

**ENGLAND'S HOPE; OR,  
HEZEKIAH'S DELIVERANCE FROM  
ASSYRIAN DOMINATION. AND  
THE ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF  
HEAVENLY GLORY**

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Sunshine of Heavenly Glory by B. L. Witts

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**B. L. WITTS**

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FROM ASSYRIAN DOMINATION.  
AND THE  
ETERNAL SUNSHINE  
OF  
HEAVENLY GLORY.

*Two Sermons, preached in St. Chrysostom's Church, Everton,  
(after many years absence)*

BY

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## PREFACE.

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The Author does not adventure these discourses on account of any intrinsic merit they possess, but for the excellence of the object for which they are published.

The proceeds, if any, will be given to the Schools of the district, which are endeared to the Author by many sacred associations. He is thankful to find them much enlarged and in so flourishing a state. His earnest prayer is offered that the presiding Minister, the Committees of management, and the several Teachers, may live to see, or have faith to believe, that God's blessing has rested, and will continue to rest, upon their prayerful and persevering labours.

NEW BRIGHTON, CHESHIRE.

*Sep.* 23, 1854.

Now therefore, O Lord our God, I beseech thee, save us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord God, even thou only.

2 KINGS, XIX. 19.

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SERMONS of a doctrinal character have their use in teaching men what is the will of God, and it is from a knowledge of that will, that precepts to model practice are deduced. To preach doctrine practically, and practice doctrinally, is the highest style of sermon writing. The bulk of this discourse, however, is neither doctrinal nor practical, but *historical and expository*. It is an exposition of the history of king Hezekiah's deliverance from the power of Sennacherib, king of Assyria, and is chosen because the subject has been brought before us in the first lesson of this morning's service.\* May it be instructive, and may the concluding remarks, which are practical, be owned and blessed of God.

\* Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Sennacherib, king of Assyria, in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, king of Judah, came up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them. He laid Hezekiah under tribute, and so great was the sum, viz:—three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold, \* that, in the impoverished state of the nation, in order to pay it, he had recourse to the same expedient to which, on one occasion, his father Ahaz resorted; he cut off the gold, which, at the commencement of his reign, he had re-placed to embellish the doors and pillars of the holy temple.†

In this he was doubtless blame-worthy, he should have refused to pay, or found some other means of paying it. Although, as it appears from the history, the tribute money was duly paid, yet notwithstanding, after a lapse of about three years, the king of Assyria, without any provocation, sends an armed host against Jerusalem. The king's ambassadors,

\* The weight of a Jewish talent, according to Dr. Arbuthnot, was 113lbs. 10oz. 1dwt. 10½grains troy weight.

A talent of silver	=	£342	3	9
A talent of gold	=	54,752	0	0
300 talents of silver	=	102,856	5	0
30 talents of gold	=	1,642,560	0	0
Total tribute in English money was		£1,745,216	5	0

† 1 Kings vi. 32. 2 Chron. xxviii. 21, 24, and xxix. 3.



Tartan and Rabsaris and Rabshakeh, seek an interview with Hezekiah. The king declines trusting himself with his domineering invaders, and appoints commissioners: he orders Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, to meet these three captains and receive their message. They come charged with rebuke, insult, and blasphemy. Hezekiah will not admit the Assyrian host within his walls—this is construed into rebellion! With pompous words, Hezekiah's counsel and strength for a war, with such a king as the great king of Assyria, is questioned. "Thou sayest," saith Rabshakeh, in behalf of his master, who was then warring against Lachish,\* "but they are but vain words—I have counsel and strength for the war: now, on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me?" He accused him of trusting upon Egypt for help, when such was not the fact. Hoshea, king of Israel, had indeed confided in Egypt, and had, alas, found the simile of the staff of the bruised reed to be but too true a description of Egypt's help, or rather Egypt's weakness: but the godly Hezekiah, king of Judah, trusted not in an arm of flesh; he knew the truth of the saying, "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put any confidence in man.

\* 2 Chron. xxxii. 9.

It is better to trust in the Lord than to put any confidence in princes." (Psalm cxviii. 8, 9.) † He could, and doubtless did say with David, "Through God we shall do valiantly: for He it is who shall tread down our enemies." \* This pious confidence in God the infidel Rabshakeh despised, and when entreated to utter his blasphemy in the Syrian language, which was not understood by the common people in Jerusalem, he persisted in speaking in Hebrew, the vulgar tongue; and tried to intimidate them, by describing, in obscene language, the distress they might experience from famine during a long siege: and calling loudly to excite them to rebellion, said, on behalf of his master, "*Let not Hezekiah deceive you, for he shall not be able to deliver you out of his hand; neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord, saying, the Lord will surely deliver us; and this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria;*" and then attributing all his past military success to the interference of his heathen deities, which were no gods, Sennacherib impiously contrasts

† "Youthful readers may have this truth more firmly fixed in their minds, by being informed that the former of these verses is the *middle verse* in the whole Bible; namely, the fifteen thousand five hundred and eighty-seventh!

\* Psalm lx. 12.

their power with the Almightyness of the Lord God of heaven and earth. *Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hema, and Ivah? have they delivered Samaria out of mine hand? Who are they among all the gods of the countries, that have delivered their country out of mine hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand.* Hezekiah was a wise and a prudent, as well as a pious prince, therefore, foreseeing the language Rabshakeh would be ordered to employ, he counselled his envoys and commanded his people to hold their peace, lest they should get engaged in a reviling contention, and thus provoke his enemies to further impiety. *But the people held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, answer him not.* In abhorrence, however, of his blasphemy, and in grief for the afflicted estate of the nation, they rent their clothes, as their manner was, and returned to Hezekiah, who also, when he heard what had passed, did likewise; moreover, he covered himself with sack cloth, and fasted and prayed, and took an early opportunity of attending divine worship in the house of God. He then sent for Isaiah who was the prophet of the day, and who, for about fifty years, had been prophesying in Judah, and he rehearsed in his ears "the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria