

# Revival Year Sermons (Expanded Edition)

Preached in the Surrey Gardens Music Hall 1859

by C. H. Spurgeon

---

## Table of Contents

[The Story of God's Mighty Acts](#) - Psalm 44:1.

[The Blood of the Everlasting Covenant](#) - Hebrews 13:20

[The Necessity of the Spirit's Work](#) - Ezekiel, 36:27

[Predestination and Calling](#) - Romans 8:30

[The Minister's Farewell](#) - Acts 20:26-27

[Bonus Revival Year Sermons 1859](#)

[Love](#) - 1 John 4:19

[Free Grace](#) - Ezekiel 36:32

[Jacob and Esau](#) - Romans 9:15

[Distinguishing Grace](#) - 1 Corinthians 4:7

[The Fainting Warrior](#) - Romans 7:24, 25

[Copyright](#)

## The Story of God's Mighty Acts

Delivered on Sabbath Morning, July 17th, 1859, by the

REV. C. H. Spurgeon

at the Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens.

"We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old."—Psalm 44:1.

PERHAPS there are no stories that stick by us so long as those which we hear in our childhood, those tales which are told us by our fathers, and in our nurseries. It is a sad reflection that too many of these stories are idle and vain, so that our minds in early infancy are tinctured with fables, and inoculated with strange and lying narratives. Now, among the early Christians and the old believers in the far-off times, nursery tales were far different from what they are now, and the stories with which their children were amused were of a far different class from those which fascinated us in the days of our babyhood. No doubt, Abraham would talk to young children about the flood, and tell them how the waters overspread the earth, and how Noah alone was saved in the ark. The ancient Israelites, when they dwelt in their own land, would all of them tell their children about the Red Sea, and the plagues which God wrought in Egypt when he brought his people out of the house of bondage. Among the early Christians we know that it was the custom of parents to recount to their children everything concerning the life of Christ, the acts of the apostles, and the like interesting narratives. Nay, among our puritanic ancestors such were the stories that regaled their childhood. Sitting down by the fireside, before those old Dutch tiles with the quaint eccentric drawings upon them of the history of Christ, mothers would teach their children about Jesus walking on the water, or of his multiplying the loaves of bread, or of his marvellous transfiguration, or of the crucifixion of Jesus. Oh, how I would that the like were the tales of the present age, that the stories of our childhood would be again the stories of Christ, and that we would each of us believe that, after all, there can be nothing so interesting as that which is true, and nothing more striking than those stories which are written in sacred writ; nothing that can more truly move the heart of a child than the marvellous works of God which he did in the olden times. It seems that the psalmist who wrote this most musical ode had heard from his father, handed to him by tradition, the stories of the wondrous things which God had done in his day; and afterwards, this sweet singer in Israel taught it to his children, and so was one generation after another led to call God blessed, remembering his mighty acts.

Now, my dear friends, this morning I intend to recall to your minds some of the wondrous things which God has done in the olden time. My aim and object will be to excite your minds to seek after the like; that looking back upon what God has done, you may be induced to look forward with the eye of expectation, hoping that he will again stretch forth his potent hand and his holy arm, and repeat those mighty acts he performed in ancient days.

First, I shall speak of *the marvellous stories which our fathers have told us, and which we have heard of the olden time*; secondly, I shall mention *some disadvantages under which these old stories labour with regard to the effect upon our minds*; and, then, I shall draw the proper inferences from those marvellous things which we have heard, that the Lord did in the days of yore.

I. To begin then, with THE WONDERFUL STORIES WE HAVE HEARD OF THE LORD'S ANCIENT DOINGS.

We have heard that God has at times done very mighty acts. The plain everyday course of the world hath been disturbed with wonders at which men have been exceedingly amazed. God hath not always permitted his church to go on climbing by slow degrees to victory, but he hath been pleased at times to smite one terrible blow, and lay his enemies down upon the earth, and bid his children

march over their prostrate bodies. Turn back then, to ancient records, and remember what God hath done. Will ye not remember what he did at the Red Sea, how he smote Egypt and all its chivalry, and covered Pharaoh's chariot and horse in the Red Sea? Have ye not heard tell how God smote Og, king of Bashan, and Sihon, king of the Amorites, because they withstood the progress of his people? Have ye not learned how he proved that his mercy endureth for ever, when he slew those great kings and cast the mighty ones down from their thrones? Have you not read, too, how God smote the children of Canaan, and drove out the inhabitants thereof, and gave the land to his people, to be a possession by lot for ever? Have you not heard how when the hosts of Jabin came against them, the stars in their courses fought against Sisera? The river of Kishon swept them away, "that ancient river, the river Kishon," and there was none of them left? Hath it not been told you, too, how by the hand of David, God smote the Philistines, and how by his right hand he smote the children of Ammon? Have you not heard how Midian was put to confusion, and the myriads of Arabia were scattered by Asa in the day of his faith? And have you not heard, too, how the Lord sent a blast upon the hosts of Sennacherib, so that in the morning they were all dead men? Tell—tell ye these, his wonders! Speak of them in your streets. Teach them to your children. Let them not be forgotten, for the right hand of the Lord hath done marvellous things, his name is known in all the earth.

The wonders, however, which most concern us, are those of the Christian era; and surely these are not second to those under the Old Testament. Have you never read how God won to himself great renown on the day of Pentecost? Turn ye to this book of the record of the wonders of the Lord and read. Peter the fisherman stood up and preached in the name of the Lord his God. A multitude assembled and the Spirit of God fell upon them; and it came to pass that three thousand in one day were pricked in their heart by the hand of God, and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. And know you not how the twelve apostles with the disciples went everywhere preaching the Word, and the idols fell from their thrones? The cities opened wide their gates, and the messengers of Christ walked through the streets and preached. It is true that at first they were driven hither and thither, and hunted like partridges upon the mountains: but do ye not remember how the Lord did get unto himself a victory, so that in a hundred years after the nailing of Christ to the cross, the gospel had been preached in every nation, and the isles of the sea had heard the sound thereof? And have you forgotten how the heathen were baptized, thousands at a time, in every river? What stream is there in Europe that cannot testify to the majesty of the gospel? What city is there in the land that cannot tell how God's truth has triumphed, and how the heathen has forsaken his false god, and bowed his knee to Jesus the crucified? The first spread of the gospel is a miracle never to be eclipsed. Whatever god may have done at the Red Sea, he hath done still more within a hundred years after the time when Christ first came into the world. It seemed as if a fire from heaven ran along the ground. Nothing could resist its force. The lightning shaft of truth shivered every pinnacle of the idol temple, and Jesus was worshipped from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same.

This is one of the things we have heard of the olden times.

And have ye never heard of the mighty things which God did by preachers some hundreds of years from that date? Hath it not been told you concerning Chrysostom, the golden-mouthed, how, whenever he preached, the church was thronged with attentive hearers; and there, standing and lifting up holy hands, he spake with a majesty unparalleled, the word of God in truth and righteousness; the people listening, hanging forward to catch every word, and anon breaking the silence with the clapping of their hands and the stamping of their feet; then silent again for a while, spell-bound by the mighty orator; and again carried away with enthusiasm, springing to their feet, clapping their hands, and shouting for joy again? Numberless were the conversions in his day. God was exceedingly magnified, for sinners were abundantly saved. And have your fathers never told you of the wondrous things that were done afterwards when the black darkness of superstition covered the earth, when Popery sat upon her throne and stretched her iron rod across the nations and shut the windows of heaven, and quenched the very stars of God and made thick darkness cover the people? Have ye never heard how Martin Luther arose and preached the gospel of the grace of God, and how the nations trembled, and the world heard the voice of God and lived? Have you not heard of Zwingli among the Swiss, and of Calvin in the city of Geneva, and of the mighty works that God did by them? Nay, as Britons have ye forgotten the mighty preacher of the truth—have your ears ceased to tingle with the wondrous tale of the preachers that Wickliffe sent forth into every market town and every hamlet of England, preaching the gospel of God? Oh, doth not history tell us that these men were like fire-brands in the midst of the dry stubble; that their voice was as the roaring of a lion, and their going forth like the springing of a young lion. Their glory was as the firstling of a bullock; they did push the nation before them, and as for the enemies, they said, "Destroy them." None could stand before them, for the Lord their God had girded them with might.

To come down a little nearer to our own times, truly our fathers have told us the wondrous things which God did in the days of Wesley and of Whitefield. The churches were all asleep. Irreligion was the rule of the day. The very streets seemed to run with iniquity, and the gutters were filled full with the iniquity of sin. Up rose Whitefield and Wesley, men whose hearts the Lord had touched, and they dared to preach the gospel of the grace of God. Suddenly, as in a moment, there was heard the rush as of wings, and the church said: "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?" They come! they come! numberless as the birds of heaven, with a rushing like mighty winds that are not to be withstood. Within a few years, from the preaching of these two men, England was permeated with evangelical truth. The Word of God was known in every town, and there was scarcely a hamlet into which the Methodists had not penetrated. In those days of the slow-coach, when Christianity seemed to have bought up the old wagons in which our fathers once travelled—where business runs with steam, there oftentimes religion creeps along with its belly on the earth,—we are astonished at these tales, and we think them wonders. Yet let us believe them; they come to us as substantial matters of history. And the wondrous things which God did in the olden times, by his grace he will yet do again. He that is mighty hath done great things and holy is his name.

There is a special feature to which I would call your attention with regard to the works of God in the olden time; they derive increasing interest and wonder from the fact that they were all sudden things. The old stagers in our churches believe that things must grow, gently, by degrees; we must go step by step onward. Concentrated action and continued labour, they say, will ultimately bring success. But the marvel is, all God's works have been sudden. When Peter stood up to preach, it did not take six weeks to convert the three thousand. They were converted at once and baptized that very day; they were that hour turned to God, and become as truly disciples of Christ as they could have been if their conversion had taken seventy years. So was it in the day of Martin Luther: it did not take Luther centuries to break through the thick darkness of Rome. God lit the candle and the candle burned, and there was the light in an instant—God works suddenly. If anyone could have stood in Wurtemberg, and have said: "Can Popery be made to quail, can the Vatican be made to shake?" The answer would have been:—"No; it will take at least a thousand years to do it. Popery, the great serpent, has so twisted itself about the nations, and bound them so fast in its coil, that they cannot be delivered except by a long process." "Not so," however, did God say. He smote the dragon sorely, and the nations went free; he cut the gates of brass, and broke

in under the bars of iron, and the people were delivered in an hour. Freedom came not in the course of years, but in an instant. The people that walked in darkness saw a great light, and upon them that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, did the light shine. So was it in Whitefield's day. The rebuking of a slumbering church was not the work of ages; it was done at once. Have ye never heard of the great revival under Whitefield? Take as an instance that at Camslang. He was preaching in the church-yard to a great congregation, that could not get into any edifice; and while preaching, the power of God came upon the people, and one after another fell down as if they were smitten; and at least it was estimated that not less than three thousand persons were crying out at one time under the conviction of sin. He preached on, now thundering like Boanerges, and then comforting like Barnabas, and the work spread, and no tongue can tell the great things that God did under that one sermon of Whitefield. Not even the sermon of Peter on the day of Pentecost was equal to it.

So has it been in all revivals; God's work has been done suddenly. As with a clap of thunder has God descended from on high; not slowly, but on cherubim right royally doth he ride; on the wings of the mighty wind does he fly. Sudden has been the work; men could scarce believe it true, it was done in so short a space of time. Witness the great revival which is going on in and around Belfast. After carefully looking at the matter, and after seeing some trusty and well-beloved brother who lived in that neighborhood, I am convinced, notwithstanding what enemies may say, that it is a genuine work of grace, and that God is doing wonders there. A friend who called to see me yesterday, tells me that the lowest and vilest men, the most depraved females in Belfast, have been visited with this extraordinary epilepsy, as the world calls it; but with this strange rushing of the spirit, as we have it. Men who have been drunkards have suddenly felt an impulse compelling them to pray. They have resisted; they have sought to their cups in order to put it out; but when they have been swearing, seeking to quench the Spirit by their blasphemy, God has at last brought them on their knees, and they have been compelled to cry for mercy with piercing shrieks, and to agonize in prayer; and then after a time, the Evil one seems to have been cast out of them, and in a quiet, holy, happy frame of mind, they have made a profession of their faith in Christ, and have walked in his fear and love. Roman Catholics have been converted. I thought that an extraordinary thing; but they have been converted very frequently indeed in Ballymena and in Belfast. In fact, I am told the priests are now selling small bottles of holy water for people to take, in order that they may be preserved from this desperate contagion of the Holy Spirit. This holy water is said to have such efficacy, that those who do not attend any of the meetings are not likely to be meddled with by the Holy Spirit—so the priests tell them. But if they go to the meetings, even this holy water cannot preserve them—they are as liable to fall prey to the Divine influence. I think they are just as likely to do so without as with it. All this has been brought about suddenly, and although we may expect to find some portion of *natural* excitement, yet I am persuaded it is in the main a real, *spiritual*, and abiding work. There is a little froth on the surface, but there is a deep running current that is not to be resisted, sweeping underneath, and carrying everything before it. At least there is something to awaken our interest, when we understand that in the small town of Ballymena on market day, the publicans have always taken one hundred pounds for whiskey, and now they cannot take a sovereign all day long in all the public houses. Men who were once drunkards now meet for prayer, and people after hearing one sermon will not go until the minister has preached another, and sometimes a third; and at last he is obliged to say: "You must go, I am exhausted." Then they will break up into groups in their streets and in their houses, crying out to God to let this mighty work spread, that sinners may be converted unto him. "Well," says one, "we cannot believe it." Very likely you cannot, but some of us can, for we have heard it with our ears, and our fathers have told us the mighty works that God did in their days, and we are prepared to believe that God can do the same works now.

I must here remark again, in all these old stories there is one very plain feature. Whenever God has done a mighty work it has been by some very insignificant instrument. When he slew Goliath it was by little David, who was but a ruddy youth. Lay not up the sword of Goliath—I always thought that a mistake of David—lay up, not Goliath's sword, but lay up the stone, and treasure up the sling in God's armory for ever. When God would slay Sisera, it was a woman that must do it with a hammer and a nail. God has done his mightiest works by the meanest instruments: that is a fact most true of all God's works—Peter the fisherman at Pentecost, Luther the humble monk at the Reformation, Whitefield the potboy of the Old Bell Inn at Gloucester in the time of the last century's revival; and so it must be to the end. God works not by Pharaoh's horses or chariot, but he works by Moses' rod; he doth not his wonders with the whirlwind and the storm; he doth them by the still small voice, that the glory may be his and the honour all his own. Doth not this open a field of encouragement to you and to me? Why may not we be employed in doing some mighty work for God here? Moreover, we have noticed in all these stories of God's mighty works in the olden time, that wherever he has done any great thing it has been by someone who has had very great faith. I do verily believe at this moment that, if God willed it, every soul in this hall would be converted now. If God chose to put forth the operations of his own mighty Spirit, not the most obdurate heart would be able to stand against it. "He will have mercy upon whom he will have mercy." He will do as he pleases; none can stay his hand. "Well," says one, "but I do not expect to see any great things." Then, my dear friend, you will not be disappointed, for you will not see them; but those that expect them *shall* see them. Men of great faith do great things. It was Elijah's faith that slew the priests of Baal. If he had the little heart that some of you have, Baal's priests had still ruled over the people, and would never have been smitten with the sword. It was Elijah's faith that bade him say: "If the Lord be God, follow him, but if Baal, then follow him." And again: "Choose one bullock for yourselves, cut it in pieces, lay it on wood and put no fire under, call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of Jehovah." It was his noble faith that bade him say: "Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape"; and he brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there—a holocaust to God. The reason why God's name was so magnified, was because Elijah's faith in God was so mighty and heroic. When the Pope sent his bull to Luther, Luther burned it. Standing up in the midst of the crowd with the blazing paper in his hand he said: "See here, this is the Pope's bull." What cared he for all the Popes that were ever in or out of hell? And when he went to Worms to meet the grand Diet, his followers said: "You are in danger, stand back." "No," said Luther, "if there were as many devils in Worms as there are tiles on the roofs of the houses, I would not fear; I will go"—and into Worms he went, confident in the Lord his God. It was the same with Whitefield; he believed and he expected that God would do great things. When he went into his pulpit he believed that God would bless the people, and God did do so. Little faith may do little things, but great faith shall be greatly honoured. O God! our fathers have told us this, that whenever they had great faith Thou hast always honoured it by doing mighty works.

