: Judges v. 16, "Why abidest thou among the sheep-folds, to hear the bleating of the flocks? For the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart."

What shall we do in such a case? Get in under Christ's shadow, by faith, renouncing our own understanding, passions, and prejudices, and giving up ourselves singly to his guiding, and his shadow will be as the shadow on the dial, pointing to the hour of the day: Psalm xxv. 9, "The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way." In the greatest darkness of the world, there is a light, even "a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto we do well that we take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in our hearts," 2 Pet. i. 19. This oracle of heaven is never struck dumb; but at any time men's corruptions may make them both blind and deaf to its warnings. But again, the bushel is preparing to put the candle under, which God has lighted to give light to his church, if mercy prevent it not; and then people that have made themselves so many silent Sabbaths, will get them made to their hands; and they that have been wearying for the day, may come to get a weary fill of it. Preachers driven into corners, closed kirk-doors, and the songs of the temple turned into howlings, will make a dark day. And now, if God do not mercifully interpose, we cannot miss it. But Christ's shadow will be refreshing in this case to those that get under it. Though the enemy should get leave to tread down the outer court, and these that worship in it, they that are farther in shall be well seen to: Rev. xi. 1, 2. Though they should burn up all the synagogues of God within the land, yet there is a little sanctuary they cannot hinder you to carry about with you: Ezek. xi. 16, "Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord God, Although I have cast them afar off among the Heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries

where they shall come." And though the stars should be stamped down to the earth, and no star-light shine in the church, ye shall not want light while the Sun of righteousness continues to shine.

Finally, The bottomless pit is already opened, the smoke is arising in our land, and the locusts are coming out of the smoke upon it: Rev. ix. 1—3. The Popish party are now begun to make head, with their brethren the malignants who carry on the war with Antichrist, and to set a limb of Antichrist upon the throne: and if they succeed, what can be expected, but that the smoke of Antichristian errors, superstition, and idolatry, will overspread these nations again? So that we must resolve either to take on the Beast's mark or Christ's fire-mark, either burn or turn. It will be weary work to get through the smoke, which it is to be feared will stifle most of us, and blacken many. But get under Christ's shadow now; seek now to believe, and feel the power of truth. An empty profession will not do here; lamps without oil will go out in the smoke. But be it ever so gross, it will hurt none but the profane and hypocritical professor: Rev. ix. 4, "And it was commanded them, that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads." They that have Christ's mark of true piety, shall be kept from receiving the mark of the beast. Under Christ's shadow they will be as the Israelites in Goshen; when darkness is over all the land, they shall have light in their dwellings.—The world is a weary land,

5. For blood and death going through it, make it a weary land. In heaven there are none of these things, it is the pleasant land, Rev. xxi. 4. But in the world they are very frequent; which often makes the weary sons of Zion to cry, "Woe is me now, for my soul is wearied because of murderers," Jer. iv. 31. The people that delight in war is a black character in the scriptures, Psalm lxxviii. 30. The confused noise of the warriors is no pleasant sound, nor are garments rolled in blood a pleasant sight. The constant disquiet and terror that attends the sword's raging in a land, is a wearisome case, as it is described, Deut. xxviii. 67, "In the morning thou shalt say, Would to God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning; for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see."

The white horse of the gospel has for many years made a pleasant parade through the land. But alas! neither it, nor the crowned head, the Son of God, that sits upon it, has been much regarded; nay; both he, and his bow, which is the word, have been despised; few, very few, have given him a crown, Song iii. 11, by closing with

him in the gospel-offers. And now the red, black, and pale horses, mentioned Rev. vi. 4, 5, 8, seem to be ready to begin their march, to avenge the affronts offered to the white horse; though the Popish and malignant riders mean not so, but to banish the white horse out of the land. What shall we do in this case? get in under Christ's shadow, that is the only safe retreat in such a case: Mic. v. 5, "And this man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land." This should be our work this day; we should sit down under his shadow, believing in him, and depending upon him, Cant. ii. 3. When public calamity comes upon a land, every person will run to that place where they expect the greatest safety; but run where they will for shelter, if they run not to Christ, their shelters will fall down about their ears at length: Isa. xxviii. 17, "And the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the water shall overflow the hiding-place." But the way of safety is to run to Jesus Christ: Prov. xviii. 10, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." You must sit down under his shadow, by closing with him in the offers of the gospel, taking him for all, and instead of all, for time and eternity: giving yourselves away to him, renouncing the devil, the world, and the flesh, embarking in his interests and cause at this day, whoever be against it. This is a loud knock Christ is giving to gospel-despisers to open to him, after the slighting of many a still small voice, whereby he lets them know, that if they will not open to him as a Lord and Saviour, he will arise on them as a Judge with a vengeance, whether they will or not. Come, then, ye despisers of Christ, and sit down under his shadow, before the scorching heat of the weary land burn you up.

