

world must eternally find its hell! This is the first thing in the text. "They shall see his face;" then they are everlastingly safe.

The second privilege is, they shall have a *clear knowledge* of him. I have dwelt upon that thought before, and merely mention it to complete the summary. To look into the face of Christ signifies to be well acquainted with his person, his office, his character, his work. So the saints in heaven shall have more knowledge of Christ than the most advanced below. As one has said, the babe in Christ admitted to heaven discovers more of Christ in a single hour than is known by all the divines of the assemblies of the church on earth. O yes, our catechisms and our creeds, and even our Bibles—all these reveal but very little of what we shall discover when we shall see his face. Our text implies also *conscious favour*. Was not that the old benediction, "The Lord lift up his countenance upon you"? He has lifted it up upon the glorified, and they see it world without end. Here it is our joy of joys to have the Lord smiling upon us, and that he delights in us, it mattereth not to us though earth and hell should hate us, and men cast out our names as evil. In heaven then, they have this to be their choice privilege. They are courtiers who stand always in the monarch's palace, secure of the monarch's smile. They are children who live unbrokenly in their father's love, and know it, and rejoice to know it evermore.

The fourth privilege involved in the text is that of *close fellowship*. They are always near to Jesus. They are never hoping that they are with him, and yet fearing that they are not; they have none of those inward struggles which make life so unhappy to some of us; they never say—

"'Tis a point I long to know;"

But they see his face and are in hourly communion with their Lord. Perfect spirits are always walking with the Lord, for they are always agreed with him. In glory they are all Enochs, walking with God. There for ever and ever they lie in the bosom of Jesus, in the nearest possible place of communion with him who redeemed them with his blood.

And this involves a fifth privilege, namely, *complete transformation*, "They shall be like him, for they shall see him as he is." If they see his face they shall be "changed from glory to glory" by this face-to-face vision of the Lord. Beholding Christ, his likeness is photographed upon them; they become in all respects like him as they gaze upon him world without end.

Thus have I very briefly mentioned the privileges involved in see Christ face to face.

IV. We must conclude by noting WHO THEY ARE TO WHOM THIS CHOICE BOON IS AFFORDED BY THE DIVINE MERCY.

"They shall see his face." Who are they? They are all his elect, all his redeemed, all

his effectually called ones, all the justified, all the sanctified. They are the tens of thousands and myriads who have died in Jesus, of whom the Spirit saith, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." Thank God we are not strangers to those who now behold his face. As we look back to the associations of our youth, and to the friendships of our manhood, we remember many whose privileges it has been to precede us, and to know long before us the things which we desire and expect so soon to learn. Some are taken away to see his face while yet young. We bless God that our babes shall have the same heaven as our holy sires; they shall not be placed in the back settlements of Canaan, but they shall with equal clearness see the face of Jesus. Those dear boys and girls who learnt to love Christ and made a profession of his name in their youth were never spared to reach the ripeness of manhood and womanhood, but they shall equally see his face with the gravest and most reverend fathers of the church. I read of no secondary joys. Whoever may have invented the doctrine of degrees in heaven I do not know, but I believe there is as much foundation for it in Scripture as there is for the doctrine of purgatory, and no more. All the saints shall see their Master's face. The thief dying on the cross was with Christ in paradise, and Paul could be no more. I like sometimes to think of heaven in the same way as old Ryland did when he wrote his rhyming letter from Northampton—

"They all shall be there,
The great and the small;
For I shall shake hands
With the blessed St. Paul.

Doubtless so we shall. Whether dying young or old, whether departing after long service of Christ, or dying immediately after conversion as with the thief, of all the saints shall it be said in the words of the text, "They shall see his face." What more can apostles and martyrs enjoy?

Do you regret that your friends have departed? Do you lament that wife, and husband, and child, and father, and grandparent, have all entered into their rest? Be not so unkind, so selfish to yourself, so cruel to them. Nay, rather, soldier of the cross, be thankful that another has won the crown before you, and do you press forward to win it too. Life is but a moment: how short it will appear in eternity. Even here hope perceives it to be brief; and though impatience counts it long, yet faith corrects her, and reminds her that one hour with God will make the longest life to seem but a point of time, a mere nothing, a watch in the night, a thing that was and was not, that has come and gone.

So we will close our sermon by observing that they who see his face already make only a part of the great "they" who shall see his face, for many of us here below are on the way to the same reward. So many as have