I will detain you no longer on this point, except to make one observation. All the mighty works of God have been attended with great prayer, as well as with great faith. Have you ever heard of the commencement of the great American revival? A man unknown and obscure, laid it up in his heart to pray that God would bless his country. After praying and wrestling and making the soul-stirring enquiry: "Lord, what wilt thou have *me* to do? Lord, what wilt thou have *me to do?*" he hired a room, and put up an announcement that there would be a prayer-meeting held there at such-and-such an hour of the day. He went at the proper hour, and there was not a single person there; he began to pray, and prayed for half an hour alone. One came in at the end of the half-hour, and then two

more, and I think he closed with six. The next week came around, and there might have been fifty dropped in at different times; at last the prayer-meeting grew to a hundred, then others began to start prayer-meetings; at last there was scarcely a street in New York that was without a prayer-meeting. Merchants found time to run in, in the middle of the day, to pray. The prayer-meetings became daily ones, lasting for about an hour; petitions and requests were sent up, these were simply asked and offered before God, and the answers came; and many were the happy hearts that stood up and testified that the prayer offered last week had been already fulfilled. Then it was when they were all earnest in prayer, suddenly the Spirit of God fell upon the people, and it was rumored that in a certain village a preacher had been preaching in thorough earnest, and there had been hundreds converted in a week. The matter spread into and through the Northern States—these revivals of religion became universal, and it has been sometimes said that a quarter of a million people were converted to God through the short space of two or three months. Now the same effect was produced in Ballymena and Belfast by the same means. The brother thought that it lay at his heart to pray, and he did pray; then he held a regular prayer-meeting; day after day they met together to entreat the blessing, and fire descended and the work was done. Sinners were converted, not by ones or twos but by hundreds and thousands, and the Lord's name was greatly magnified by the progress of his gospel. Beloved, I am only telling you facts. Make each of you your own estimate of them if you please.

II. Agreeable to my division,, I have now to make a few observations upon THE DISADVANTAGES UNDER WHICH THESE OLD STORIES FREQUENTLY LABOUR. When people hear about what God used to do, one of the things they say is: "Oh, that was a very long while ago." They imagine that times have altered since then. Says one: "I can believe anything about the Reformation—the largest accounts that can possibly be given, I can take in." "And so could I concerning Whitefield and Wesley," says another, "all that is quite true, they did labour vigorously and successfully, but that was many years ago. Things were in a different state then from what they are now." Granted; but I want to know what the things have to do with it. I thought it was God that did it. Has God changed? Is he not an immutable God, the same yesterday, to-day and for ever? Does not that furnish an argument to prove that what God has done at one time he can do at another? Nay, I think I may push it a little further, and say what he has done once, is a prophecy of what he intends to do again—that the mighty works which have been accomplished in the olden time shall all be repeated, and the Lord's song shall be sung again in Zion, and he shall again be greatly glorified. Others among you say, "Oh, well I look upon these things as great prodigies—miracles. We are not to expect them every day." That is the very reason why we do not get them. If we had learnt to expect them, we should no doubt obtain them, but we put them up on the shelf, as being out of the common order of our moderate religion, as being mere curiosities of Scripture history. We imagine such things, however true, to be prodigies of providence; we cannot imagine them to be according to the ordinary working of his mighty power. I beseech you, my friends, abjure that idea, put it out of your mind. Whatever God has done in the way of converting sinners is to be looked upon as a precedent, for "his arm is not shortened that He cannot save, not is his ear heavy that He cannot hear." If we are straitened at all, we are not straitened in ourselves, and with earnestness seek that God would restore to us the faith of the men of old, that we may richly enjoy his grace as in the days of old. Yet there is yet another disadvantage under which these old stories labour. The fact is, we have not seen them. Why, I may talk to you ever so long about revivals, but you won't believe them half so much, nor half so truly, as if one were to occur in your very midst. If you saw it with your own eyes, then you would see the power of it. If you had lived in Whitefield's day, or had heard Grimshaw preach, you would believe anything. Grimshaw would preach twenty-four times a week: he would preach many times in the course of a sultry day, going from place on horseback. That man *did* preach. It seemed as if heaven would come down to earth to listen to him. He spoke with a real earnestness, with all the fire of zeal that ever burned in mortal breast, and the people trembled while they listened to him, and said, "Certainly this is the voice of God." It was the same with Whitefield. The people would seem to move to and fro while he spoke, even as the harvest field is moved with the wind. So mighty was the energy of God that after hearing such a sermon the hardest-hearted men would go away and say: "There must be something in it, I never heard the like." Can you not realize these as literal facts? Do they stand up in all their brightness before your eyes? Then I think the stories you have heard with your ears should have a true and proper effect upon your lives.

III. This brings me in the third place to the PROPER INFERENCES THAT ARE TO BE DRAWN FROM THE OLD STORIES OF GOD'S MIGHTY DEEDS.

I would that I could speak with the fire of some of those men whose names I have mentioned. Pray for me, that the Spirit of God may rest upon me, that I may plead with you for a little time with all my might, seeking to exhort and stir you up, that you may get a like revival in your midst. My dear friends, the first effect which the reading of the history of God's mighty works should have upon us, is that of gratitude and praise. Have we nothing to sing about to-day?—then let us sing concerning days of yore. If we cannot sing to our well-beloved a song concerning what he is doing in our midst, let us, nevertheless, take down our harps from the willows, and sing an old song, and bless and praise his holy name for the things which he did to his ancient church, for the wonders which he wrought in Egypt, and in all the lands wherein he led his people, and from which he brought them out with a high hand and with an outstretched arm. When we have thus begun to praise God for what he has done, I think I may venture to impress upon you one other great duty. Let what God has done suggest to you the prayer that he would repeat the like signs and wonders among us. Oh! men and brethren, what would this heart feel if I could but believe that there were some among you who would go home and pray for a revival of religion—men whose faith is large enough, and their love fiery enough to lead them from this moment to exercise unceasing intercessions that God would appear among us and do wondrous things here, as in the times of former generations. Why, look you here in this present assembly what objects there are for our compassion. Glancing round, I observe one and another whose history I may happen to know, but how many are there still unconverted—men who trembled and who know they have, but have shaken off their fears, and once more are daring their destiny, determined to be suicides to their own souls and to put away from them that grace which once seemed as if it were striving in their hearts. They are turning away from the gates of heaven, and running post-haste to the doors of hell; and will not you stretch out your hands to God to stop them in this desperate resolve? If in this congregation there were but one unconverted man and I could point him out and say: "There he sits, one soul that has never felt the love of God, and never has been moved to repentance," with what anxious curiosity would every eye regard him? I think out of thousands of Christians here, there is not one who would refuse to go home and pray for that solitary unconverted individual. But, oh! my brethren, it is not one that is in danger of hell fire; here are hundreds and thousands of our fellow-creatures.

Shall I give you yet another reason why you should pray? Hitherto all other means have been used without effect. God is my witness how often I have striven in this pulpit to be the means of the conversion of men. I have preached my very heart out. I could say no more than I have said, and I hope the secrecy of my chamber is a witness to the fact that I do not cease to feel when I cease to speak; but I have a heart to pray for those of you who are never affected, or who, if affected, still quench the Spirit of God. I have done my

utmost. Will not you come to the help of the Lord against the mighty? Will not your prayers accomplish that which my preaching fails to do? Here they are; I commend them to you. Men and women whose hearts refuse to melt, whose stubborn knees will not bend; I give them up to you and ask you to pray for them. Carry their cases on your knees before God. Wife! never cease to pray for your unconverted husband. Husband! never stop your supplication till you see your wife converted. And, O fathers and mothers! have you no unconverted children? have you not brought them here many and many a Sunday, and they remain just as they have been? You have sent them first to one chapel and then to another, and they are just what they were. The wrath of God abideth on them. Die they must; and should they die now, to a certainty you are aware that the flames of hell must engulf them. And do you refuse to pray for them? Hard hearts, brutish souls, if knowing Christ yourself ye will not pray for those who come of your own loins—your children according to the flesh.

Dear friends, we do not know what God may do for us if we do but pray for a blessing. Look at the movement we have already seen; we have witnessed Exeter Hall, St. Paul's Cathedral, and Westminster Abbey, crammed to the doors, but we have seen no effect as yet of all these mighty gatherings. Have we not tried to preach without trying to pray? It is not likely that the church has been putting forth its preaching hand but not its praying hand? O dear friends! let us agonize in prayer, and it shall come to pass that this Music Hall shall witness the sighs and groans of the penitent and the songs of the converted. It shall yet happen that this vast host shall not come and go as now it does, but little the better; but men shall go out of this hall, praising God and saying:—"It was good to be there; it was none other than the house of God, and the very gate of heaven." Thus much to stir you up to prayer.

Another inference we should draw is that all the stories we have heard should correct any self-dependence which may have crept into our treacherous hearts. Perhaps we as a congregation have begun to depend upon our numbers and so forth. We may have thought: "Surely God must bless us through the ministry." Now let the stories which our fathers have told us remind you, and remind me, that God saves not by many nor by few; that it is not in us to do this but God must do it all; it may be that some hidden preacher, whose name has never been known, will yet start up in this city of London and preach the Lord with greater power than bishops or ministers have ever known before. I will welcome him; God be with him; let him come from where he may; only let God speed him, and let the work be done. Mayhap, however, God intends to bless the agency used in this place for your good and for your conversion. If so, I am thrice happy to think such should be the case. But place no dependence upon the instrument. No, when men laughed at us and mocked us most, God blessed us most; and now it is not a disreputable thing to attend the Music Hall. We are not so much despised as we once were, but I question whether we have so great a blessing as once we had. We would be willing to endure another pelting in the pillory, to go through another ordeal with every newspaper against us, and with every man hissing and abusing us, if God so pleases, if he will but give us a blessing. Only let him cast out of us any idea that our own bow and sword will get us victory. We shall never get a revival here unless we believe that it is the Lord, and the Lord alone, that can do it.

Having made this statement, I will endeavour to stir you up with confidence that the result may be obtained that I have pictured, and that the stories we have heard of the olden time, may become true in our day. Why should not every one of my hearers be converted? Is there any limitation in the Spirit of God? Why should not the feeblest minister become the means of salvation to thousands? Is God's arm shortened? My brethren, when I bid you pray that God would make the ministry quick and powerful, like a two-edged sword, for the salvation of sinners, I am not setting you a hard, much less an impossible, task. We have but to ask and to get. Before we call, God will answer; and while we are yet speaking he will hear. God alone can know what may come of this morning's sermon, if he chooses to bless it. From this moment you may pray more; from this moment God may bless the ministry more. From this hour other pulpits may become more full of life and vigour than before. From this same moment the Word of God may flow, and run, and rush, and get to itself an amazing and boundless victory. Only wrestle in prayer, meet together in your houses, go to your closets, be instant, be earnest in season and out of season, agonize for souls, and all that you have heard shall be forgotten in what you shall see; and all that others have told you shall be as nothing compared with what you shall hear with your ears and behold with your eyes in your own midst. Oh ye, to whom all this is as an idle tale, who love not God, neither serve him, I beseech you stop and think for a moment. Oh, Spirit of God, rest on thy servant while a few sentences are uttered, and make them mighty. God has striven with some of you. You have had your times of conviction. You are trying now, perhaps, to be infidels. You are trying to say now—"There is no hell—there is no hereafter." It will not do. You know there is a hell and all the laughter of those who seek to ruin your souls cannot make you believe that there is not. You sometimes try to think so, but you know that God is true. I do not argue with you now. Conscience tells you that God will punish you for sin. Depend upon it—you will find no happiness in trying to stifle God's Spirit. This is not the path to bliss, to quench those thoughts which would lead you to Christ. I beseech you, take off your hands from God's arm; resist not still His Spirit. Bow the knee and lay hold of Christ and believe on him. It will come to this yet. God the Holy Spirit will have you. I do trust that in answer to many prayers he intends to save you yet. Give way now, but oh, remember if you are successful in quenching the Spirit, your success will be the most awful disaster that can ever occur to you, for if the Spirit forsake you, you are lost. It may be that this is the last warning you will ever have. The conviction you are now trying to put down and stifle may be the last you will have, and the angel standing with the black seal and the wax may be now about to drop it upon your destiny, and say, "Let him alone. He chooses drunkenness—he chooses lust—let him have them;; and let him reap the wages in the everlasting fires of hell." Sinners, believe on the Lord Jesus: repent and be converted every one of you. I am bold to say what Peter did. Breaking through every bond of every kind that could bind my lip, I exhort you in God's name—Repent and escape from damnation. A few more months and years, and ye shall know what damnation means, except ye repent. Oh! fly to Christ while yet the lamp holds out and burns, and mercy is still preached to you. Grace is still presented; accept Christ, resist him no longer; come to him now. The gates of mercy are wide open to-day; come now, poor sinner, and have thy sins forgiven. When the old Romans used to attack a city, it was sometimes their custom to set up at the gate a white flag, and if the garrison surrendered while that white flag was there, their lives were spared. After that the black flag was put up, and then every man was put to the sword. The white flag is up to-day; perhaps to-morrow the black flag will be elevated upon the pole of the law; and then there is no repentance or salvation either in this world or in that which is to come. An old eastern conqueror when he came to a city used to light a brazier of coals, and, setting it high upon a pole he would, with sound of trumpet proclaim, that if they surrendered while the lamp held out and burned he would have mercy upon them, but that when the coals were out he would storm the city, pull it stone from stone, sow it with salt, and put men, women, and children, to a bloody death. To-day the thunders of God bid you to take the like warning. There is your light, the lamp, the brazier of hot coals. Year after year the fire is dying out, nevertheless there is coal left. Even now the wind of death is trying to blow out the last live coal. Oh! sinner, turn while the lamp continues to blaze. Turn now, for when the last coal is dead thy repentance cannot avail thee. Thy everlasting yelling in torment cannot move the heart of God; thy groans and briny tears cannot move him to pity thee. To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation. Oh, to-day lay hold on Christ, "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye

perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

## The Blood of the Everlasting Covenant

Delivered on Sabbath Morning, September 4th, 1859, by the

REV. C. H. Spurgeon

at the Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens.

"The blood of the everlasting covenant."—Hebrews 13:20.