We must sit still under his shadow, by cleaving to him, and depending upon him: Isa. xxx. 7, "For the Egyptian shall help in vain, and to no purpose; therefore have I cried concerning this, Their strength is to sit still." Though the scourge reach all, the greatest safety will be there. Cleave to him and his cause, come what will come; for if you go off his way to seek safety, you cast yourselves out of his promised protection. Piety will be the best policy in the worst of times: Prov. x. 9, "He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely; but he that perverteth his way, shall be known." And depend on him by believing his promises, both for your personal case, and the church's case; for whoever be in the field, victory is in his hand alone, and he gives it to whom he will; he does what he will in the armies of heaven and earth; whom he will he strengthens, whom he will he weakens, for he is the Lord of hosts; and he hath engaged that at length it shall be ill

with his enemies, and well with his friends : Isa. liv. 17, "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper ; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn ; this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."—But again,

We must lie down under his shadow, in holy resignation, to suffer whatsoever he may call us to, Isa. li. 23. The dispensations of the day call aloud to us to prepare for suffering ; if the malignant party prevail, doubt not but their little finger will be heavier than their father's loins. Our Lord has given many love-tokens to the generation, which have been lightly esteemed ; howbeit, there are many that profess love to him and his truths ; and it would seem, he will try what tokens we have to bestow on him and his cause. It is likely he will have a portion of some one's goods, relations, liberty, yea, and of their blood too, ere all be done ; and it is to be feared, the tokens of his displeasure draw so deep, that many will give up with-him on this account. But if you be wise, lie down under his shadow ; for a thorny bed under Christ's shadow will at the last prove more easy than the beds of ivory on which his enemies may stretch themselves for a little ; Job xx. 5, "The triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment." The hour and power of darkness will not last ; and though God should suffer that party to carry all before them a while, there is no ground to doubt but God will be even with them, for all their enmity, and opposition to his work ; yes, and render home their father's opposition to it into their bosom, and give them blood to drink, for the blood their fathers shed in fields, and on scaffolds, when they have filled up the measure of their iniquity by what they may now do : Rev. xvi. 5, 6, "And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy."

But we must also stand up under Christ's shadow, and act for him. Certainly, as the quarrel is now stated betwixt Christ and his enemies in Britain and Ireland, he calls his people now to act for him and his cause. If *they* have a standard to be displayed for Popery and slavery, God has given us a standard to be displayed for religion and liberty : Psalm lx. 4, "Thou has given a banner to them that feared thee, that it might be displayed because of the truth." And people are called, by this dispensation, to put themselves in a posture to defend their religion and liberties, their Protestant King, country and families, and not to leave themselves a

naked prey for murderers. And in such a time, people consulting their own ease, more than the honour of God, the welfare of his cause, and their neighbour's safety, may easily slip themselves in under Meroz's curse, which, when incurred, will not be got so easily off persons: Judges v. 23, "Curse ye Meroz, (said the angel of the Lord), curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

Never was the cause more clear in Britain. The word, to spirit the soldiery under the enemies' standard, should be, The great red dragon, Rev. xii. 3, and the motto corresponding with this, as in Psalm ii. 3, "Let us break their bands, and cast their cords from us." This is the design of the attempt, and, I am persuaded, is looked upon so by Him that sitteth in the heavens. What else is the design of the Papists and malignants this day? Our holy religion must go, and idolatry and superstition come in its room; we and our families must be murdered, or renounce our religion, though denying of Christ will never altogether please them, for they will especially never trust Scotch Presbyterians, so that that would be the way to die a double death. Our Protestant King must go, and a Papist ascend the throne, and the covenanted work of Reformation be rooted out, unless that people act for their defence against the Antichristian party. I know no minds this day, but that every one must be on Christ's side, or on Antichrist's. This cause will bear no neutrality: Matth. xii. 30, "He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad."

Never was the cause more favourable; for while our intruders and enemies cannot appear in the field but as rebels and traitors, laying themselves open to all the pains of treason and rebellion, we have, by the mercy of God, the law on our side. No doubt, masses will be said at Rome for them, and in other parts of the Pope's territory; but the prayers of all the Protestant churches abroad will be for us and our righteous cause; and the prayers of all the godly in the land will also be in our favour. It is true, indeed, our God is angry with us; but sure I am, he is not well-pleased with them, he never was nor will be pleased with the cause they have in hand; and therefore, seeing the cause is the Lord's, we may be sure that "though he cause grief, yet he will have compassion;" and when he has done his work with his furnace on Mount Zion, he will bring off his cause and people victorious at length, Isa. liv. 17. And we have ground to hope, that if the noise of enemies go on, it will raise up at length a ghost upon the Popish and malignant interest in

these nations, that shall affright them, and ruin it more than ever ; I mean, the ghost of the buried covenants.*

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

SERMON XXIII.

ISA. xxxii. 2,

And a man shall be—as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

HAVING, in the preceding discourse, offered several reasons why this world is to the saints a weary land, I go on now farther to observe, that the world is to them a weary land : For,

6. An ill way makes a weary land to travellers. There is much ill way in the world, that wearies sore them that are travelling Zion-ward. It is true, the way of holiness is a good way, in so far as it leads to the heavenly Jerusalem ; and though it be strewed with thorns and briars, it is better to walk in it, than in the way to destruction strewed with roses. But an uneasy way we call an ill way ; and such is the way through the weary land of the world. It is all up-hill, which scars the most part of the world. The way to hell is down the hill, but the way to heaven is up the hill : Psalm xxiv. 3, “ Who shall ascend into the hill of God ? ” They that would sit at ease, and sleep through the world, are not meet for heaven ; the way will try people’s strength, and an easy way to heaven no man shall find. There are strong lusts, and temptations, and troubles, which people have to climb over. But under Christ’s shadow, the traveller will recover his breath again, and be invigorated for new difficulties, till he come to the top of the hill : Isa. xl. 29, “ He giveth power to the faint ; and to them that have no might, he increaseth strength.” Ver. 31, “ They that wait upon the Lord

* The intelligent reader, who is acquainted with the history of Britain, has only to be reminded, that the period when this discourse was delivered was very eventful. An unnatural rebellion was then breaking out, cherished by a Popish faction both at home and abroad, which in its progress threatened to overturn our religion and liberties. On this occasion, the worthy author, as a sound patriot for his country’s welfare, as a genuine son of Zion, and a faithful watchman upon her walls, could not fail to sound a suitable alarm. From the deep sense he had of the impending danger, from a clear conviction of indispensable duty, and possessing a natural warmth of temper, the strong expressions made use of by him in this and other parts of his discourses, are easily to be accounted for.

shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

It is a narrow way: "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life," Matth. vii. 14. Multitudes walk in the broad way, and there they get room enough; but in the narrow way there are few travellers, and they that are on it must take good heed to their feet, or they are apt to catch a fall. And considering how rash we naturally are, and how weak-headed and false-hearted we are, and how narrow the road is, and how loose the ground about it is, it is no wonder, that with the Psalmist we complain of broken bones, Psalm li. 8. These make a weary way. But under Christ's shadow there is light for the blind, strength for them that go even on, and medicine to cure them that are bruised by their falls, if they intend not to lie still, but to get up and walk on.

It is a hard and rugged way, and therefore they must have leg-harness, as soldiers have, to preserve their feet from stones and roughness in the way of their march: Eph. vi. 15, "And their feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." There are many difficulties to go through that will need resolution and undaunted courage. The spies saw such difficulties in the way to Canaan, that they brought up an ill report of the land. But Caleb and Joshua had another spirit, that fitted them to face all these difficulties, Numb. xiv. 24. The fearful are not for heaven, Rev. xxi. 8. But under Christ's shadow there is sweet refreshment in the hardest piece of the way, and nothing is too hard for them whom he bears up: Phil. iv. 13, "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me."

It is a way wherein many snares are laid. The snares of the world make it a weary land. The way is beset with thorns, and lies through thickets, where on every side there is something to catch a man. There are snares in every lot, in every condition, in the most innocent things in the world; and there is need of great caution to get through them. How often are men in the snare ere ever they are aware! Like the poor bird they find the snare laid where they were not looking for it. But under Christ's shadow, there is a shelter where they may be safe. It is he that leads them through the wilderness to that place where they will be in no more hazard. Yea, casting themselves by faith on him, they are in no danger from any quarter whatever.—It may be further observed,

7. That the country-disease often makes it a weary land; and that, in the world, is sin. No sooner do any set their foot in that land, than are they infected with it: Psalm li. 5, "Behold I was

shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Though the power of this disease be broken in the saints at their conversion, yet it hangs about them as long as they are in the land. What wonder, then, that it be to them a weary land?—And there are five things that make it so.

(1.) The heaviness of the disease. It is called a body of death, Rom. vii. 24, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Death is heavy in any part of it, how much more burdensome must a body of it be? It bears down the man continually; it is a burden to the back, that makes him stoop, and so makes a weary land.

(2.) The universality of the disease. It affects and indisposes the whole man, so that we may say, Isa. i. 5, 6, that "the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint; from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores." It spreads itself like a leprosy, through all the faculties of the soul, and leaves no part of the man unaffected. It has smitten the understanding with blindness, and the heart with hardness, and filled the mind with enmity against God. Job's life was a heavy life when he was full of boils all over; and so is the life of those who are universally affected with the disease of sin.—There is,

(3.) The frequent relapses that take place in this disease. How often do they fall back again when they seem to be in a fair way of recovery! This makes a weary world to a heaven-born soul, that would fain be like God in holiness; ever wrestling, and ever falling into the mire again, makes weary work. This makes that longing to be away for which the saint is distinguished.—There is,

(4.) The malignant influence these things have on the saints' journey through the weary land. By these means they are very much unfitted for it, they walk very slowly. It is a weary journey to them; and oftentimes they are so laid by, that they are not able to move forward at all, and they are driven back, instead of going forward.

