

their end, our misplaced confidence would have been called into fresh operation and confirmed. But by the seeming unfitness under consideration, we are compelled to place our simple and entire reliance on the wisdom and sufficiency of God, if we would avail ourselves of the remedy which he has seen proper to provide. Let us therefore most carefully give exercise to this reliance. Shutting our ear to all the unbelieving instructions of our erring understandings, let us listen to the teachings of implicit faith, and heartily receive the Saviour just as he is presented to us in the word, contented that he is such as God thought proper to provide, and on that account concluding that in those very respects in which he seems most unsuited to our need, he really is perfectly adapted to effect our complete salvation.

3. The serpent was an *exclusive* remedy. Numerous as was the bitten camp, there was but this one means of safety given or allowed. Had they employed others of their own devising, or had they fabricated other serpents similar to this, they would only have spent their labour and ingenuity in vain. Their own devices may have deluded them with fallacious expectation of recovery, and thus have turned off their gaze from the divinely instituted object; but they would by this means only have rendered their destruction certain.

"Neither"—says the Holy Spirit—"is there salvation in any other than" the Lord Jesus Christ, "for there is none other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved." "I am God"—says the Lord—"and beside me there is no Saviour." Men have devised unnumbered other means of safety; but each and all have failed utterly to save a single soul. They have only conduced to seal the ruin of those who have trusted in them, by preventing them from looking to him who only possesses power to save.

Oh! let us with eager solicitude turn away from every such delusion, and repose our hopes alone in Jesus.

4. Israel's remedy was remarkable for *durability*. It might have been made of wood or clay, but then it would speedily have perished. It was formed of brass, one of the most lasting mate-

rials, and so was easily preserved by Israel till they passed the infested wilderness, and reached the promised land where no fiery serpents were found.

"And this man"—Jesus—"because he abideth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood; wherefore he is able to save at all times those who come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." He died, but did not perish. Even whilst lying in the arms of death, he as truly existed as our Saviour as he did before; and now he lives and still shall live to carry on his saving purposes till they are perfected.

Whilst therefore we should dread the thought of being again bitten by the old dragon, who will infest our path till we have passed beyond his reach by entering the celestial Canaan, we have no reason to despair: the remedy remains again to heal us—our Lord abides to reapply his saving power.

III. *The means by which its benefit was secured.*

1. The Jews *felt their need* of heaven's interfering for them. They were conscious of being wounded—of the pain and danger of their wounds—and of the insufficiency of any help they could receive but that of God. They therefore entreated Moses to pray to the Lord to interpose on their behalf. And but for this state of mind they doubtless would not have availed themselves of Jehovah's goodness, after he had appointed the means of healing.

Jesus seems to intend to point out the necessity of a similar sense of the indispensable importance of his saving aid, in those who are to be benefited by his death, when he reminds the Pharisees that the whole need not a physician but they that are sick. And both in the nature of things, and in point of fact, this necessity is manifest. No sinner can think, and no sinner ever has thought of applying to this Saviour till he has felt that he is sinful, and therefore so exposed to future wrath, that there is no hope for him except in Christ.

We ought, therefore, to guard most carefully against every thing that would deaden our sensibility to our perilous condition, and by every means, to strive to realize as far as possible our actual case.

2. Israel were also *conscious of their*