ALL GOD'S dealings with men have had a covenant character. It hath so pleased Him to arrange it, that he will not deal with us except through a covenant, nor can we deal with Him except in the same manner. Adam in the garden was under a covenant with God and God was in covenant with Him. That covenant he speedily brake. There is a covenant still existing in all its terrible power—terrible I say, because it has been broken on man's part, and therefore God will most surely fulfill its solemn threatenings and sanctions. That is the covenant of works. By this he dealt with Moses, and in this doth he deal with the whole race of men as represented in the first Adam. Afterwards when God would deal with Noah, it was by a covenant; and when in succeeding ages he dealt with Abraham, he was still pleased to bind himself to him by a covenant. That covenant he preserved and kept, and it was renewed continually to many of his seed. God dealt not even with David, the man after his own heart, except with a covenant. He made a covenant with his anointed and beloved; he dealeth with you and me this day still by covenant. When he shall come in all his terrors to condemn, he shall smite by covenant—namely, by the sword of the covenant of Sinai; and if he comes in the splendors of his grace to save, he still comes to us by covenant—namely, the covenant of Zion; the covenant which he has made with the Lord Jesus Christ, the head and representative of his people. And mark, whenever we come into close and intimate dealings with God, it is sure to be, on our part, also by covenant. We make with God, after conversion, a covenant of gratitude; we come to him sensible of what he has done for us, and we devote ourselves to him. We set our seal to that covenant when in baptism we are united with his church; and day by day, so often as we come around the table of the breaking of the bread, we renew the vow of our covenant, and thus we have personal intercourse with God. I cannot pray to him except through the covenant of grace; and I know that I am not his child unless I am his, first through the covenant whereby Christ purchased me, and secondly, through the covenant by which I have given up myself, and dedicated all that I am and all that I have to him. It is important, then, since the covenant is the only ladder which reaches from earth to heaven—since it is the only way in which God has intercourse with us, and by which we can deal with him, that we should know how to discriminate between covenant and covenant; and should not be in any darkness or error with regard to what is the covenant of grace, and what is not. It shall be our endeavor, this morning, to make as simple and as plain as possible, the matter of the covenant spoken of in our text, and I shall thus speak—first upon the *covenant of grace*; secondly, *its everlasting character*; and thirdly, the relationship which the blood bears to it. "*The blood of the everlasting covenant.*"

I. First of all, then, I have to speak this morning of THE COVENANT mentioned in the text; and I observe that we can readily discover at first sight *what the covenant is not*. We see at once that this is not the covenant of works, for the simple reason that this is an everlasting covenant. Now the covenant of works was not everlasting in any sense whatever. It was not eternal; it was first made in the garden of Eden. It had a beginning, it has been broken; it will be violated continually and will soon be wound up and pass away: therefore, it is not everlasting in any sense. The covenant of works cannot bear an everlasting title; but as the one in my text is an everlasting covenant, therefore it is not a covenant of works. God made a covenant first of all with the human race, which ran in this wise: "If thou, O man, wilt be obedient, thou shalt live and be happy, but if thou wilt be disobedient, thou shalt perish. In the day that thou disobey me thou shalt die. That covenant was made with all of us in the person of our representative, the first Adam. If Adam had kept that covenant, we believe we should everyone of us have been preserved. But inasmuch as he broke the covenant, you and I, and all of us, fell down and were considered henceforth as the heirs of wrath, as inheritors of sin as prone to every evil and subject to every misery. That covenant has passed away with regard to God's people; it has been put away through the new and better covenant which has utterly and entirely eclipsed it by its gracious glory.

Again, I may remark that the covenant here meant is not the covenant of gratitude which is made between the loving child of God and his Saviour. Such a covenant is very right and proper. I trust all of us who know the Saviour have said in our very hearts:—

"'Tis done! The great transaction's done;

I am my Lord's, and he is mine."

We have given up everything to him. But that covenant is not the one in the text, for the simple reason that the covenant in our text is an everlasting one. Now ours was only written out some few years ago. It would have been despised by us in the earlier parts of our life, and cannot at the very utmost be so old as ourselves.

Having thus readily shown what this covenant is not, may I observe *what this covenant is*. And here it will be necessary for me to subdivide this head again and to speak of it thus: To understand a covenant, you must know who are the contracting parties; secondly, what are the stipulations of the contract; thirdly, what are the objects of it; and then, if you would go still deeper, you must understand something of the motives which lead the contracting parties to form the covenant between themselves.

1. Now, in this covenant of grace, we must first of all observe *the high contracting parties* between whom it was made. The covenant of grace was made before the foundation of the world between God the Father, and God the Son; or to put it in a yet more scriptural light, it was made mutually between the three divine persons of the adorable Trinity. This covenant was not made mutually between God and man. Man did not at that time exist; but Christ stood in the covenant as man's representative. In that sense we will allow that it was a covenant between God and man, but not a covenant between God and any man personally and individually. It was a covenant between God with Christ, and through Christ indirectly with all the blood-bought seed who were loved of Christ from the foundation of the world. It is a noble and glorious thought, the very poetry of that old Calvinistic doctrine which we teach, that long ere the day-star knew its place, before God had spoken existence out of nothing, before angel's wing had stirred the unnavigated

ether, before a solitary song had distributed the solemnity of the silence in which God reigned supreme, he had entered into solemn council with himself, with his Son, and with his Spirit, and had in that council decreed, determined, proposed, and predestinated the salvation of his people. He had, moreover, in the covenant arranged the ways and means, and fixed and settled everything which should work together for the effecting of the purpose and the decree. My soul flies back now, winged by imagination and by faith, and looks into that mysterious council-chamber, and by faith I behold the Father pledging himself to the Son, and the Son pledging himself to the Father, while the Spirit gives his pledge to both, and thus that divine compact, long to be hidden in darkness, is completed and settled—the covenant which in these latter days has been read in the light of heaven, and has become the joy, and hope, and boast of all the saints.

2. And now, what were *the stipulations of this covenant*? They were somewhat in the wise. God has foreseen that man after creation would break the covenant of works; that however mild and gentle the tenure upon which Adam had possession of Paradise, yet that tenure would be too severe for him, and he would be sure to kick against it, and ruin himself. God had also foreseen that his elect ones, whom he had chosen out of the rest of mankind would fall by the sin of Adam, since they, as well as the rest of mankind, were represented in Adam. The covenant therefore had for its end the restoration of the chosen people. And now we may readily understand what were the stipulations. On the Father's part, thus run the covenant. I cannot tell you it in the glorious celestial tongue in which it was written: I am fain to bring it down to the speech which suiteth to the ear of flesh, and to the heart of the mortal. Thus, I say, run the covenant, in ones like these: "I, the Most High Jehovah, do hereby give unto my only begotten and well-beloved Son, a people, countless beyond the number of stars, who shall be by him washed from sin, by him preserved, and kept, and led, and by him, at last, presented before my throne, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. I covenant by oath, and swear by myself, because I can swear by no greater, that these whom I now give to Christ shall be for ever the objects of my eternal love. Them I will forgive through the merit of the blood. To these will I give a perfect righteousness; these will I adopt and make my sons and daughters, and these shall reign with me through Christ eternally." Thus run that glorious side of the covenant. The Holy Spirit also, as one of the high contracting parties on this side of the covenant, gave his declaration, "I hereby covenant," saith he, "that all whom the Father giveth to the Son, I will in due time quicken. I will show them their need of redemption; I will cut off from them all groundless hope, and destroy their refuges of lies. I will bring them to the blood of sprinkling; I will give them faith whereby this blood shall be applied to them, I will work in them every grace; I will keep their faith alive; I will cleanse them and drive out all depravity from them, and they shall be presented at last spotless and faultless." This was the one side of the covenant, which is at this very day being fulfilled and scrupulously kept. As for the other side of the covenant this was the part of it, engaged and covenanted by Christ. He thus declared, and covenanted with his Father: "My Father, on my part I covenant that in the fullness of time I will become man. I will take upon myself the form and nature of the fallen race. I will live in their wretched world, and for my people I will keep the law perfectly. I will work out a spotless righteousness, which shall be acceptable to the demands of thy just and holy law. In due time I will bear the sins of all my people. Thou shalt exact their debts on me; the chastisement of their peace I will endure, and by my stripes they shall be healed. My Father, I covenant and promise that I will be obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. I will magnify thy law, and make it honourable. I will suffer all they ought to have suffered. I will endure the curse of thy law, and all the vials of thy wrath shall be emptied and spent upon my head. I will then rise again; I will ascend into heaven; I will intercede for them at thy right hand; and I will make myself responsible for every one of them, that not one of those whom thou hast given me shall ever be lost, but I will bring all my sheep of whom, by thy blood, thou hast constituted me the shepherd—I will bring every one safe to thee at last." Thus ran the covenant; and now, I think, you have a clear idea of what it was and how it stands—the covenant between God and Christ, between God the Father and God the Spirit, and God the Son as the covenant head and representative of all Gods elect. I have told you, as briefly as I *could* what were the stipulations of it. You will please to remark, my dear friends, that the covenant is, on one side, perfectly fulfilled. God the Son has paid the debts of all the elect. He has, for us men and for our redemption, suffered the whole of wrath divine. Nothing remaineth now on this side of the question except that he shall continue to intercede, that he may safely bring all his redeemed to glory.

On the side of the Father this part of the covenant has been fulfilled to countless myriads. God the Father and God the Spirit have not been behindhand in their divine contract. And mark you, this side shall be as fully and as completely finished and carried out as the other. Christ can say of what he promised to do. "It is finished!" and the like shall be said by all the glorious covenanters. All for whom Christ died shall be pardoned, all justified, all adopted. The Spirit shall quicken them all, shall give them all faith, shall bring them all to heaven, and they shall, every one of them, without let or hindrance, stand accepted in the beloved, in the day when the people shall be numbered, and Jesus shall be glorified.

3. And now having seen who were the high contracting parties, and what were the terms of the covenant made between them, let us see what were *the objects of this covenant*. Was this covenant made for every man of the race of Adam? Assuredly not; we discover the secret by the visible. That which is in the covenant is to be seen in due time by the eye and to be heard with the ear. I see multitudes of men perishing, continuing wantonly in their wicked ways, rejecting the offer of Christ which is presented to them in the Gospel day after day, treading under foot the blood of the Son of Man, defying the Spirit who strives with them; I see these men going on from bad to worse at last perishing in their sins. I have not the folly to believe that they have any part in the covenant of grace. Those who die impenitent, the multitudes who reject the Saviour, are clearly proved to have no part and no lot in the sacred covenant of divine grace; for if they were interested in that, there would be certain marks and evidences which would show us this. We should find that in due time in this life they would be brought to repentance, would be washed in the Saviour's blood, and would be saved. The covenant—to come at once straight to the matter, however offensive the doctrine may be—the covenant has relationship to the elect and none besides. Does this offend you? Be ye offended ever more. What said Christ? "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me: for they are thine." If Christ prayeth for none but for the chosen, why should ye be angry that ye are also taught from the Word of God that in the covenant there was provision made for the like persons, that they might receive eternal life. As many as shall believe, as many as shall trust in Christ, as many as shall persevere unto the end, as many as shall enter into the eternal rest, so many and no more are interested in the covenant of divine grace.

4. Furthermore, we have to consider what were the motives of this covenant. Why was the covenant made at all? There was no compulsion or constraint on God. As yet there was no creature. Even could the creature have an influence on the Creator, there was none existing in the period when the covenant was made. We can look nowhere for God's motive in the covenant except it be in himself, for of God it could be said literally in that day, "I am, and there is none beside me." Why then did he make the covenant? I answer, absolute sovereignty dictated it. But why were certain men the objects of it and why not others? I answer, sovereign grace

guided the pen. It was not the merit of man, it was nothing which God foresaw in us that made him choose many and leave others to go on in their sins. It was nothing in them, it was sovereignty and grace combined that made the divine choice. If you, my brethren and sisters, have a good hope that you are interested in the covenant of grace, you must sing that song—

"What was there in me to merit esteem, or give the Creator delight?

'Twas even so Father I ever sing, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

"He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy," "for it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." His sovereignty elected, and his grace distinguished, and immutability decreed. No motive dictated the election of the individuals, except a motive in himself of love and of divine sovereignty. Doubtless the grand intention of God in making the covenant at all was his own glory; any motive inferior to that would be beneath his dignity. God must find his motives in himself: he has not to look to moths and worms for motives for his deeds. He is the "I AM."

"He sits on no precarious throne,

Nor borrows leave to be."

He doth as he wills in the armies of heaven. Who can stay his hand and say unto him, "What doest thou?" Shall the clay ask the potter for the motive for his making it into a vessel? Shall the thing formed before its creation dictate to its Creator? No, let God be God, and let man shrink into his native nothingness, and if God exalt him, let him not boast as though God found a reason for the deed in man. He finds his motives in himself. He is self-contained, and findeth nothing beyond nor needeth anything from any but himself. Thus have I, as fully as time permits this morning, discussed the first point concerning the covenant. May the Holy Spirit lead us into this sublime truth.

II. But now, in the second place, we come to notice ITS EVERLASTING CHARACTER. It is called an everlasting covenant. And here you observe at once its *antiquity*. The covenant of grace is the oldest of all things. It is sometimes a subject of great joy to me to think that the covenant of grace is older than the covenant of works. The covenant of works had a beginning, but the covenant of grace had not; and blessed be God the covenant of works has its end, but the covenant of grace shall stand fast when heaven and earth shall pass away. The antiquity of the covenant of grace demands our grateful attention. It is a truth which tends to elevate the mind. I know of no doctrine more grand than this. It is the very soul and essence of all poetry, and in sitting down and in sitting down and meditating upon it. I do confess my spirit has sometimes been ravished with delight. Can you conceive the idea that before all things God thought of you? That when as yet he had not made his mountains, he had thought of thee, poor puny worm? Before the magnificent constellations began to shine, and ere the great centre of the world had been fixed, and all the mighty planets and divers worlds had been made to revolve around it, then had God fixed the centre of his covenant, and ordained the number of those lesser stars which should revolve round that blessed centre, and derive light therefrom. Why, when one is taken up with some grand conceptions of the boundless universe, when with the astronomers we fly through space, when with we find it without end, and the starry hosts without number, does it not seem marvelous that God should give poor insignificant man the preference beyond even the whole universe besides? Oh this cannot make us proud, because it is a divine truth, but it must make us feel happy. Oh believer, you think yourself nothing, but God does not think so of you. Men despise you but God remembered you before he made anything. The covenant of love which he made with his Son on your behalf is older than the hoary ages, and if ye fly back when as yet time had not begun, before those massive rocks that bear the marks of gray old age upon them, had begun to be deposited, he had loved and chosen you, and made a covenant on your behalf. Remember well these ancient things of the eternal hills.

Then, again, it is an everlasting covenant from its *sureness*. Nothing is everlasting which is not secure. Man may erect his structures and think they may last for ever, but the Tower of Babel has crumbled, and the very Pyramids bear signs of ruin. Nothing which man has made is everlasting, because he cannot ensure it against decay. But as for the covenant of grace, well David say of it, "It is ordered in all things and sure." It is

"Signed, and sealed, and ratified,

In all things ordered well."

There is not an "if" or a "but" in the whole of it from beginning to end. Free-will hates God's "shalls" and "wills," and likes man's "ifs" and "buts," but there are no "ifs" and "buts" in the covenant of grace. Thus the tenure runs: "I will" and "they shall." Jehovah swears it and the Son fulfills it. It is—it must be true. It must be sure, for "I AM" determines. "Hath he said and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" It is a sure covenant. I have sometimes said, if any man were about to build a bridge or a house if he would leave me just one single stone or one timber to put where I liked, I would undertake that his house would fall down. Let me if there is anyone about to construct a bridge, have just simply the placing of one stone—I will select which stone it shall be and I will defy him to build a bridge that shall stand. I should simply select the key-stone and then he might erect whatever he pleased and it should soon fall. Now, the Armenian's covenant is one that cannot stand because there are one or two bricks in it (and that is putting it in the slightest form; I might have said, "because every stone in it," and that would be nearer the mark) that are dependent on the will of man. It is left to the will of the creator whether he will be saved or not. If he will not, there is no constraining influence that can master and overcome his will. There is no promise that any influence shall be strong enough to overcome him, according to the Armenian. So the question is left to man, and God the mighty Builder—though he put stone on stone massive as the universe—yet may be defeated by this creature. Out upon such blasphemy! The whole structure, from beginning to end, is in the hand of God. The very terms and conditions of that covenant are become its seals and guarantees, seeing that Jesus has fulfilled them all. Its full accomplishment in every jot and title is sure, and must be fulfilled by Christ Jesus, whether man will or man will not. It is not the creature's covenant, it is the Creator's. It is not man's covenant, it is the Almighty's covenant, and he will carry it out and perform it, the will of man notwithstanding. For this is the very glory of grace—that man hates to be saved—that he is enmity to him, yet God will have him redeemed—that God's consensus is. "You shall," and man's intention is "I will not, and God's "shall" conquers man's "I will not." Almighty grace rides victoriously over the neck of free will and leads it captive in glorious captivity to the all-conquering power of irresistible grace and love. It is a sure covenant, and therefore deserves the title of everlasting.

Furthermore, it is not only sure, but it is immutable. If it were not *immutable*, it could not be everlasting. That which changes

passes away. We may be quite sure that anything that has the word "change" on it, will sooner or later die, and be put away as a thing of nought. But in the covenant, everything is immutable. Whatever God has established must come to pass, and not word, or line, or letter, can be altered. Whatever the Spirit voucheth shall be done, and whatever God the Son promised hath been fulfilled, and shall be consummated at the day of his appearing. Oh if we could believe that the sacred lines could be erased—that the covenant could be blotted and blurred, why then my dear friends, we might lie down and despair. I have heard it said by some preachers, that when the Christian is holy, he is in the covenant; that when he sins, he is crossed out again; that when he repents, he is put in again, and if he fails he is scratched out once more; and so he goes in and out of the door, as he would in and out of his own house. He goes in at one door and out of another. He is sometimes the child of God, and sometimes the child of the devil—sometimes an heir of heaven, and anon an heir of hell. And I know one man who went so far as to say that although a man might have persevered through grace for sixty years, yet should he fall away the last year of his life—if he should sin and die so, he would perish everlastingly, and all his faith, and all the love which God had manifested to him in the day's gone by would go for nothing. I am very happy to say that such a notion of God is just the very notion I have of the devil. I could not believe in such a God, and could not bow down before him. A God that loves today and hates tomorrow; a God that gives a promise, and yet foreknows after all that man shall not see the promise fulfilled; a God that forgives and punishes—that justifies and afterwards executes—is a God that I cannot endure. He is not the God of the Scriptures I am certain, for *he* is immutable, just, holy, and true, and having loved his own, he will love them to the end, and if he hath given a promise to any man, the promise shall be kept, and that man once in grace, is in grace forever, and shall without fall by-and-by enter into glory.

And then to finish up this point. The covenant is everlasting because *it will never run itself out*. It will be fulfilled but it will stand firm. When Christ hath completed all, and brought every believer to heaven; when the Father hath seen all his people gathered in—the covenant it is true, will come to a consummation, but not to a conclusion, for thus the covenant runs: The heirs of grace shall be blessed for ever, and as long as "for ever" lasts, this everlasting covenant will demand the happiness, the security, the glorification, of every object of it.

III. Having thus noticed the everlasting character of the covenant, I conclude by the sweetest and most precious portion of the doctrine—the relation which the blood bears to it—THE BLOOD OF THE EVERLASTING COVENANT. The blood of Christ stands in a fourfold relationship to the covenant. *With regard to Christ*, his precious blood shed in Gethsemane, in Gabbatha and Golgotha, is *the fulfillment* of the covenant. By this blood sin is canceled; by Jesus' agonies justice is satisfied; by his death the law is honoured; and by that precious blood in all its mediatorial efficacy, and in all its cleansing power, Christ fulfills all that He stipulated to do on the behalf of his people towards God. Oh, believer, look to the blood of Christ, and remember that there is Christ's part of the covenant carried out. And now, there remains nothing to be fulfilled but God's part, there is nothing for thee to do; Jesus has done it all; there is nothing for free will to supply; Christ has done everything that God can demand. The blood is the fulfillment of the debtor's side of the covenant, and now God becometh bound by his own solemn oath to show grace and mercy to all whom Christ has redeemed by his blood. With regard to the blood in another respect, it is *to God the Father the bond* of the covenant. When I see Christ dying on the cross, I see the everlasting God from that time, if I may use the term of him who ever must be free, bound by his own oath and covenant to carry out every stipulation. Does the covenant say, "A new heart will I give thee, and a right spirit will I put within thee?" It must be done, for Jesus died, and Jesus' death is the seal of the covenant. Does it say, "I will sprinkle pure water upon them and they shall be clean; from all their iniquities will I cleanse them?" Then it must be done, for Christ has fulfilled his part. And, therefore, now we can present the covenant no more as a thing of doubt; but as our claim on God through Christ, and coming humbly on our knees, pleading that covenant, our heavenly Father will not deny the promises contained therein, but will make every one of them yea and amen to us through the blood of Jesus Christ.

Then, again, the blood of the covenant has relation *to us as the objects* of the covenant, and that is its third light; it is not only a fulfillment as regards Christ, and a bond as regards his Father, but it is *an evidence* as regards ourselves. And here, dear brothers and sisters, let me speak affectionately to you. Are you relying wholly upon the blood? Has his blood—the precious blood of Christ—been laid to your conscience? Have you seen your sins pardoned, through his blood? Have you received forgiveness of sins through the blood of Jesus? Are you glorying in his sacrifice, and is his cross your only hope and refuge? Then you are in the covenant. Some men want to know whether they are elect. We cannot tell them unless they will tell us this. Dost thou believe? Is thy faith fixed on the precious blood? Then thou art in the covenant. And oh, poor sinner, if thou hast nothing to recommend thee; if thou art standing back, and saying "I dare not come! I am afraid! I am not in the covenant!" still Christ bids thee come. "Come unto *me*," saith he. "If thou canst not come to the covenant Father, come to the covenant Surety. Come unto *me* and I will give thee rest." And when thou hast come to him, and his blood has been applied to thee doubt not, but that in the red roll of election stands thy name. Canst thou read thy name in the bloody characters of a Saviour's atonement? Then shalt thou read it one day in the golden letters of the Father's election. He that believeth is elected. The blood is the symbol, the token, the earnest, the surety, the seal of the covenant of grace to thee. It must ever be the telescope through which thou canst look to see the things that are afar off. Thou canst not see thy election with the naked eye, but through the blood of Christ thou canst see it clear enough. Trust thou in the blood, poor sinner, and then the blood of the everlasting covenant is a proof that thou art an heir of heaven. Lastly, the blood stands in a relationship *to all three*, and here I may add that *the blood is the glory of all*. To the Son it is the fulfillment, to the Father the bond, to the sinner the evidence, and to all—To Father, Son, and sinner—it is the common glory and the common boast. In this the Father is well pleased; in this the Son also, with joy, looks down and sees the purchase of his agonies; and in this must the sinner ever find his comfort and his everlasting song,—"*Jesus, thy blood and righteousness, are my glory, my song, for ever and ever!*"

And now, my dear hearers, I have one question to ask, and I have done. Have you the hope that you are in the covenant? Have you put your trust in the blood? Remember, though you imagine, perhaps, from what I have been saying, that the gospel is restricted, that the gospel is freely preached to all. The decree is limited, but the good news is as wide as the world. The good spell, the good news, is as wide as the universe. I tell it to every creature under heaven, because I am told to do so. The secret of God, which is to deal with the application, that is restricted to God's chosen ones, but not the message, for that is to be proclaimed to all nations. Now thou hast heard the gospel many and many a time in thy life. It runs thus: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Dost thou believe that? And this is thy hope—something like this: "I am a sinner. I trust Christ has died for me; I put my trust in the merit of his blood, and sink or swim, I have no other hope but this.

'Nothing in my hand I bring,

Thou hast heard it; hast thou received it in thy heart, and laid hold on it; then thou art one of those in the covenant. And why should election frighten thee? If thou hast chosen Christ, depend upon it he has chosen thee. If thy tearful eye is looking to him, then his omniscient eye has long looked on thee; if thy heart lovest him, his heart loves thee better than ever thou canst love, and if now thou art saying, "My father, thou shalt be the guide of my youth," I will tell thee a secret—he has been thy guide, and has brought thee to be what thou now art, a humble seeker, and he will be thy guide and bring thee safe at last. But art thou a proud, boastful, free-willer, saying, "I will repent and believe whenever I choose; I have as good a right to be saved as anybody, for I do my duty as well as others, and I shall doubtless get my reward"—if you are claiming a universal atonement, which is to be received at the option of man's will, go and claim it, and you will be disappointed in your claim. You will find God will not deal with you on that ground at all, but will say, "Get thee hence, I never knew thee. He that cometh not to me through the Son cometh not at all." I believe the man who is not willing to submit to the electing love and sovereign grace of God, has great reason to question whether he is a Christian at all, for the spirit that kicks against that is the spirit of the devil, and the spirit of the unhumiliated, unrenewed heart. May God take away the enmity out of your heart to his own precious truth, and reconcile you to himself through THE BLOOD of his Son, which is the bond and seal of the everlasting covenant.

## The Necessity of the Spirit's Work

Delivered on Sabbath Morning, May 8th, 1859, by the

REV. C. H. Spurgeon

at the Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens.

"And I will put my Spirit within you."—Ezekiel, 36:27.

The miracles of Christ are remarkable for one fact, namely that they are none of them unnecessary. The pretended miracles of Mahomet, and of the church of Rome, even if they had been miracles, would have been pieces of folly. Suppose that Saint Denis had walked with his head in his hand after it had been cut off, what practical purpose would have been subserved thereby? He would certainly have been quite as well in his grave, for any practical good he would have conferred on men. The miracles of Christ were never unnecessary. They are not freaks of power; they are displays of power it is true, but they all of them have a practical end. The same thing may be said of the promises of God. We have not one promise in the Scripture which may be regarded as a mere freak of grace. As every miracle was necessary, absolutely necessary, so is every promise that is given in the Word of God. And hence from the text that is before us, may I draw, and I think very conclusively, the argument, that if God in his covenant made with his people has promised to put his Spirit within them, it must be absolutely necessary that this promise should have been made, and it must be absolutely necessary also to our salvation that every one of us should receive the Spirit of God. This shall be the subject of this morning's discourse. I shall not hope to make it very interesting, except to those who are anxiously longing to know the way of salvation.

We start, then, by laying down this proposition—that the work of the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary to us, if we would be saved.

I. In endeavoring to prove this, I would first of all make the remark that this is very manifest if we *remember what man is by nature*. Some say that man may of himself attain unto salvation—that if he hear the Word, it is in his power to receive it, to believe it, and to have a saving change worked in him by it. To this we reply, you do not know what man is by nature, otherwise you would never have ventured upon such an assertion. Holy Scripture tells us that man by nature is *dead* in trespasses and sins. It does not say that he is sick, that he is faint, that he has grown callous, and hardened, and seared, but it says he is absolutely dead. Whatever that term "death" means in connection with the body, that it means in connection with man's soul, viewing it in its relation to spiritual things. When the body is dead it is powerless; it is unable to do any thing for itself; and when the soul of man is dead, in a spiritual sense, it must be, if there is any meaning in the figure, utterly and entirely powerless, and unable to do any thing of itself or for itself. When ye shall see dead men raising themselves from their graves, when ye shall see them unwinding their own sheets, opening their own coffin-lids, and walking down our streets alive and animate, as the result of their own power, then perhaps ye may believe that souls that are dead in sin may turn to God, may recreate their own natures, and may make themselves heirs of heaven, though before they were heirs of wrath. But mark, *not till then*. The drift of the gospel is, that man is dead in sin, and that divine life is God's gift; and you must go contrary to the whole of that drift, before you can suppose a man brought to know and love Christ, apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit finds men as destitute of spiritual life as Ezekiel's dry bones; he brings bone to bone, and fits the skeleton together, and then he comes from the four winds and breathes into the slain, and they live, and stand upon their feet, an exceeding great army, and worship God. But apart from that, apart from the vivifying influence of the Spirit of God, men's souls must lie in the valley of dry bones, dead, and dead for ever.

But Scripture does not only tell us that man is dead in sin; it tells us something worse than this, namely, that he is utterly and entirely averse to every thing that is good and right. "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."—Romans 8:7.—Turn you all Scripture through, and you find continually the will of man described as being contrary to the things of God. What said Christ in that text so often quoted by the Arminian to disprove the very doctrine which it clearly states? What did Christ say to those who imagined that men would come without divine influence? He said, first, "No man can come unto me except the Father which hath sent me draw him;" but he said something more strong—"Ye *will not* come unto me that ye might have life." No man *will* come. Here lies the deadly mischief; not only that he is powerless to do good, but that he is powerful enough to do that which is wrong, and that his will is desperately set against every thing that is right. Go, Armenian, and tell your hearers that they will come if they please, but know that your Redeemer looks you in the face, and tells you that you are uttering a lie. Men *will not* come. They never will come of themselves. You cannot induce them to come; you cannot force them to come by all your thunders, nor can you entice them to come by all your invitations. They *will not* come unto Christ, that they may have life. Until the Spirit draw them, come they neither will, nor can.

Hence, then, from the fact that man's nature is hostile to the divine Spirit, that he hates grace, that he despises the way in which grace is brought to him, that it is contrary to his own proud nature to stoop to receive salvation by the deeds of another—hence it is necessary that the Spirit of God should operate to change the will, to correct the bias of the heart, to set man in a right track, and then give him strength to run in it. Oh! if ye read man and understand him, ye cannot help being sound on the point of the necessity of the Holy Spirit's work. It has been well remarked by a great writer, that he never knew a man who held any great theological error, who did not also hold a doctrine which diminished the depravity of man. The Armenian says man is fallen, it is true, but then he has power of will left, and that will is free; he can raise himself. He diminishes the desperate character of the fall of man. On the other hand, the Antinomian says, man cannot do any thing, but that he is not at all responsible, and is not bound to do it, it is not his duty to believe, it is not his duty to repent. Thus, you see, he also diminishes the sinfulness of man; and has not right views of the fall. But once get the correct view, that man is utterly fallen, powerless, guilty, defiled, lost, condemned, and you *must* be sound on all points of the great gospel of Jesus Christ. Once believe man to be what Scripture says he is—once believe his heart to be depraved, his affections perverted, his understanding darkened, his will perverse, and *you must* hold that if such a wretch as that be saved, it must e t e work of the Spirit of God, and of the Spirit of God alone.

2. I have another proof ready to hand. Salvation must be the work of the Spirit in us, because *the means used in salvation are of themselves inadequate for the accomplishment of the work*. And what are the means of salvation? Why, first and foremost stands the preaching of the Word of God. More men are brought to Christ by preaching than by any thing else; for it is God's chief and first instrument. This is the sword of the Spirit, quick and powerful, to the dividing asunder of the joints and marrow. "It pleaseth God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." But what is there in preaching, by which souls are saved, that looks as if it would be the means of saving souls? I could point you to divers churches and chapels into which you might step, and say, "Here is a learned minister, indeed, a man who would instruct and enlighten the intellect;" you sit down, and you say, "Well, if God means to work a great work, he will use a learned man like this." But do you know any learned men that are made the means of bringing souls to Christ, to any great degree? Go round your churches, if you please, and look at them, and then answer the question. Do you know any great men—men great in learning and wisdom—who have become spiritual fathers in our Israel? Is it not a fact that stares us in the face, that our fashionable preachers, our eloquent preachers, our learned preachers, are just the most useless men in creation for the winning of souls to Christ. And where are souls born to God? Why, in the house around which the jeer and the scoff and the sneer of the world have long gathered. Sinners are converted under the man whose eloquence is rough and homely, and who has nothing to commend him to his fellows, who has daily to fall on his knees and confess his own folly, and when the world speaks worst of him, feels that he deserves it all, since he is nothing but an earthen vessel, in which God is pleased to put his heavenly treasure. I will dare to say it, that in every age of the world the most despised ministry has been the most useful; and I could find you at this day poor Primitive Methodist preachers who can scarce speak correct English, who have been the fathers of more souls, and have brought to Christ more than any one bishop on the bench. Why, the Lord hath been pleased always to make it so, that he will clothe with power the weak and the foolish, but he will not clothe with power those who, if good were done, might be led to ascribe the excellence of the power to their learning, their eloquence, or their position. Like the apostle Paul, it is every minister's business to glory in his infirmities. The world says, "Pshaw! upon your oratory; it is rough, and rude, and eccentric." Yet, 'tis even so, but we are content, for God blesses it. Then so much the better that it has infirmities in it; for now shall it be plainly seen that it is not of man or by man, but the work of God, and of God alone. It is said that once upon a time a man exceedingly curious desired to see the sword with which a mighty hero had fought some desperate battles; casting his eye along the blade, he said, "Well, I don't see much in this sword." "Nay," said the hero, "but you have not examined the arm that wields it." And so when men come to hear a successful minister, they are apt to say, "I do not see any thing in him." No, but you have not examined the eternal arm that reaps its harvest with this sword of the Spirit. If ye had looked at the jaw-bone of the ass in Samson's hand, you would have said, "What! heaps on heaps with this!" No; bring out some polished blade; bring forth the Damascus steel! NO; but God would have all the glory, and, therefore, not with the polished steel, but with the jaw-bone must Samson get the victory. So with ministers; God has usually blessed the weakest to do the most good. Well, now, does it not follow from this, that it must be the work of the Spirit? Because, if there be nothing in the instrument that can lead thereunto, is it not the work of the Spirit when the thing is accomplished? Let me just put it to you. Under the ministry dead souls are quickened, sinners are made to repent, the vilest of sinners are made holy, men who came determined not to believe are compelled to believe. Now, who does this? If you say the ministry does it, then I say farewell to your reason, because there is nothing in the successful ministry which would tend thereunto. It must be that the Spirit worketh in man through the ministry or else such deeds would never be accomplished. You might as well expect to raise the dead by whispering in their ears, as hope to save souls by preaching to them, if it were not for the agency of the Spirit. Melancthon went out to preach, you know, without the Spirit of the Lord, and he thought he should convert all the people, but he found out at last that old Adam was too strong for young Melancthon, and he had to go back and ask for the help of the Holy Spirit or ever he saw a soul saved. I say, that the fact that the ministry is blessed proves, since there is nothing in the ministry, that salvation must be the work of a higher power.

Other means, however, are made use of to bless men's souls. For instance, the two ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. They are both made a rich means of grace. But let me ask you, is there any thing in baptism that can possibly bless any body? Can immersion in water have the slightest tendency to be blessed to the soul? And then with regard to the eating of bread and the drinking of wine at the Lord's Supper, can it by any means be conceived by any rational man that there is any thing in the mere piece of bread that we eat, or in the wine that we drink? And yet, doubtless, the grace of God does go with both ordinances for the confirming of the faith of those who receive them, and even for the conversion of those who look upon the ceremony. There must be something, then, beyond the outward ceremony; there must, in fact, be the Spirit of God, witnessing through the water, witnessing through the wine, witnessing through the bread, or otherwise none of these things could be means of grace to our souls. They could not edify; they could not help us to commune with Christ; they could not tend to the conviction of sinners, or to the establishment of saints. There must, then, from these facts, be a higher, unseen, mysterious influence—the influence of the divine Spirit of God.

3. Let me again remind you, in the third place, that the absolute necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart may be clearly seen from this fact, that *all which has been done by God the Father, and all that has been done God the Son must be ineffectual to us, unless the Spirit shall reveal these things to our souls*. We believe, in the first place, that God the Father elects his people; from before all worlds he chooses them to himself, but let me ask you—what effect does the doctrine of election have upon any man until the Spirit of God enters into him? How do I know whether God has chosen me from before the foundation of the world? How can I possibly know. Can I climb to heaven and read the roll? Is it possible for me to force my way through the thick mists which hide eternity, and open the seven seals of the book, and read my name recorded there? Ah! no; election is a dead letter both in my consciousness and in

any effect which it can produce upon me, until the Spirit of God calls me out of darkness into marvelous light. And then, through my calling, I see my election, and, knowing myself to be called of God, I know myself to have been chosen of God from before the foundation of the world. It is a precious thing—that doctrine of election—to a child of God. But what makes it precious? Nothing but the influence of the Spirit. Until the Spirit opens the eye to read, until the Spirit imparts the mystic secret, no heart can know its election. No angel ever revealed to any man that he was chosen of God; but the Spirit doth it. He, by his divine workings bears an infallible witness with our spirits that we are born of God; and then we are enabled to "read our title clear to mansions in the skies."

Look, again, at the covenant of grace. We know that there was a covenant made with the Lord Jesus Christ by his Father from before all worlds, and that in this covenant the persons of all his people were given to him, and were secured; but of what use, or of what avail is the covenant to us, until the Holy Spirit brings the blessings of the covenant to us? The covenant is, as it were, a holy tree laden with fruit; if the Spirit doth not shake that tree, and make the fruit fall therefrom, until it comes to the level of our standing, how can we receive it? Bring hither any sinner and tell him there is a covenant of grace, what is he advantaged thereby? "Ah," says he, "I may not be included in it; my name may not be recorded there; I may not be chosen in Christ;" but let the Spirit of God dwell in his heart, richly by faith and love which is in Christ Jesus, and that man sees the covenant, ordered in all things and sure, and he cries with David, "It is all my salvation and all my desire."

Take, again, the redemption of Christ. We know that Christ did stand in the room, place, and stead of all his people, and that all those who shall appear in heaven will appear there as an act of justice as well as of grace, seeing that Christ was punished in their room and stead, and that it would have been unjust if God punished them, seeing that he had punished Christ for them. We believe that Christ, having paid all their debts, they have a right to their freedom in Christ—that Christ having covered them with his righteousness, they are entitled to eternal life as much as if they had themselves been perfectly holy. But of what avail is this to me, until the Spirit takes of the things of Christ and shows them to me? What is Christ's blood to any of you until you have received the Spirit of grace? You have heard the minister preach about the blood of Christ a thousand times, but you passed by; it was nothing to you that Jesus should die. You know that he did atone for sins that were not his own; but you only regarded it as a tale, perhaps, even an idle tale. But when the Spirit of God led you to the cross, and opened your eyes, and enabled you to see Christ crucified, ah, then there was something in the blood indeed. When his hand dipped the hyssop in the blood, and when it applied that blood to, your spirit, then there was a joy and peace in believing, such as you had never known before. But ah, my hearer, Christ's dying is nothing to thee unless thou hast a living Spirit within thee. Christ brings thee no advantage, saving, personal, and lasting, unless the Spirit of God hath baptized thee in the fountain filled with his blood, and washed thee from head to foot therein.

I only mention these few out of the many blessings of the covenant just to prove that they are, none of them, of any use to us, unless the Holy Spirit gives them to us. There hang the blessings on the nail—on the nail, Christ Jesus; but we are short of stature; we cannot reach them; the Spirit of God takes them down and gives them to us, and there they are; they are ours. It is like the manna in the skies, far out of mortal reach; but the Spirit of God opens the windows of heaven, brings down the bread, and puts it to our lips, and enables us to eat. Christ's blood and righteousness are like wine stored in the wine-vat; but we cannot get thereat. The Holy Spirit dips our vessel into this precious wine, and then we drink; but without the Spirit we must die and perish just as much, though the Father elect and the Son redeem, as though the Father never had elected, and though the Son had never bought us with his blood. The Spirit is absolutely necessary. Without him neither the works of the Father, nor of the Son, are of any avail to us.

4. This brings us to another point. *The experience of the true Christian is a reality; but it never can be known and felt without the Spirit of God.* For what is the experience of the Christian? Let me just give a brief picture of some of its scenes. There is a person come into this hall this morning—one of the most reputable men in London. He has never committed himself in any outward vice; he has never been dishonest; but he is known as a staunch, upright tradesman. Now, to his astonishment, he is informed that he is a condemned, lost sinner, and just as surely lost as the thief who died for his crimes upon the cross. Do you think that man will believe it? Suppose, however, that he does believe it, simply because he reads it in the Bible, do you think that man will ever be made to feel it? I know you say, "Impossible!" Some of you, even now, perhaps, are saying, "Well, I never should!" Can you imagine that honorable, upright tradesman, saying, "God be merciful to me, a sinner?"—standing side by side with the harlot and the swearer, and feeling in his own heart as if he had been as guilty as they were, and using just the same prayer and saying, "Lord, save, or I perish." You cannot conceive it, can you? It is contrary to nature that a man who has been so good as he should pat himself down among the chief of sinners. Ah! but that will be done before he will be saved; he must feel that before he can enter heaven. Now, I ask, who can bring him to such a leveling experience as that, but the Spirit of God? Ye know very well proud nature will not stoop to it. We are all aristocrats in our own righteousness; we do not like to bend down and come among common sinners. If we are brought there, it must be the Spirit of God who casts us to the ground. Why, I know if any one had told me that I should ever cry to God for mercy, and confess that I had been the vilest of the vile, I should have laughed in their face; I should have said, "Why I have not done anything particularly wrong; I have not hurt anybody." And yet I know this very day I can take my place upon the lowest form, and if I can get inside heaven I shall feel happy to sit among the chief of sinners, and praise that Almighty love which has saved even me from my sins. Now, what works this humiliation of heart? Grace. It is contrary to nature for an honest and an upright man in the eye of the world to feel himself a lost sinner. It must be the Holy Spirit's work, or else it never will be done. Well, after a man has been brought here, can you conceive that man at last conscience-stricken, and led to believe that his past life deserves the wrath of God? His first thought would be, "Well, now, I will live better than I ever have lived." He would say, "Now, I will try and play the hermit, and pinch myself here and there, and deny myself, and do penance; and in that way, by paying attention to the outward ceremonies of religion, together with a high moral character, I doubt not I shall blot out whatever slurs and stains there have been." Can you suppose that man brought at last to feel that, if ever he gets to heaven, he will have to get there through the righteousness of another? "Through the righteousness of another?" says he, "I don't want to be rewarded for what another man does,—not I. If I go there, I will go there and take my chance; I will go there through what I do myself. Tell me something to do, and I will do it; I will be proud to do it, however humiliating it may be, so that I may at last win the love and esteem of God." Now, can you conceive such a man as that brought to feel that he can do nothing?—that, good man as he thinks himself, he cannot do any thing whatever to merit God's love and favor; and that, if he goes to heaven, he must go through what Christ did? Just the same as the drunkard must go there through the merits of Christ, so this moral man must enter into life, having nothing about him but Christ's perfect righteousness, and being washed in the blood of Jesus. We say that this is so contrary to human nature, so diametrically opposed to all the instincts of our poor fallen humanity, that nothing but the Spirit of God can ever bring a man to strip himself of all self-righteousness, and of all creature strength, and compel him to rest and lean simply and wholly upon Jesus Christ the Saviour.

These two experiences would be sufficient to prove the necessity of the Holy Spirit to make a man a Christian. But let me now describe a Christian as he is after his conversion. Trouble comes, storms of trouble, and he looks the tempest in the face and says, "I know that all things work together for my good." His children die, the partner of his bosom is carried to the grave; he says, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." His farm fails, his crop is blighted; his business prospects are clouded, all seem to go, and he is left in poverty: he says, "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail and the fields shall yield no meat; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." You see him next laid upon a sick bed himself, and when he is there, he says, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, for before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy Word." You see him approaching at last the dark valley of the shadow of death, and you hear him cry, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me, and thou thyself art with me." Now, I ask you, what makes this man calm in the midst of all these varied trials, and personal troubles, if it be not the Spirit of God? O, ye that doubt the influence of the Spirit, produce the like without him, go ye and die as Christians die, and live as they live, and if you can show the same calm resignation, the same quiet joy, and the same firm belief that adverse things shall, nevertheless, work together for good, then we may be, perhaps, at liberty to resign the point, and not till then. The high and noble experience of a Christian in times of trial and suffering, proves that there must be the operation of the Spirit of God.

But look at the Christian, too, in his joyous moments. He is rich. God has given him all his heart's desire on earth. Look at him: he says, "I do not value these things at all, except as they are the gift of God; I sit loose by them all and, notwithstanding this house and home, and all these comforts, 'I am willing to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.' It is true, I want nothing here on earth; but still I feel that to die would be gain to me, even though I left all these." He holds earth loosely; he does not grasp it with a tight hand, but looks upon it all as dust,—a thing which is to pass away. He takes but little pleasure therein, saying,—

"I've no abiding city here,  
I seek a city out of sight."

Mark that man; he has plenty of room for pleasures in this world, but he drinks out of a higher cistern. His pleasure springs from things unseen; his happiest moments are when he can shut all these good things out, and when he can come to God as a poor guilty sinner, and come to Christ and enter into fellowship with him, and rise into nearness of access and confidence, and boldly approach to the throne of the heavenly grace. Now, what is it that keeps a man who has all these mercies from setting his heart upon the earth? This is a wonder, indeed, that a man who has gold and silver, and flocks and herds, should not make these his god, but that he should still say,—

"There's nothing round this spacious earth  
That suits my large desire;  
To boundless joy and solid mirth  
My nobler thoughts aspire."

These are not my treasure; my treasure is in heaven, and in heaven only. What can do this? No mere moral virtue. No doctrine of the Stoic ever brought a man to such a pass as that. No, it must be the work of the Spirit, and the work of the Spirit alone, that can lead a man to live in heaven, while there is a temptation to him to live on earth. I do not wonder that a poor man looks forward to heaven; he has nothing to look upon on earth. When there is a thorn in the nest, I do not wonder that the lark flies up, for there is no rest for him below. When you are beaten and chafed by trouble, no wonder you say,—

"Jerusalem! my happy home!  
Name ever dear to me;  
When shall my labors have an end,  
In joy, and peace, and thee?"

But the greatest wonder is, if you line the Christian's nest never so softly, if you give him all the mercies of this life, you still cannot keep him from saying,—

"To Jesus, the crown of my hope,  
My soul is in haste to be gone;  
Oh bear me, ye cherubim, up,  
And waft me away to his throne."

5. And now, last of all, the acts, *the acceptable acts, of the Christian's life, cannot be performed without the Spirit*; and hence, again, the necessity for the Spirit of God. The first act of the Christian's life is repentance. Have you ever tried to repent? If so, if you tried without the Spirit of God you know that to urge a man to repent without the promise of the Spirit to help him, is to urge him to do an impossibility. A rock might as soon weep, and a desert might as soon blossom, as a sinner repent of his own accord. If God should offer heaven to man, simply upon the terms of repentance of sin, heaven would be as impossible as it is by good works; for a man can no more repent of himself, than he can perfectly keep God's law; for repentance involves the very principle of perfect obedience to the law of God. It seems to me that in repentance there is the whole law solidified and condensed; and if a man can repent of himself then there is no need of a Saviour, he may as well go to heaven up the steep sides of Sinai at once.

Faith is the next act in the divine life. Perhaps you think faith very easy; but if you are ever brought to feel the burden of sin you would not find it quite so light a labor. If you are ever brought into deep mire, where there is no standing, it is not so easy to put your

feet on a rock, when the rock does not seem to be there. I find faith just the easiest thing in the world when there is nothing to believe; but when I have room and exercise for my faith, then I do not find I have so much strength to accomplish it. Talking one day with a countryman, he used this figure: "In the middle of winter I sometimes think how well I could mow; and in early spring I think, oh! how I would like to reap; I feel just ready for it; but when mowing time comes, and when reaping time comes, I find I have not strength to spare." So when you have no troubles, couldn't you mow them down at once? When you have no work to do, couldn't you do it? But when work and trouble come you find how difficult it is. Many Christians are like the stag, who talked to itself, and said, "Why should I run away from the dogs? Look what a fine pair of horns I've got, and look what heels I've got too; I might do these hounds some mischief. Why not let me stand and show them what I can do with my antlers? I can keep off any quantity of dogs." No sooner did the dogs bark, than off the stag went. So with us. "Let sin arise," we say, "we will soon rip it up, and destroy it; let trouble come, we will soon get over it; but when sin and trouble come, we then find what our weakness is. Then we have to cry for the help of the Spirit; and through him we can do all things, though without him we can do nothing at all.

In all the acts of the Christian's life, whether it be the act of consecrating one's self to Christ, or the act of daily prayer, or the act of constant submission, or preaching the gospel, or ministering to the necessities of the poor, or comforting the desponding, in all these the Christian finds his weakness and his powerlessness, unless he is clothed about with the Spirit of God. Why, I have been to see the sick at times, and I have thought how I would like to comfort them; and I could not get a word out that was worth their hearing, or worth my saying; and my soul has been in agony to be the means of comforting the poor, sick, desponding brother; but I could do nothing, and I came out of the chamber, and half wished I had never been to see a sick person in my life: I had so learned my own folly. So has it been full often in preaching. You get a sermon up, study it, and come and make the greatest mess of it that can possibly be. Then you say, "I wish I had never preached at all." But all this is to show us, that neither in comforting nor in preaching can one do any thing right, unless the Spirit work in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure. Every thing, moreover, that we do with out the Spirit is unacceptable to God; and whatever we do under his influence, however we may despise it, is not despised of God, for he never despises his own work, and the Spirit never can look upon what he works in us with any other view than that of complacency and delight. If the Spirit helps me to groan, then God must accept the groaner. If thou couldst pray the best prayer in the world, without the Spirit, God would have nothing to do with it; but if thy prayer be broken, and lame, and limping, if the Spirit made it, God will look upon it, and say, as he did upon the works of creation, "It is very good;" and he will accept it.

And now let me conclude by asking this question. My hearer, then have you the Spirit of God in you? You have some religion, most of you, I dare say. Well, of what kind is it? Is it a homemade article? Did you make yourself what you are? Then, if so, you are a lost man up to this moment. If, my hearer, you have gone no further than you have walked yourself, you are not on the road to heaven yet; you have got your face turned the wrong way; but if you have received something which neither flesh nor blood could reveal to you, if you have been led to do the very thing which you once hated, and to love that thing which you once despised, and to despise that on which your heart and your pride were once set, then, soul, if this be the Spirit's work, rejoice; for where he hath begun the good work he will carry it on. And you may know whether it is the Spirit's work by this. Have you been led to Christ, and away from self: Have you been led away from all feelings, from all doings, from all willings, from all prayings, as the ground of your trust and your hope, and have you been brought nakedly to rely upon the finished work of Christ? If so, this is more than human nature ever taught any man; this is a height to which human nature never climbed. The Spirit of God has done that, and he will never leave what he has once begun, but thou shalt go from strength to strength, and thou shalt stand among the bloodwashed throng, at last complete in Christ, and accepted in the beloved. But if you have not the Spirit of Christ, you are none of his. May the Spirit lead you to your chamber now to weep, now to repent, and now to look to Christ, and may you now have a divine life implanted, which neither time nor eternity shall be able to destroy. God, hear this prayer, and send us away with a blessing, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

## **Predestination and Calling**

Delivered on Sabbath Morning, March 6th, 1859, by the

REV. C. H. Spurgeon

at the Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens.

"Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called."—Romans 8:30

HE GREAT BOOK OF GOD'S DECREES is fast closed against the curiosity of man. Vain man would be wise; he would break the seven seals thereof, and read the mysteries of eternity. But this cannot be; the time has not yet come when the book shall be opened, and even then the seals shall not be broken by mortal hand, but it shall be said, "The lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed to open the book and break the seven seals thereof."

Eternal Father, who shall look

Into thy secret will?

*None but the Lamb shall take the book,*

*And open every seal.*

None but he shall ever unroll that sacred record and read it to the assembled world. How then am I to know whether I am predestinated by God unto eternal life or not? It is a question in which my eternal interests are involved; am I among that unhappy number who shall be left to live in sin and reap the due reward of their iniquity; or do I belong to that goodly company, who albeit that they have sinned shall nevertheless be washed in the blood of Christ, and shall in white robes walk the golden streets of paradise? Until this question be answered my heart cannot rest, for I am intensely anxious about it. My eternal destiny infinitely more concerns me than all the affairs of time. Tell me, oh, tell me, if ye know, seers and prophets, is my name recorded in that book of life? Am I one

of those who are ordained unto eternal life, or am I to be left to follow my own lusts and passions, and to destroy my own soul? Oh! man, there is an answer to thy inquiry; the book cannot be opened, but God himself hath published many a page thereof. He hath not published the page whereon the actual *names* of the redeemed are written; but that page of the sacred decree whereon their *character* is recorded is published in his Word, and shall be proclaimed to thee this day. The sacred record of God's hand is this day published everywhere under heaven, and he that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto him. O my hearer, by thy name I know thee not, and by thy name God's Word doth not declare thee, but by thy character thou mayest read thy name; and if thou hast been a partaker of the calling which is mentioned in the text, then mayest thou conclude beyond a doubt that thou art among the predestinated—"For whom he did predestinate, them he also called." And if thou be called, it follows as a natural inference thou art predestinated.

Now, in considering this solemn subject, let me remark that there are two kinds of callings mentioned in the Word of God. The first is the *general call*, which is in the gospel sincerely given to everyone that heareth the word. The duty of the minister is to call souls to Christ, he is to make no distinction whatever—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel *to every creature*." The trumpet of the gospel sounds aloud to every man in our congregations—"Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." "Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man" (Prov. 8:4). This call is sincere on God's part; but man by nature is so opposed to God, that this call is never effectual, for man disregards it, turns his back upon it, and goes his way, caring for none of these things. But mark, although this call be rejected, man is without excuse in the rejection; the universal call has in it such authority, that the man who will not obey it shall be without excuse in the day of judgment. When thou art commanded to believe and repent, when thou art exhorted to flee from the wrath to come, the sin lies on thy own head if thou dost despise the exhortation, and reject the commandment. And this solemn text drops an awful warning: "How shall ye escape, if ye neglect so great salvation." But I repeat it, this universal call is rejected by man; it is a call, but it is not attended with divine force and energy of the Holy Spirit in such a degree as to make it an unconquerable call, consequently men perish, even though they have the universal call of the gospel ringing in their ears. The bell of God's house rings every day, sinners hear it, but they put their fingers in their ears, and go their way, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise, and though they are bidden and are called to the wedding (Luke 14:16,17,18), yet they will not come, and by not coming they incur God's wrath, and he declareth of such,—"None of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper" (Luke 14:24). The call of our text is of a different kind; it is not a universal call, it is a special, particular, personal, discriminating, efficacious, unconquerable, call. This call is sent to the predestinated, and to them only; they by grace hear the call, obey it, and receive it. These are they who can now say, "Draw us, and we will run after thee."

In preaching of this call this morning, I shall divide my sermon into three brief parts.—First, I shall give *illustrations of the call*; second, we shall come to *examine whether we have been called*; and then third, *what delightful consequences flow therefrom*.

Illustration, examination, consolation.

I. First, then, for ILLUSTRATION. In illustrating the effectual call of grace, which is given to the predestinated ones, I must first use the picture of Lazarus. See you that stone rolled at the mouth of the sepulchre? Much need is there for the stone that it should be well secured, for within the sepulchre there is a putrid corpse. The sister of that corrupt body stands at the side of the tomb, and she says, "Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days." This is the voice of reason and of nature. Martha is correct; but by Martha's side there stands a man who, despite all his lowliness, is very God of very God. "Roll ye away the stone," saith he, and it is done; and now, listen to him; he cries, "Lazarus, come forth!" that cry is directed to a mass of putridity, to a body that has been dead four days, and in which the worms have already held carnival; but, strange to say, from that tomb there comes a living man; that mass of corruption has been quickened into life, and out he comes, wrapped about with graveclothes, and having a napkin about his head. "Loose him and let him go," saith the Redeemer; and then he walks in all the liberty of life. The effectual call of grace is precisely similar; the sinner is dead in sin; he is not only in sin but *dead* in sin, without any power whatever to give to himself the life of grace. Nay, he is not only dead, but he is corrupt; his lusts, like the worms, have crept into him, a foul stench riseth up into the nostrils of justice, God abhorreth him, and justice crieth, "Bury the dead out of my sight, cast it into the fire, let it be consumed." Sovereign Mercy comes, and there lies this unconscious, lifeless mass of sin; Sovereign Grace cries, either by the minister, or else directly without any agency, by the Spirit of God, "come forth!" and that man lives. Does he contribute anything to his new life? Not he; his life is given solely by God. He was dead, absolutely dead, rotten in his sin; the life is given when the call comes, and, in obedience to the call, the sinner comes forth from the grave of his lust, begins to live a new life, even the life eternal, which Christ gives to his sheep.

"Well," cries one, "but what are the words which Christ uses when he calls a sinner from death?" Why the Lord may use any words. It was not long ago there came unto this hall, a man who was without God and without Christ, and the simple reading of the hymn—

"Jesus lover of my soul,"

was the means of his quickening. He said within himself, "Does Jesus love me? then I must love him," and he was quickened in that selfsame hour. The words which Jesus uses are various in different cases. I trust that even while I am speaking this morning, Christ may speak with me, and some word that may fall from my lips, unpremeditated and almost without design, shall be sent of God as a message of life unto some dead and corrupt heart here, and some man who has lived in sin hitherto, shall now live to righteousness, and live to Christ. That is the first illustration I will give you of what is meant by effectual calling. It finds the sinner dead, it gives him life, and he obeys the call of life and lives.

But let us consider a second phase of it. You will remember while the sinner is dead in sin, he is alive enough so far as any opposition to God may be concerned. He is powerless to obey, but he is mighty enough to resist the call of divine grace. I may illustrate it in the case of Saul of Tarsus: this proud Pharisee abhors the Lord Jesus Christ; he has seized upon every follower of Jesus who comes within his grasp; he has haled men and women to prison; with the avidity of a miser who hunts after gold, he has hunted after the precious life of Christ's disciple, and having exhausted his prey in Jerusalem, he seeks letters and goes off to Damascus upon the same bloody errand. Speak to him on the road, send out the apostle Peter to him, let Peter say, "Saul, why dost thou oppose Christ? The time shall come when thou shalt yet be his disciple." Paul would turn round and laugh him to scorn—"Get thee gone thou fisherman, get thee gone—I a disciple of that imposter Jesus of Nazareth! Look here, this is my confession of faith; here will I hale thy brothers and thy sisters to prison, and beat them in the synagogue and compel them to blaspheme and even hunt them to death, for my breath is threatening, and my heart is as fire against Christ." Such a scene did not occur, but had there been any remonstrance given by men

you may easily conceive that such would have been Saul's answer. But Christ determined that he would call the man. Oh, what an enterprise! Stop HIM? Why he is going fast onward in his mad career. But lo, a light shines round about him and he falls to the ground, and he hears a voice crying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me; it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." Saul's eyes are filled with tears, and then again with scales of darkness, and he cries, "Who art thou?" and a voice calls, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." It is not many minutes before he begins to feel his sin in having persecuted Jesus, nor many hours ere he receives the assurance of his pardon, and not many days ere he who persecuted Christ stands up to preach with vehemence and eloquence unparalleled, the very cause which he once trod beneath his feet. See what effectual calling can do. If God should choose this morning to call the hardest-hearted wretch within hearing of the gospel, he must obey. Let God call—a man may resist, but he cannot resist effectually. Down thou shalt come, sinner, if God cries *down*; there is no standing when he would have thee fall. And mark, every man that is saved, is always saved by an overcoming call which he cannot withstand; he may resist it for a time, but he cannot resist so as to overcome it, he *must* give way, he *must* yield when God speaks. If he says, "Let there be light," the impenetrable darkness gives way to light; if he says, "Let there be grace," unutterable sin gives way, and the hardest-hearted sinner melts before the fire of effectual calling.

I have thus illustrated the call in two ways, by the state of the sinner in his sin, and by the omnipotence which overwhelms the resistance which he offers. And now another case. The effectual call may be illustrated *in its sovereignty* by the case of Zaccheus. Christ is entering into Jericho to preach. There is a publican living in it, who is a hard, gripping, grasping, miserly extortioner. Jesus Christ is coming in to call some one, for it is written he must abide in some man's house. Would you believe it, that the man whom Christ intends to call is the worst man in Jericho—the extortioner? He is a little short fellow, and he cannot see Christ, though he has a great curiosity to look at him; so he runs before the crowd and climbs up a sycamore tree, and thinking himself quite safe amid the thick foliage, he waits with eager expectation to see this wonderful man who had turned the world upside down. Little did he think that he was to turn him also. The Saviour walks along preaching and talking with the people until he comes under the sycamore tree, then lifting up his eyes, he cries—"Zaccheus, make haste and come down, for today I must abide in thy house." The shot took effect, the bird fell, down came Zaccheus, invited the Saviour to his house, and proved that he was really called not by the voice merely but by grace itself, for he said, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give unto the poor, and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore unto him fourfold;" and Jesus said, "This day is salvation come unto thy house." Now why call *Zaccheus*? There were many better men in the city than he. Why call him? Simply because the call of God comes to unworthy sinners. There is nothing in man that can deserve this call; nothing in the best of men that can invite it; but God quickeneth whom he will, and when he sends that call, though it come to the vilest of the vile, down they come speedily and swiftly; they come down from the tree of their sin, and fall prostrate in penitence at the feet of Jesus Christ.

But now to illustrate this call in its effects, we remind you that Abraham is another remarkable instance of effectual calling. "Now the Lord had said unto Abraham, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee," and "by faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." Ah! poor Abraham, as the world would have had it, what a trial his call cost him! He was happy enough in the bosom of his father's household, but idolatry crept into it, and when God called Abraham, he called him alone and blessed him out of Ur of the Chaldees, and said to him, "Go forth, Abraham!" and he went forth, not knowing whither he went. Now, when effectual calling comes into a house and singles out a man, that man will be compelled to go forth without the camp, bearing Christ's reproach. He must come out from his very dearest friends, from all his old acquaintances, from those friends with whom he used to drink, and swear, and take pleasure; he must go straight away from them all, to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. What a trial to Abraham's faith, when he had to leave all that was so dear to him, and go he knew not whither! And yet God had a goodly land for him, and intended greatly to bless him. Man! if thou art called, if thou art called truly, there will be a going out, and a going out alone. Perhaps some of God's professed people will leave you; you will have to go without a solitary friend,—maybe you will even be deserted by Sarah herself, and you may be a stranger in a strange land, a solitary wanderer, as all your fathers were. Ah! but if it be an effectual call, and if salvation shall be the result thereof, what matters it though thou dost go to heaven alone? Better to be a solitary pilgrim to bliss, than one of the thousands who throng the road to hell.

I will have one more illustration. When effectual calling comes to a man, at first he may not know that it is effectual calling. You remember the case of Samuel; the Lord called Samuel, and he arose and went to Eli, and he said, "Here am I, for thou calledst me." Eli said, "I called not, lie down again. And he went and lay down." The second time the Lord called him, and said, "Samuel, Samuel," and he arose again, and went to Eli, and said, "Here am I, for thou didst call me," and then it was that Eli, not Samuel, first of all perceived that the Lord had called the child. And when Samuel knew it was the Lord, he said, "Speak; for thy servant heareth." When the work of grace begins in the heart, the man is not always clear that it is God's work; he is impressed under the minister, and perhaps he is rather more occupied with the impression than with the agent of the impression; he says, "I know not how it is, but I have been called; Eli, the minister, has called me." And perhaps he goes to Eli to ask what he wants with him. "Surely," said he, "the minister knew me, and spoke something personally to me, because he knew my case." And he goes to Eli, and it is not till afterwards, perhaps, that he finds that Eli had nothing to do with the impression, but that the Lord had called him. I know this—I believe God was at work with my heart for years before I knew anything about him. I knew there was a work; I knew I prayed, and cried, and groaned for mercy, but I did not know that was the Lord's work; I half thought it was my own. I did not know till afterwards, when I was led to know Christ as all my salvation, and all my desire, that *the Lord* had called the child, for this could not have been the result of nature, it must have been the effect of grace. I think I may say to those who are the beginners in the divine life, so long as your call is real, rest assured it is divine. If it is a call that will suit the remarks which I am about to give you in the second part of the discourse, even though you may have thought that God's hand is not in it, rest assured that it is, for nature could never produce effectual calling. If the call be effectual, and you are brought out and brought in—brought out of sin and brought to Christ, brought out of death into life, and out of slavery into liberty, then, though thou canst not see God's hand in it, yet it is there.

II. I have thus illustrated effectual calling. And now as a matter of EXAMINATION let each man judge himself by certain characteristics of heavenly calling which I am about to mention. If in your Bible you turn to 2 Timothy 1:9, you will read these words—"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling." Now here is the first touchstone by which we may try our calling—many are called but few are chosen, because there are many kinds of call, but the true call, and that only, answers to the description of the text. It is "an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." This calling forbids all trust in our own doings and conducts us to Christ alone for salvation, but it afterwards

purges us from dead works to serve the living and true God. If you are living in sin, you are not called; if you can still continue as you were before your pretended conversion, then it is no conversion at all; that man who is called in his drunkenness, will forsake his drunkenness; men may be called in the midst of sin, but they will not continue in it any longer. Saul was anointed to be king when he was seeking his father's asses; and many a man has been called when he has been seeking his own lust, but he will leave the asses, and leave the lust, when once he is called. Now, by this shall ye know whether ye be called of God or not. If ye continue in sin, if ye walk according to the course of this world, according to the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience, then are ye still dead in your trespasses and your sins; but as he that hath called you is holy, so must ye be holy. Can ye say, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I desire to keep all thy commandments, and to walk blamelessly in thy sight. I know that my obedience cannot save me, but I long to obey. There is nothing that pains me so much as sin; I desire to be quit and rid of it; Lord help me to be holy"? Is that the panting of thy heart? Is that the tenor of thy life towards God, and towards his law? Then, beloved, I have reason to hope that thou hast been called of God, for it is a holy calling wherewith God doth call his people.

Another text. In Philippians 3:13 and 14 you find these words. "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the *high* calling of God in Christ Jesus." Is then your calling a high calling, has it lifted up your heart, and set it upon heavenly things? Has it lifted up your hopes, to hope no longer for things that are on earth, but for things that are above? Has it lifted up your tastes, so that they are no longer grovelling, but you choose the things that are of God? Has it lifted up the constant tenor of your life, so that you spend your life with God in prayer, in praise, and in thanksgiving, and can no longer be satisfied with the low and mean pursuits which you followed in the days of your ignorance? Recollect, if you are truly called it is a high calling, a calling from on high, and a calling that lifts up your heart, and raises it to the high things of God, eternity, heaven, and holiness. In Hebrews 3:1, you find this sentence. "Holy brethren partakers of the *heavenly* calling." Here is another test. Heavenly calling means a call *from* heaven. Have you been called, not of man but of God? Can you now detect in your calling, the hand of God, and the voice of God? If man alone call thee, thou art uncalled. Is thy calling of God? and is it a call *to* heaven as well as from heaven? Can you heartily say that you can never rest satisfied till you

—"behold his face

And never, never sin,

But from the rivers of his grace,

Drink endless pleasures in."

Man, unless thou art a stranger here, and heaven is thy home, thou hast not been called with a heavenly calling, for those who have been so called, declare that they look for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, and they themselves are strangers and pilgrims upon the earth.

There is another test. Let me remind you, that there is a passage in scripture which may tend very much to your edification, and help you in your examination. Those who are called, are men who before the calling, groaned in sin. What says Christ?—"I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Now, if I cannot say the first things because of diffidence, though they be true, yet can I say this, that I feel myself to be a sinner, that I loathe my sinnership, that I detest my iniquity, that I feel I deserve the wrath of God on account of my transgressions? If so, then I have a hope that I may be among the called host whom God has predestinated. He has called not the righteous but sinners to repentance. Self-righteous man, I can tell thee in the tick of a clock, whether thou hast any evidence of election. I tell thee—No; Christ never called the righteous; and if he has not called thee, and if he never does call thee, thou art not elect, and thou and thy self-righteousness must be subject to the wrath of God, and cast away eternally. Only the sinner, the awakened sinner, can be at all assured that he has been called; and even he, as he gets older in grace, must look for those higher marks of the high heavenly and holy calling in Christ Jesus.

As a further test,—keeping close to scripture this morning, for when we are dealing with our own state before God there is nothing like giving the very words of scripture,—we are told in the first epistle of Peter, the second chapter, and the ninth verse, that God hath called us out of darkness into marvelous light. Is that your call? Were you once darkness in regard to Christ; and has marvelous light manifested to you a marvelous Redeemer, marvelously strong to save? Say soul, canst thou honestly declare that thy past life was darkness and that thy present state is light in the Lord? "For ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of the light." That man is not called who cannot look back upon darkness, ignorance, and sin, and who cannot now say, that he knows more than he did know, and enjoys at times the light of knowledge, and the comfortable light of God's countenance.

Yet again. Another test of calling is to be found in Galatians, the fifth chapter, and the fifteenth verse. "Brethren, ye have been called into liberty." Let me ask myself again this question, Have the fetters of my sin been broken off, and am I God's free man? Have the manacles of justice been snapped, and am I delivered—set free by him who is the great ransom of spirits? The slave is not called. It is the free man that has been brought out of Egypt, who proves that he has been called of God and is precious to the heart of the Most High.

And yet once more, another precious means of test in the first of Corinthians, the first chapter, and the ninth verse. "He is faithful by whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." Do I have fellowship with Christ? do I converse with him, commune with him? Do I suffer *with* him, suffer *for* him? Do I sympathize with him in his objects and aims? Do I love what he loves; do I hate what he hates? Can I bear his reproach; can I carry his cross; do I tread in his steps; do I serve his cause, and is it my grandest hope that I shall see his kingdom come, that I shall sit upon his throne, and reign with him? If so, then am I called with the effectual calling, which is the work of God's grace, and is the sure sign of my predestination.

Let me say now, before I turn from this point, that it is possible for a man to know whether God has called him or not, and he may know it too beyond a doubt. He may know it as surely as if he read it with his own eyes; nay, he may know it more surely than that, for if I read a thing with my eyes, even my eyes may deceive me, the testimony of sense may be false, but *the testimony of the Spirit must be true*. We have the witness of the Spirit within, bearing witness with our spirits that we are born of God. There is such a thing on earth as an infallible assurance of our election. Let a man once get that, and it will anoint his head with fresh oil, it will clothe him with the white garment of praise, and put the song of the angel into his mouth. Happy, happy man! who is fully assured of his interest

in the covenant of grace, in the blood of atonement, and in the glories of heaven! Such men there are here this very day. Let them  
"rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say rejoice."

What would some of you give if you could arrive at this assurance? Mark, if you anxiously desire to know, you may know. If your heart pants to read its title clear it shall do so ere long. No man ever desired Christ in his heart with a living and longing desire, who did not find him sooner or later. If thou hast a desire, God has given it thee. If thou pantest, and criest, and groanest after Christ, even this is his gift; bless him for it. Thank him for little grace, and ask him for great grace. He has given thee hope, ask for faith; and when he gives thee faith, ask for assurance; and when thou gettest assurance, ask for full assurance; and when thou hast obtained full assurance, ask for enjoyment; and when thou hast enjoyment, ask for glory itself; and he shall surely give it thee in his own appointed season.

III. I now come to finish up with CONSOLATION. Is there anything here that can console me? Oh, yes, rivers of consolation flow from my calling. For, first, if I am called then I am predestinated, there is no doubt about it. The great scheme of salvation is like those chains which we sometimes see at horse-ferries. There is a chain on this side of the river fixed into a staple, and the same chain is fixed into a staple at the other side, but the greater part of the chain is for the most part under water, and you cannot see it: you only see it as the boat moves on, and as the chain is drawn out of the water by the force that propels the boat. If today I am enabled to say I am called, then my boat is like the ferry-boat in the middle of the stream. I can see that part of the chain, which is named "calling," but blessed be God, that is joined to the side that is called "election," and I may be also quite clear that it is joined on to the other side, the glorious end of "glorification." If I be called I must have been elected, and I need not doubt that. God never tantalized a man by calling him by grace effectually, unless he had written that man's name in the Lamb's book of life. Oh, what a glorious doctrine is that of election, when a man can see himself to be elect. One of the reasons why many men kick against it is this, they are afraid it hurts them. I never knew a man yet, who had a reason to believe that he himself was chosen of God, who hated the doctrine of election. Men hate election just as thieves hate Chubb's patent locks; because they cannot get at the treasure themselves, they therefore hate the guard which protects it. Now election shuts up the precious treasury of God's covenant blessings for his children—for penitents, for seeking sinners. These men will not repent, will not believe; they will not go God's way, and then they grumble and growl, and fret, and fume, because God has locked the treasure up against them. Let a man once believe that all the treasure within is his, and then the stouter the bolt, and the surer the lock, the better for him. Oh, how sweet it is to believe our names were on Jehovah's heart, and graven on Jesus' hands before the universe had a being! May not this electrify a man of joy, and make him dance for very mirth?

Chosen of God ere time began.

Come on, slanderers! rail on as pleases you. Come on thou world in arms! Cataracts of trouble descend if you will, and you, ye floods of affliction, roll if so it be ordained, for God has written my name in the book of life. Firm as this rock I stand, though nature reels and all things pass away. What consolation then to be called: for if I am called, then I am predestinated. Come let us at the sovereignty which has called us, and let us remember the words of the apostle, "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

A second consolation is drawn from the grand truth, that if a man be called he will certainly be saved at last. To prove that, however, I will refer you to the express words of scripture: Romans 11:29—"The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." He never repents of what he gives, nor of what he calls. And indeed this is proved by the very chapter out of which we have taken our text. "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified," everyone of them. Now, believer, thou mayest be very poor, and very sick, and very much unknown and despised, but sit thee down and review thy calling this morning, and the consequences that flow from it. As sure as thou art God's called child today, thy poverty shall soon be at an end, and thou shalt be rich to all the intents of bliss. Wait awhile; that weary head shall soon be girt with a crown. Stay awhile; that horny hand of labor shall soon grasp the palm branch. Wipe away that tear; God shall soon wipe away thy tears for ever. Take away that sigh—why sigh when the everlasting song is almost on thy lip? The portals of heaven stand wide open for thee. A few winged hours must fly; a few more billows must roll o'er thee, and thou wilt be safely landed on the golden shore. Do not say, "I shall be lost; I shall be cast away." Impossible.

Whom once he loves he never leaves,

But loves them to the end.

If he hath called thee, nothing can divide thee from his love. The wolf of famine cannot gnaw the bond; the fire of persecution cannot burn the link, the hammer of hell cannot break the chain; old time cannot devour it with rust, nor eternity dissolve it, with all its ages. Oh! believe that thou art secure; that voice which called thee, shall call thee yet again from earth to heaven, from death's dark gloom to immortality's unuttered splendours; Rest assured, the heart that called thee, beats with infinite love towards thee, a love undying, that many waters cannot quench, and that floods cannot drown. Sit thee down; rest in peace; lift up thine eye of hope, and sing thy song with fond anticipation. Thou shall soon be with the glorified, where thy portion is; thou art only waiting here to be made meet, for the inheritance, and that done, the wings of angels shall waft thee far away, to the mount of peace, and joy, and blessedness, where

Far from a world of grief and sin,

With God eternally shut in,

thou shall rest for ever and ever. Examine yourselves then whether you have been called.—And may the love of Jesus be with you.  
Amen.

## The Minister's Farewell

Delivered on Sabbath Morning, December 11th, 1859, by the

REV. C. H. Spurgeon

at the Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens,

Upon the last occasion of his preaching in that place.

"Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."—Acts 20:26-27.

HEN Paul was parting from his Ephesian friends, who had come to bid him farewell at Miletus, he did not request of them a commendation of his ability; he did not request of them a recommendation for his fervid eloquence, his profound learning, his comprehensive thought, or his penetrating judgment. He knew right well that he might have credit for all these, and yet be found a castaway at last. He required a witness which would be valid in the court of heaven, and of value in a dying hour. His one most solemn adjuration is: "I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." In the apostle this utterance was no egotism; it was a fact that he had, without courting the smiles or fearing the frowns of any, preached the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, as it had been taught to him by the Holy Spirit, and as he had received it in his own heart. O that all ministers of Christ could honestly challenge the like witness!

Now, this morning I propose, by the help of God's Spirit, to do two things. The first will be to say a little upon *the apostle's solemn declaration at parting*; and then, afterwards, in a few solemn words, to *take my own personal farewell*.