(5.) It is not their case alone, but of all that are there, the being affected by this disease. The world is an hospital of souls sick with sin. Some of them are sensible of their disease, others are not. The godly have not only their own plague-sores running on, but they also see those of others running on: and that makes a weary land: Jer. ix. 2, "O that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place of a wayfaring man, that I might leave my people, and go from them! for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men." But under Christ's shadow, there is medicine for the sore. There is

balm in Gilead, and a physician there. His blood takes away the guilt, his Spirit takes away the power of sin; and in his holy promises they see their freedom and complete cure.—I observe,

8. That the scorching heats in the world make it a weary land. And there are these four kinds of scorching heat.

(1.) There is the fiery heat of desertion, from heaven. This the captain of our salvation met with in the weary land, Psalm xxii. 1—14; and this has often been the lot of the people of God in the weary land; they have lost sight of their guide, and have been left in darkness, and gone mourning many days, without the sun, with many a weary groan, Psalm vi. 6. Nay, there have been many positive outgoings of wrath against their souls, sparks of hell flying in on heaven-born souls, while they have been pressed under a sense of the Lord's anger, living, as it were, in the smoke of a furnace: Psalm cii. 3, "For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth."—There is,

(2.) The fiery heat of temptation from hell: Eph. vi. 12, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickednesses in high places." When the Israelites were in the wilderness they met with fiery serpents that bit them, Num. xxi. 6; and while we are in the wilderness of this world, we cannot miss the inflaming bites of the old serpent the devil. Satan is within bow-shot of us while here; and the tosses of temptation from him make it a weary land. Ordinary temptations are never wanting, but are coming through the weary land like midges in a hot summer-day. Sometimes there are extraordinary temptations, fiery darts, where the poor soul will be as much put to it, to defend itself, as one to defend a thatch-house against one casting fire-balls, as it were, without intermission.—There is,

(3.) The fiery trial from the men of the world, persecution. This is such an ordinary inheritance of the people of God in the weary land, that an apostle says, 1 Pet. iv. 12, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." There is much dross, together with the good metal, which gathers together in Zion, and therefore God will have a furnace there, and the wicked of the world to set it on, and blow it up, and professors must be cast into it to try them, some to be consumed, some to be refined in it: Zech. xiii. 9, "And I will bring the third part through the fire, and refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on my name, and I will hear them; I will say, it is my people, and they shall say, the Lord is my God."—There is,

(4.) The fiery heat of contention and division from the altar, mentioned Rev. viii. 5. These have a sort of malignant influence on the church; they scorch and blacken her exceedingly: Song i. 6, "Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me." Hence you may see the dreadful mischief which it does, Rev. viii. 7, 8, "There followed hail and fire, mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth, and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up." Though the way be long and sore, the travellers may be hearty, and they may go pleasantly on, while they are comfortable to one another; but when they grow a burden to one another, when their unity and love among themselves are gone, that makes a weary way to travellers. But never was the shadow of a great rock more suitable to the scorched traveller, than Christ is to his people in all these cases.—For,

(1.) He is their great plight-anchor in desertion, their hope, and the support of their souls. His blood is the great fence, under which they shelter themselves from the fire of the law, and brings them into hope, when they are next door to desponding. An absolute God is a terrible, but God in Christ is a refreshing, sight.

(2.) He is their protector in temptation. Faith in Christ is a shield which quenches all the fiery darts of the wicked, Eph. vi. 16. He is stronger than the strong man, and a present help in time of temptation, either to repel the tempter, or else to bear up the tempted. He says to them, "My grace is sufficient for you, and my strength is made perfect in your weakness," 2 Cor. xii. 9.

(3.) He is their strong tower in persecution, where they abide, and stand out against all the storms of an enraged world. He gives them peace, when their enemies are carrying on the war. "Peace" says he, "I leave with you; my peace I give unto you." He makes their bow to abide in its strength when the archers shoot at them, Gen. xlix. 24; and makes them more than conquerors, Rom. viii. 37; and so lines the thorny crown with his love, that it sits very soft on their heads.

(4.) He is their peace in time of contention and division. With whomsoever they have war and strife, through him they have peace, peace with God, peace with conscience, and a hopeful prospect of getting thither,—where light shall be perfect, and where therefore there can be no difference of judgment;—where love is perfect, and therefore no alienation of affections among the inhabitants shall prevail.

