

# NOTES OF ADDRESSES

BY THE LATE

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## XII.

### THE BREAKER UP.

[Free West Church, Sabbath Evening, February 19. 1844.]

“I WILL SURELY ASSEMBLE, O JACOB, ALL OF THEE; I WILL SURELY GATHER THE REMNANT OF ISRAEL; I WILL PUT THEM TOGETHER AS THE SHEEP OF BOZRAH, AS THE FLOCK IN THE MIDST OF THEIR FOLD: THEY SHALL MAKE GREAT NOISE BY REASON OF THE MULTITUDE OF MEN. THE BREAKER IS COME UP BEFORE THEM: THEY HAVE BROKEN UP, AND HAVE PASSED THROUGH THE GATE, AND ARE GONE OUT BY IT; AND THEIR KING SHALL PASS BEFORE THEM, AND THE LORD ON THE HEAD OF THEM.”—*Micah II. 12, 13.*

THIS passage refers to ancient Israel, but its application does not end there. It applies to the salvation of everyone who is delivered from the death and bondage of sin, by Him here called “The Breaker,” who is evidently no other than the Son of the mighty God. Three things we notice here—first, What is said of Israel, “They have broken up, and have passed through the gate, and are gone out by it.” That has an application to all who are delivered; and to prepare the way for this, two other things must be noticed, and these refer, not to the people who go out, but to Jesus, their King,—“They have broken up, they have passed through the gate, and are gone out by it.”

You will ask, from what are they delivered? The language employed here, refers to a state of captivity and bondage,—to persons shut up in a prison, encompassed by walls, gates, and bars. From this prison-house, they come out. On the state of outward bondage to which the passage may refer, if taken literally, we have not time to dwell at present; but as applied to the state of an individual sinner, it evidently represents the man here to be in a state of imprisonment. When a citizen of any land commits a public offence against its laws, he is taken up, and, by the power of the law, kept in prison. So it is with the breakers of the law of God. What but the power of law is shown by all our prisons and penitentiaries? What are these but so many assertions, made by the law of the country, that it has power over the acts of men, and so many provisions made by the statutes of the realm, for the safety of persons and of property,—for the preservation of social order, and the maintenance of civil peace? So is it with the offender against God’s moral government. Every claim made upon the creature, rests on the divine law given in the Ten Commandments; and if we dared to place one part of Jehovah’s testimony above another, we should call it the most important part of

the Word of God, the only part of that Word which was written by His own finger; distinguished by Him in this way.

Unless you have a right and distinct view of this, you can neither understand your awful state, nor God's glorious deliverance from it. Not till then will you see, that, as a human law pursues, imprisons, and keeps the offender bound, so the divine law accuses, pursues, apprehends, judges, condemns, and imprisons. Then it is that bonds are on the soul, and chains upon the conscience. They do not, indeed, bind the body, but they are stronger than any other, for the iron enters into the soul. The sinner is kept as in a prison, held fast so that he cannot escape. If the bars were of brass, or iron, they might be broken,—if they were adamant, they might be burst asunder; but the chain that binds him, is a righteous sentence, passed by the Holy One. Who can alter the nature of justice? Its bond is stronger than omnipotence, since omnipotence will not, and cannot break it. Power cannot throw it down, for power is but the hand of justice, and inferior to it. Not so, indeed, on earth: what is right, and what is, are not always the same thing now. Power triumphs many a time over right; but even on earth, in a moral point of view, that which is right is infinitely superior to that which has merely power on its side. If omnipotence could prevail over justice at any time, to set her lawful captives free, it would put the triumph into Satan's hands! Is it not the very glory of the Lord, that His justice guides His power! The law has, in its own hand, a right to condemn and to destroy. Justice reigns and shines in God's government, through all His holy nature, and in His blessed will. Herein lies the strength of our prison. Take an illustration. When I sin, I am guilty. I am worthy of the wrath of the living God. Justice brings her accusations and lays them at my door, while, in her hand, is the warrant to destroy; and power stands back: it cannot, by whomsoever wielded, release me. Why? Because it was not against power that I sinned: it was justice that I wounded,—it was holiness I grieved, and they must be satisfied, come what may of me. The illustration only gains strength as you widen the range from one guilty soul to a myriad. Come what may to all creatures in the universe, justice must be vindicated and glorified eternally.

By the Word of God, and from the experience of men we know, that in all ages, since the fall to this present day, there has come forth, from this dark and lawful prison-house, a holy band of delivered men,—the ransomed church of God. They have broken up, passed through the gate, and have gone out by it. Yes; and we know, that at this hour there are in the midst of a world which lieth in the Wicked One, a company who have been breaking up, and passing through, coming out, by the open gates of righteousness, into present and eternal liberty from condemnation, vengeance, and eternal doom! They have broken up, and have passed through the gate. Observe, it is something done by them, not only done for them (as salvation, doubtless,

is done wholly for us, in one sense); it is also done by an act of their own will,—an act, ungodly man, which you too must yet do, if ever you are to be saved,—an act, believing sinner, which you have already done. You are come out into a large place. How, then, did you this? How did you escape? We cannot understand it; and yet, you came out by your own act,—you came out with the triumph and the confidence of a believing sinner, and you have walked in the light of God’s reconciled countenance up to this hour. But how? Were not these walls of adamant, were not these barriers impassable, was not your soul undone? See, beloved, the Breaker! The heavenly Breaker is gone up before.

Three names are given to Him in this single verse. There is, first, the incommunicable name, Jehovah—I am. This leader of the people is none other than “the Man who is Jehovah’s Fellow.” That is one name, but He has another, “their King at the head of them,” even the King of kings. “He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords.” “I will make Him my First-Born, higher than the kings of the earth.” The third name given is the Breaker. See, now, it is Jehovah Himself who has entered in and gone before; and He is called “The Breaker” for various reasons. First, that He has to break through many barriers. He opened the gate by which the ransomed of the Lord come forth from prison, and by which the church has a ready and constant access to the holiest of all. And how did He come forth?

We have told you of that prison-house, and of its security. We have told you that its walls are the righteousness of the law, holding the sinner under the curse of God. But how are these things ever to be taken out of the way? How shall holiness become the sinner’s friend? How is divine justice to take the sinner’s part, seeing that power can avail him nothing, supposing, which God forbid, it were brought over to his side. All is done by the Lord Jehovah. In a very few words we shall try to tell you how. He comes down from the heavens, and advances to the gates of justice; He undertakes to break them, by coming first into the prison itself,—within its very walls. Among its poor inmates is heard the joyful sound, “To us a child is born, to us a son is given.” To us the holy child Jesus appears, born among sinners, born in the prison, born within the gates of the condemning law, born of a human mother, born of a sinful creature. Not one whit better than other sinners was Mary. Of her was He born into a world condemned and perishing, and subject to the awful curse of God.

He did not enter the prison after He was brought up. No, He was *born* there; and not content with that, our King spends His life in the prison, dwelling here for more than thirty years. What was He doing all that time? Many seem to speak as if He had done next to nothing in these thirty years, and that His glorious work of redemption was not begun then; but that it

was a very inferior part of His life on earth that we hear of when it is said that he lived unknown but as the carpenter's son—the child of Mary. But, ah! He was obeying the law, in satisfying all its demands and keeping it entire. Every bar, then, that made the prison secure, was impassable and indestructible, because each one was a bar of pure justice, and unspotted holiness, and eternal truth; and each one had a voice to cry, “The soul that sinneth it shall die”; while the gates were bolted, so to speak, by the majesty and holiness of God.

Anything else would have been a setting aside of the justice of God, for the sake of a guilty worm,—which cannot be; therefore the Lord undertook to be the Breaker. Ah! Satan thought that the gates could not be broken, or at least, if they could, that it would serve his purpose even better; for it would be the triumph of power over right. But the Deliverer was a great King, and He was Jehovah all the time He was working out this deliverance for us. That was what made His work of infinite value; that was what enabled Him confidently to undertake to pay all the price that justice could demand. He undertook to open wide the gates of brass, to buy them open, and to leave them open to the end of time, as gates of righteousness and gates of life! Oh, what an undertaking! For this He kept the holy law for three-and-thirty years; for this He laboured among the unbelieving Jews; for this He bore the united hatred of man and devils, aye, and even desertion from the Father Himself. The work of His lifetime was laying down the price of man's salvation, and setting open the gates of righteousness. Little did the world think what Christ was doing. Satan thought that he himself was triumphing in his own work of darkness; and in proportion as the Lord's work progressed, Satan thought it was going backward. When Satan thought the victory was won, Immanuel was actually putting the price into the Father's hand. So He lay in the grave till death could keep its royal Master no longer; for death had now no cord wherewith to bind Him. On the resurrection morning, the Breaker arose a conqueror.

This was the Breaker coming up; and the reason why the bands of death were allowed to hold Him was, that the strong bond of justice was around Him. It was not man's power that crucified the Lord of Glory, it was an unseen power—the power of a sentence passed in a higher court. It was not the Jews, nor was it Pilate, that laid the chains upon Him,—it was the process pending at the bar of justice on high, in the name of sinners; *that* alone gave Him into the power of death and the grave. But now that sentence being executed, the grave could no longer hold Him. He died once; but, behold! He is alive again.

I fear that few of us realise our need of this Saviour. Here the door is open, and now the message is to tell the wide world that all may enter; and to call upon all men to awake, arise, and flee from wrath to come. The pris-

on is the very place where you have been born and brought up in. You have lived in it too long to wish to escape from it. Yet listen to these precious words, "The Breaker is gone up." Yes; and He comes to you and asks you to go forth. The Lord comes up to the poor sinner, to every one whom He delivers, He comes by His word, by His divine power, by His servants, and by His Spirit. He awakens them,—He arouses them as the jailor at Philippi. Peter trembled when the angel came to him in the prison; but the Lord led him forth, and he found, to his amazement, that, instead of meeting with obstacles, every door was standing wide open for his escape. We need the Lord to come forth with us, to lead us by the hand. The door has stood open now for eighteen hundred years; but oh, how few come forth. How we need the Breaker still; we need Him in the midst of us; we need His hand to touch the sleeping sinner, and take him by the hand. And all we have to do is to come among you to tell that the new and living way is open, and that if you will but come boldly up to it, come when it even seems bolted to your unbelieving eye, it will spring open of itself. Oh, that men were walking forth in multitudes into the freedom of the Lord! Where, oh where, is the freedom of the Free Church, if she is in bondage with her children, if they are not being made free by the Son of God?