9. Scarcity of provisions makes this world a weary land. What else can be expected in the waste howling wilderness of this world,

where, though there is enough to raise the appetite of lusts, and a sufficiency of husks for swine to feed on; yet provision suitable for the soul is very scarce; and this is what makes the world to the saints a weary land. For oftentimes their table is overturned; the table of public ordinances is removed, which brings a famine of the word by which their souls should live, Amos viii. 11, 12. Then they may be sent to seek bread for their souls with the peril of their lives; and this makes a weary land to these that know the spiritual sweetness of gospel ordinances.—Again, many times when they come to the table of ordinances, they get nothing at all, not a mess from the King's hand, less or more. How often are prayers, sermons, communions, like the empty chair of state, the king not filling it; like the empty grave, where the grave clothes lie, but the Lord himself is gone; so that there is nothing substantial with which to satisfy the hungry soul.—Finally, at their best entertainment in the weary land, they ordinarily rise hungry, and with an appetite. They are held short by the head, and it is but drops and sips that are got in this world; the full feast, where they shall hunger no more, is reserved to the pleasant land, where there is fulness of joy, and pleasures evermore. But in this respect Christ is a suitable shadow, he keeps the soul from fainting; rather than they should want, bread shall be sent from heaven, and water shall flow out of the flinty rock: "Open thy mouth wide," says he, "and I will fill it," Psalm lxxxi. 10. He has the keys of heaven, and is the great steward of the Father's treasures, who, in the greatest scarcity, has enough amply to furnish those who by faith come to him.

10. Little company in the road to Zion makes it a weary land to the traveller thitherward. The multitude go all the other way; few take the narrow road. Christ's flock is but a little flock; in Elijah's days there were so very few upon the road, that he thought he had been all alone; he had so little help of the seven thousand, that he knew not of them. See how Micah longed for company on the road, but they were hid out of his view, Micah vii. 1, and downwards. Now, this circumstance makes it a weary land; for at this rate the traveller has few to take a lift of his burden, and bear it with him. The apostle says, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." But alas! we are in a strange land, and there are many to lay a load above a burden, but few to take a lift of it. But people must even creep under their own burdens as they can, and keep to it themselves. This is what makes a weary world. But they are not to be moaned in this case, who get in under Christ's shadow; he can bear them, and their burden also. The Lord even reduces his people to this case, that they may depend the more upon

himself. When we have created props standing about us, we are ready to lay over much weight on them, and therefore the Lord suffers people to find their own weight, that they may be constrained to employ himself, to put the work in his own hand.—Again, the traveller has few to consult with, when he comes to a difficult and dark step. There are such steps which Christians meet with in their way to Zion, and it is no small mercy to have those who will help by their sympathy, advice, and prayers. But, alas! the unfeeling world affords few such; and this is what makes it a weary land. But Christ lives, and he lives to be a counsellor, an interpreter, one among a thousand. Therefore, let us not complain in this case: Mic. iv. 9, “Now, why dost thou cry out aloud? is there no king in thee? is thy counsellor perished?” They are well-guided whom Jesus guides; and if he do not guide us, we may blame ourselves, for, “the meek he will guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way,” Psalm xxv. 9. Let us go to the oracle, and improve his prophetic office.—Finally, they have few to keep them out of languor by the way. It would be a great comfort to the weary traveller, to have the benefit of conference about the holy city, the New Jerusalem, to which the travellers are going, and of the glory, ease, and rest, that are to be enjoyed there; it would tend to comfort and stir them up to vigorous walking. But they are not alone, who have Christ with them; he can bear the soul company by his word and Spirit, he can keep them from languishing in the weary land.—We now proceed,

III. To shew in what respects Christ is a suitable and refreshful shade or shelter. The truth is, there is nothing in Christ but what affords a refreshful shade to the believer in the weary land: Song v. 16, “Yea, he is altogether lovely.” But the breaking of the spices will make them the more fragrant to those that have their senses spiritually exercised. Therefore observe,

1. That his very name affords a broad shade for the refreshment of the traveller in the weary land, sufficient to recover the soul that is swooning away: Song i. 3, “Because of the savour of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee.” When Moses would see the glory of God, the Lord proclaimed his name before him: Exod. xxxiv. 6, “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.” His name is more glorious than if it were written in letters of gold; it is written to us in letters of his precious blood. The truth is, all things in the world are rather names than things, the

most desirable things in it are the name of nothing : Prov. xxiii. 5, "Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not ? for riches certainly make themselves wings, they fly away as an eagle toward heaven." The terrible things of it are but frightful names, 2 Cor. vi. 9, 10 ; but here is a name "that is above every name," Phil. ii. 9. I shall mention only three instances.—His name is,

(1.) Jesus, a Saviour : Matth. i. 21, "His name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." How sweet must this name be to a sensible lost sinner ! in the world we hear of Adam the destroyer, who ruined himself and all his posterity ; of sinners, his children, self-destroyers, Hos. xiii. 9 ; of Abaddon, the great destroyer, who goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. But to all these we may comfortably oppose Jesus the Saviour ; stronger than Adam, saving those that he destroyed ; stronger than sinners, helping those that have destroyed themselves ; stronger than Satan, whom he spoils of his prey : Isa. xlix. 25, "Thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered ; for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children."—His name is,

(2.) Messiah, or Christ, the anointed of the Father, pointing at his three offices. For under the Old Testament, prophets, priests, and kings were anointed ; it signified their call to the office : so that in this name we see him in all his offices, called to the Mediatorial office by the Father, and fully furnished for it ; and so there is enough in him for all our needs, to be drawn forth by faith in his name. And we have it in Greek, as well as in Hebrew, shewing that the Gentiles, as well as the Jews have access to him : John i. 41, "We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ."—His name is,

(3.) Immanuel, God with us, Matth. i. 23. If we press this name by faith, the sap of it will come forth to the believer in three things.—There is,

1st, God in our nature : John i. 14, "And the word was made flesh." God made man ; Satan having withdrawn man from his allegiance, the whole human nature was corrupted, and set at enmity with God. But, behold in Christ the divine and human natures united, heaven and earth joined together in him, under the shade of which sinners may, with comfort and confidence, approach to God.—There is,

2dly, God reconciled to us in Christ : John i. 14, "And dwelt among us ;" (Gr. tabernacled.) Christ is the tabernacle of meeting, wherein God and sinners meet in peace : Rev. xxi. 3, "Behold, the

tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." There the weapons fall out of the hand of justice, and there the arms of mercy embrace the sinner. When the sinner comes there, he is out of the dark and black region, where death, wrath, and the curse reign; he comes into a place of light, the light of the Lord's countenance, that shines on sinners in the face of Jesus, our Immanuel. O what a blessed shade is here! —There is,

3dly, God on our side: Psalm xlvi. 7, "The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge." Under this shade, believers may bid defiance to all their enemies, the united powers of earth and hell: Rom. viii. 31, "If God be for us, who can be against us." This is the best shade the Lord's people can betake themselves to in a time of confusion and danger. Before the wars of Canaan began, the Lord brought Joshua under it, Josh. v. 13, 14. And if people could be got awakened out of their sleep upon these pillows which their enemies have laid under their heads, the directing them to this shadow by the word would be both reckoned sweet and seasonable, as Exod. ix. 20. This was the shadow Isaiah directed the people to, when the news came that the malignant Ephraimites, and the idolatrous Syrians, were confederated to war against Judah, and to set up a king of their own stamp over Judah: Isa. vii. 2—6, "And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim; and his heart was moved, and the hearts of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind. Then said the Lord unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shear-jashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field, and say unto him, take heed, and be quiet, fear not, neither be faint-hearted, for the two tails of these smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the Son of Remaliah. Because Syria, Ephraim, and the Son of Remaliah, have taken evil counsel against thee, saying let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal." The prophet labours to draw them to this shadow, as a complete defence against the scorching heat of these two smoking firebrands; for he says, Isa. viii. 10, "Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought, speak the word, and it shall not stand, for God is with us," (Heb. Immanuel is with us.)

2. His natures afford a broad shade to the traveller in the weary land; he is both God and man. Jesus, he is man, and as such he has a sympathy, as one that has had experience of the troubles

his people meet with in the weary land : Heb. iv. 15, " For we have not an high priest, which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." As he is God, he is able to give them all protection in all cases and all conditions. However low they be, his power, being infinite, is able to raise them up. So that, however unequally they be matched with devils and men, they may say, as 2 Kings vi. 16, " Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." When Christ sent out his apostles into the world, and knew that they would be opposed by the authority of the great ones, by the power, the learning, the prejudice, and superstitions of the world, over against all these he sets these emphatic words, " Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," Matth. xxviii. 20.

3. His offices are a shade to the traveller in a weary land. These are suited to all the cases his people can possibly be in, in the weary land.

He is a Prophet, to teach them, to lead and guide them : Isa. lv. 4, " Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a Leader and Commander to the people." If darkness arise, he is light to them that sit in darkness. There is no case so perplexed, but he can resolve it ; and faith can begin where sight ends ; and his direction will ever be ready to his own in the time of need : " It shall be given them in that hour, what they shall speak," Matth. x. 19.

He is a Priest to purge away sin, and manage his people's cause in the court of heaven. If guilt sting the conscience, and make a sick soul, his blood removes the sting : it purges the conscience from dead works, Heb. ix. 14 : it heals all their wounds : Isa. xxxiii. 24, " And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick : the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." If they have a petition to present before the Lord, while Jesus lives, they know of a proper hand in the court of heaven, into which they can put it. For he makes intercession for us ; he is our Advocate with the Father. This is no small comfort in the weary land.

He is a King, to protect and defend them, to conquer and restrain all his and their enemies. If Satan be too strong and subtle for them, yet Jesus is stronger than he, and can outwit him, and even outshoot him in his own bow. His grace is sufficient against the greatest temptations. If the world, the men or things of the world, be too hard for them, Jesus has overcome both. And though they may be ready to cry out for fear of these, that one day they will perish by their hands, yet their great Captain being on their head they shall surely come off victorious at last, saying, " Thanks be to

God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

4. His purchase affords shelter in the weary land. The price he paid was his own precious blood; the purchase then must needs be great, seeing the price was of infinite value. He has purchased for his people all that is necessary to make them happy. What Adam lost, Christ has purchased again, and that with advantage; so that all their losses are made up in him. Would you have the inventory of Christ's purchase? you have it, 1 Cor. iii. 22, "Whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours." The best things for their enjoyment in time or through eternity. The worst things, through him, work for your good. What a refreshing shade, then, is this in the worst of times!

5. His relations afford shelter in a weary land. He stands in many near relations to his people: he is the foundation on which they are built, and therefore, as the house built on the rock stands unshaken, so he will support them under all pressures. He is their Father, and will allow them their provision, he will afford them protection, an inheritance, and every thing that children may expect from a father. He is their Husband, and therefore will be their defence: yea, their Head, and therefore he will guide them, and every way tenderly care for them, as the head does for the several members of the body.

6. His covenant and promises afford shelter in a weary land. The covenant is offensive and defensive, therefore the believer has common friends and enemies with the Lord himself: Zech. ii. 8. He that toucheth his people toucheth the apple of his eye. Hence, said Jesus, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Who would not venture to sea in that ship in which Christ himself, his interest, and his glory, are embarked; for though the ship in that case be beset with waves, it will not sink. Cæsar, when embarking on board a ship to pursue his enemy, to encourage the pilot, who was afraid of the storm, cried out, You have Cæsar and his fortune embarked with you. How much more may the Christian not be afraid in the greatest storm, when Christ, his interest, and his honour, are with him. There are promises in the covenant suited to every case. The Lord has secured to his people protection and provision in the worst of times: "He shall dwell on high, his place of defence shall be the munition of rocks; bread shall be given him, his water shall be sure."

He has secured them against apostacy: John x. 29, "No man (says he) shall pluck them out of my Father's hand." He has promised strength to the weak and fearful, Isa. xl. 29—31;

he hath promised his presence to be with them for ever, Heb. xiii. 5; Isa. xliii. 2, he hath promised that all things shall work together for their good, Rom. viii. 28; and finally, there is nothing whatever which can befall them in the weary land, but there is something in the covenant and the promise suited to it, peculiarly calculated to comfort and support them under every pressure.

It remains that, as was proposed,

IV. I make some practical improvement, which I shall do,

1st, In an use of information, and,

2dly, In an use of exhortation.

For an use of information we may see,

1. That it is a black mark of a soul, that has no more to look for as a portion but the world; when they take so well with the world's entertainment, that they never seek after Christ. The world is not the weary land to them, and so they care not for Christ. Are there not many who would desire no better portion than the world, if they could get it kept? They could well renounce their pretensions to Canaan, if they could get their tents to stand always on this side Jordan: they would never desire a better heaven than their lordships, their farms, or what else they can work for with their own hands. While these things prosper with them, they have nothing to make the world a weary land to them; the country's disease never wearies them; and if they be crossed in one worldly thing, they do not go to Christ to get comfort under it, but to some other worldly thing. This speaks, that they are at home in the world, and are not travelling towards Zion. Others may be pilgrims in it, but they are not; they are just where they would be, and have no other choice, Psalm iv. 6. It shews also that they would never look near Christ, if death did not make sure of their being turned out of the earth. They have no love to Christ for himself, they could fend well enough without him, if he would but let them alone in the world.

2. See here the mystery of the Christian life. Why do true Christians so condemn the world? It is a weary land to all such. What keeps them all under the tribulation of the world, while others faint, so that they have had a joy in tribulation, took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, yea, and even death itself? Why, under the shadow of the great Rock, they got meat to eat the world knew not of.

3. See the transcendent excellence of Christ. What a precious one must he be in whom there is enough to balance all the miseries of the weary land! There are some of these that nothing under the sun can balance; what avails all the riches and honours under

the sun, to a person under extreme bodily distress, or exposed to the arrest of death. But in the most wearisome step of the weary land, Christ is a refreshing shade.

4. This lets us see, where there is a shelter to be found in the worst of times, against the stormy tempest of public or private calamity: John xvi. 33, "These things (says Jesus) I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace; in the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." In Jesus Christ our safety lies, and without him there is no safety. Here is the rock that is higher than we, and higher too than the highest of our enemies, whether devils or men.

I have only now to add an use of exhortation. I would exhort you to come to Christ, and put yourselves under his shadow this day. And that you may understand what you are called to, take it in the following advices.

1. Lay aside your security, and see that you stand in need of a shade for refreshment and for protection in the weary land. However lightly people look on the confusions of our day, I think we have no reason to be secure; security is dangerous, seeing the sins of the generation are crying sins, crying for a stroke. Whatever has brought a stroke on a church or people, that is not wanting in Scotland this day. Did universal corruption amongst all ranks bring the deluge on the old world? that is visibly the plague of this generation. Did the despising of the gospel bring the Roman armies on the Jews? Matth. xxii. 7, the monstrous profanity amongst some, and loathsome formality among others, says we cannot escape, though God bear long with us.—The many deliverances we have met with when at the brink of ruin, and yet the generation not bettered by them, says that the axe, which has been lying so long at the root of the tree, will be wielded against us at the last: Amos iv. 11, 12, "I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning; yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. Therefore thus will I do unto you, O Israel! and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel!" We are manifestly pining away under spiritual plagues at this day, many given up to vile affections, the generation generally plagued with hardness of heart and deadness, men are turned hateful, and left to hate one another, biting and devouring one another, all which is an evidence, that there is an evil spirit amongst us.—Finally, our security in the face of alarming dispensations, is a terrible token, according to that in 1 Thess. v. 3, "For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail

upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape."—I would exhort you,

2. To embrace Jesus Christ, and lay hold on the everlasting covenant. Ye that are strangers to Christ, come in at length. Let the state of your perishing souls come into your minds in earnest, and lay a sure foundation for eternity. Ye who have already come, come nearer and nearer, renew your acceptance of Christ, and stir up the grace of faith, that for the present is lying in such a weak state.

3. Repent of your sins, and turn from them. Amend your ways and your doings, and let not iniquity be your eternal ruin. Answer the call of God at length, that there may be no standing controversy betwixt God and you. Many delays have been in this matter, bring it now to a point, and halt no more betwixt two opinions, whether to be for God or for your lusts.—In a word, I exhort you,

4. To lay the weight of your through-bearing through the weary land over on Jesus Christ.—Look before you to the difficult steps that may be yet betwixt you and the grave, and solemnly take him for all you need or may need. Be concerned to depend upon him, and to trust in him, that he will not cease caring for you, and working in you, till he completely accomplish all that good word upon which he has caused you to hope.—To prompt you to this good work, I would propose the following motives:—

1. This is the shade God the Father has provided for you. "I have (says he) laid help upon one that is mighty," Psalm lxxxix. 19; and you hear what he says to you in the text. Therefore, honour the Father by coming to his Son, and putting yourselves under his shadow. He knew sinners would need a shelter in the weary land. O neglect not the offered salvation!—Consider,

2. That all other shadows are and will be but vain and vanishing ones; they will not be able to defend you from the ills to which you are exposed in the weary land; they will be like a hut built within the sea-mark, which will be carried away, together with the inhabitant, when the waters begin to flow: Isa. xxviii. 17, "The hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place." Then your own wisdom will be but folly, your strength weakness, your carnal schemes shall not profit you.—Consider,

3. That the wrath of God will pursue all who are not under this shadow. O Christless sinners! what will you do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what will you answer him? He is a consuming fire, all else you can put betwixt him and you will be but as stubble, or at best but a partition-wall of dry boards, that will quickly be consumed in that devouring fire.—Consider,

4. That whatever weary steps ye meet with in the weary land, these will be doubly heavy by your not coming in under Christ's shadow; for the curse will be in them; and though they were very light in themselves, that will make them heavy. You will get all your burden to bear alone, as Saul did. And, O what a sad case it is to have heaven and earth dark both at once! Isa. viii. 21, 22.—Consider,

5. That all the travellers to Zion have made this shade their shelter. It is a tried shade in all ages of the church, Psalm xc. 1; whoever pursues them, this is the refuge of all the people of God in all times: Prov. xviii. 10, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." The spouse of Christ looks for this shade, Song i. 7, 8, and ii. 3: and many a good word they have spoken of it to recommend it to others.—Consider,

Lastly, That under Christ's shadow there will be safety in the most wearisome parts of the weary land. He is the Saviour, and there is none besides him. Under his shadow there is safety from troubles, when they are flying very thick in the weary land. He can hide his people in the hollow of his hand in the midst of danger, Psalm xci. 7. For he has all things at his command; men and devils are under the check of his providence. There is oftentimes a moderation of troubles.—Under this shadow people find, that though they be not quite freed from them, yet they are made very moderate to them: Jer. xv. 11, "The Lord said, Verily, it shall be well with thy remnant, verily I will cause the enemy to entreat thee well in the time of evil, and in the time of affliction." And sometimes it is much better for his people to meet with this moderation, Jer. xlv. 5. The life for a prey is no small mercy. While his people rest under this shadow, there is always a spiritual salvation from the sting of evil; thus the nature of afflictions is altered, and the sharpest and heaviest stones thrown at them become precious stones, which do them no hurt, but rather good; for "who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" 1 Pet. iii. 13.—To sum up all in a word,

There is never missed here an eternal salvation. However they be treated in the weary land, none go to hell from under Christ's shadow; but though they should go through fire and water, they will land at last in Abraham's bosom, and be brought unto the wealthy place. Amen.