1. In the first place, THE APOSTLE'S WORD AT PARTING: "I call you to record I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." The first thing that strikes us is the declaration of the apostle concerning *the doctrines he had preached*. He had preached ALL the counsel of God. By which I think we are to understand that he had given to his people the entire gospel. He had not dwelt upon some one doctrine of it, to the exclusion of the rest; but it had been his honest endeavour to bring out every truth according to the analogy of faith. He had not magnified one doctrine into a mountain, and then diminished another into a molehill; but he had endeavoured to present all blended together, like the colours in the rainbow, as one harmonious and glorious whole. Of course, he did not claim for himself any infallibility as a man, although as an inspired man he was without error in his writings. He had, doubtless, sins to confess in private, and faults to bemoan God. He had, doubtless, sometimes failed to put a truth as clearly as he could have wished, when preaching the Word; he had not always been earnest as he could desire; but at least he could claim this, that he had not wilfully kept back a single part of the truth as it is in Jesus.

Now, I must bring down the apostle's saying to these modern times; and I take it, if any one of us would clear our conscience by delivering the whole counsel of God, we must take care that we preach in the first place *the doctrines of the gospel*. We ought to declare the grand doctrine of the Father's love towards his people from before all worlds. His sovereign choice of them, his covenant purposes concerning them, and his immutable promises to them, must all be uttered with trumpet tongue. Coupled with this the true evangelist must never fail to set forth the beauties of the person of Christ, the glory of his offices, the completeness of his work, and above all, the efficacy of his blood. Whatever we omit, this must be in the most forcible manner proclaimed again and again. That is no gospel which has not Christ in it, and the modern idea of preaching THE TRUTH instead of Christ, is a wicked device of Satan. Nor is this all, for as there are Three Persons in the Godhead, we must be careful that they all have due honour in our ministry. The Holy Spirit's work in regeneration, in sanctification and in perseverance, must be always magnified from our pulpit. Without his power our ministry is a dead letter, and we cannot expect his arm to be made bare unless we honour him day-by-day.

Upon all these matters we are agreed, and I therefore turn to points upon which there is more dispute, and consequently more need of honest avowal, because more temptation to concealment. To proceed then:—I question whether we have preached the whole counsel of God, unless predestination with all its solemnity and sureness be continually declared—unless election be boldly and nakedly taught as being one of the truths revealed of God. It is the minister's duty, beginning from this fountain head, to trace all the other streams; dwelling on effectual calling, maintaining justification by faith, insisting upon the certain perseverance of the believer, and delighting to proclaim that gracious covenant in which all these things are contained, and which is sure to all the chosen, blood-bought seed. There is a tendency in this age to throw doctrinal truth into the shade. Too many preachers are offended with that stern truth which the Covenanters held, and to which the Puritans testified in the midst of a licentious age. We are told that the times have changed: that we are to modify these old (so-called) Calvinistic doctrines, and bring them down to the tone of the times; that, in fact, they need dilution, that men have become so intelligent that we must pare off the angles of our religion, and make the square into a circle by rounding off the most prominent edges. Any man who doth this, so far as my judgment goes, does not declare the whole counsel of God. The faithful minister must be plain, simple, pointed, with regard to these doctrines. There must be no dispute about whether he believes them or not. He must so preach them that his hearers will know whether he preaches a scheme of freewill, or a covenant of grace—whether he teaches salvation by works, or salvation by the power and grace of God.

But beloved, a man might preach all these doctrines to the full, and yet not declare the whole counsel of God. For here comes the labour and the battle; here it is that he who is faithful in these modern days will have to bare the full brunt of war. It is not enough to preach doctrine; we must preach *duty*, we must faithfully and firmly insist upon practice. So long as you will preach nothing but bare doctrine, there is a certain class of men of perverted intellect who will admire you, but once begin to preach responsibility—say outright, once for all, that if the sinner perish it is his own fault, that if any man sinks to hell, his damnation will lie at his own door, and at once there is a cry of "Inconsistency! How can these two things stand together?" Even good Christian men are found who cannot endure the whole truth, and who will oppose the servant of the Lord who will not be content with a fragment, but will honestly present the whole gospel of Christ. This is one of the troubles that the faithful minister has to endure. But he is not faithful to God—I say it solemnly, I do not believe that any man is even faithful to his own conscience, who can preach simply the doctrine of

responsibility. I do assuredly believe that every man who sinks into hell shall have himself alone to curse for it. It shall be said of them as they pass the fiery portal: "Ye would not." "Ye would have none of my rebukes. Ye were bidden to the supper and ye would not come. I called, and ye refused; I stretched out my hands, and no man regarded. And now, behold, I will mock at your calamities. I will laugh when your fear cometh." The apostle Paul knew how to dare public opinion, and on one hand to preach the duty of man, and on the other the sovereignty of God. I would borrow the wings of an eagle and fly to the utmost height of high doctrine when I am preaching divine sovereignty. God hath absolute and unlimited power over men to do with them as he pleases, even as the potter doeth with the clay. Let not the creature question the Creator, for he giveth no account of his matters. But when I preach concerning man, and look at the other aspect of truth, I dive to the utmost depth. I am, if you will so call me, a low-doctrine man in that, for as an honest messenger of Christ I must use his own language, and cry: "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he believeth not on the Son of God." I do not see that the whole counsel of God is declared, unless those two apparently contradictory points are brought out and plainly taught. To preach the whole counsel of God it is necessary to declare the promise in all its freeness, sureness and richness. When the promise makes the subject of the text the minister should never be afraid of it. If it is an unconditional promise, he should make its unconditionality one of the most prominent features of his discourse; he should go the whole way with whatever God has promised to his people. Should the command be the subject, the minister must not flinch; he must utter the precept as fully and confidently as he would the promise. He must exhort, rebuke, command with all long-suffering. He must ever maintain the fact that the perceptive part of the gospel is as valuable—nay, as invaluable—as the promissory part. He must stand to it, that "By their fruits ye shall know them;" that "Unless the tree bring forth good fruit it is hewn down and cast into the fire." Holy living must be preached, as well as happy living. Holiness of life must be constantly insisted on, as well as that simple faith which depends for all on Christ. To declare the whole counsel of God—to gather up ten thousand things into one—I think it is needful that when a minister gets his text, he should say what that text means honestly and uprightly. Too many preachers get a text and kill it. They wring its neck, then stuff it with some empty notions and present it upon the table for an unthinking people to feed upon. That man does not preach the whole counsel of God who does not let God's Word speak for itself in its own pure, simple language. If he finds one day a text like this: "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy," the faithful minister will go all the lengths of that text. And if on the morrow the Spirit of God lays home to his conscience this: "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life," or this other: "Whosoever will, let him come," he will be just as honest with his text on that side as he was on the other. He will not shirk the truth. He will dare to look at it straight in the face himself and then he will bring it up into the pulpit, and there say to it: "O Word, speak for thyself, and be thou heard alone. Suffer me not, O Lord, to pervert or ministerpret thine own heaven-sent truth." Simple honesty to the pure Word of God is I think requisite to the man who would not shun to declare the whole counsel of God.

Moreover, this is not all, If a man would declare the whole counsel of God, and not shun to do so, he must be very particular upon the crying sins of the times. The honest minister does not condemn sin in the mass; he singles out separate sins in his hearers, and without drawing the bow at a venture he puts an arrow on the string and the Holy Spirit sends it right home to the individuals conscience. He who is true to his God does not look to his congregation as a great mass, but as separate individuals, and he endeavours to adapt his discourse to men's conscience, so that they will perceive he speaks of them. It is said of Rowland Hill, that he was so personal a preacher, that if a man were far away sitting in a window, or in some secret corner, he would nevertheless feel—"That man is speaking to me." And the true preacher who declares the whole counsel of God, so speaks, that his hearers feel that there is something for them; a reproof for their sins, an exhortation which they ought to obey, a something which comes pointedly, pertinently and personally home. Nor do I think any man has declared the whole counsel of God, who does not do this. If there be a vice that you should shun, if there be an error that you should avoid, if there be a duty that you ought to fulfil, if all these things be not mentioned in the discourses from the pulpit, the minister has shunned to declare the whole counsel of God. If there be one sin that is rife in the neighbourhood, and especially in the congregation, should the minister avoid that particular vice in order to avoid offending you, he has been untrue to his calling, dishonest to his God. I do not know how I can describe the man who declares the whole counsel of God better than by referring you to the epistles of St. Paul. There you have the doctrine and the precept, experience and practice. He tells of corruption within and temptation without. The whole divine life is portrayed, and the needed directions given. There you have the solemn rebuke, and the gentle comfort. There you have the words that "drop as the rain, and distil as the dew," and there you have the sentences that roll like thunders, and flash like lightning. There you see him at one time with his crook in his hand, gently leading his sheep into the pastures; and, anon, you see him with his sword drawn, doing valiant battle against the enemies of Israel. He who would be faithful, and preach the whole counsel of God, must imitate the apostle Paul, and preach as *he* wrote.

The question, however, is suggested, is there any temptation which arises to the man who endeavours to do this? Is there anything which would tempt him from the straight path and induce him not to preach the whole counsel of God? Ah, my brother, little do you understand the minister's position, if you have not sometimes trembled for him. Espouse but one phase of the truth, and you shall be cried up to the very heavens. Become such a Calvinist that you shut your eyes to one half the Bible, and cannot see the responsibility of the sinner, and men will clap their hands, and cry Hallelujah! and on the backs of many you shall be hoisted to a throne, and become a very prince in their Israel. On the other hand, begin to preach mere morality, practice without doctrine, and you shall be elevated on other men's shoulders; you shall, if I may use such a figure, ride upon these asses into Jerusalem; and you shall hear them cry, Hosanna! and see them wave their palm branches before you. But once preach the whole counsel of God, and you shall have both parties down upon you; one crying, "The man is too high," the other saying, "No, he is too low;" the one will say, "He's a rank Arminian," the other, "He's a vile hyper-Calvinist." Now, a man does not like to stand between two fires. There is an inclination to please one or other of the two parties, and so, if not to increase one's adherents, at least to get a more ferociously attached people. Ay, but if we once begin to think of that, if we suffer the cry of either party on either hand to lead us from that narrow path—the path of right and truth and rectitude, it is all over with us then. How many ministers feel the influence of persons of wealth. The minister in his pulpit, perhaps, is inclined to think of the squire in his green pew. Or else he thinks: "What will deacon so-and-so say?" or, "What will the other deacon say, who thinks the very reverse?" or, "What will Mr. A, the editor of such a newspaper, write next Monday?" or, "What will Mrs. B. say next time I meet her?" Yes, all these things cast their little weight into the scale; and they have a tendency, if a man be not kept right by God the Holy Spirit, to make him diverge a little from that narrow path, in which alone he can stand if he would declare the whole counsel of God. Ah, friends, there are honours to be had by the man who will espouse the opinion of a clique; but while there are honours, there are far more dishonours to be gained by him who will stand firm to the unstained banner of truth, singly and alone, and do battle against mischief of every shape, as well in the church as in the world. Therefore, it was no mean testimony that the apostle asked for himself, that he had not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God.

But, then, let me remark further, while there is this temptation not to declare all the counsel of God, the true minister of Christ feels impelled to preach the whole truth, because it and it alone can meet the wants of man. What evils has this world seen through a distorted, mangled, man-moulded gospel. What mischiefs have been done to the souls of men by men who have preached only one part and not all the counsel of God. My heart bleeds for many a family where Antinomian doctrine has gained the sway. I could tell many a sad story of families dead in sin, whose consciences are seared as with a hot iron, by the fatal preaching to which they listen. I have known convictions stifled and desires quenched by the soul-destroying system which takes manhood from man and makes him no more responsible than an ox. I cannot imagine a more ready instrument in the hands of Satan for the ruin of souls than a minister who tells sinners that it is not their duty to repent of their sins or to believe in Christ, and who has the arrogance to call himself a gospel minister, while he teaches that God hates some men infinitely and unchangeably for no reason whatever but simply because he chooses to do so. O my brethren! may the Lord save you from the voice of the charmer, and keep you ever deaf to the voice of error.

Even in Christian families, what evil will a distorted gospel produce! I have seen the young believer, just saved from sin, happy in his early Christian career, and walking humbly with his God. But evil has crept in, disguised in the mantle of truth. The finger of partial blindness was laid upon their eyes, and but one doctrine could be seen. Sovereignty was seen, but not responsibility. The minister once beloved was hated; he who had been honest to preach God's Word, was accounted as the off-scouring of all things. And what became the effect? The very reverse of good and gracious. Bigotry usurped the place of love; bitterness lived where once there had been a loveliness of character. I could point you to innumerable instances where harping upon any one peculiar doctrine has driven men to excess of bigotry and bitterness. And when a man has once come there, he is ready enough for sin of any kind to which the devil may please to tempt him. There is a necessity that the whole gospel should be preached, or else the spirits, even of Christians, will become marred and maimed. I have known men diligent for Christ, labouring to win souls with both hands; and on a sudden they have espoused one particular doctrine and not the whole truth, and they have subsided into lethargy. On the other hand, where men have only taken the practical side of truth, and left out the doctrinal, too many professors have run over into legality; have talked as if they were to be saved by works, and have almost forgotten that grace by which they were called. They are like the Galatians; they have been bewitched by what they have heard. The believer in Christ, if he is to be kept pure, simple, holy, charitable, Christ-like, is only to be kept so by a preaching of the whole truth as it is in Jesus. And as for the salvation of sinners, ah, my hearers, we can never expect God to bless our ministry for the conversion of sinners unless we preach the gospel as a whole. Let me get but one part of the truth, and always dwell upon it, to the exclusion of every other, and I cannot expect my Master's blessing. If I preach as he would have me preach, he will certainly own the word; he will never leave it without his own living witness. But let me imagine that I can improve the gospel, that I can make it consistent, that I can dress it up and make it look finer, I shall find that my Master is departed, and that Ichabod is written on the walls of the sanctuary. How many there are kept in bondage through neglect of gospel invitations. They are longing to be saved. They go up to the house of God, crying to be saved; and there is nothing but predestination for them. On the other hand, what multitudes are kept in darkness through practical preaching. It is do! do! do! and nothing but do! and the poor souls come away and say: "Of what use is that to me? I can do nothing. Oh, that I had a way shown to me available for salvation." Of the apostle Paul we think it may be truly said, that no sinner missed a comfort from his keeping back Christ's cross; that no saint was bewildered in spirit from his denying the bread of heaven and withholding precious truth; that no practical Christian became so practical as to become legal, and no doctrinal Christian became so doctrinal as to become unpractical. His preaching was of so savoury and consistent a kind, that they who heard him, being blessed of the Spirit, became Christians indeed, both in life and spirit, reflecting the image of their Master.

I feel I cannot dwell very long upon this text. I have been so extremely unwell for the last two days, that the thoughts which I hoped to present to you in better form, have only come tumbling out of my mouth in far from an orderly manner.

II. I must now turn away from the apostle Paul to address you A VERY FEW EARNEST, SINCERE AND AFFECTIONATE WORDS BY WAY OF FAREWELL. "Wherefore I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." I wish not to say anything in self-commendation and praise; I will not be my own witness as to my faithfulness; but I appeal unto you, I take you to witness this day, that I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Often have I come into this pulpit in great weakness, and I have far more often gone away in great sorrow, because I have not preached to you as earnestly as I desired. I confess to many errors and failings, and more especially to a want of earnestness when engaged in prayer for your souls. But there is one charge which my conscience acquits me of this morning, and I think you will acquit me too, for I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God. If in anything I have erred, it has been an error of judgment; I may have been mistaken, but so far as I have learned the truth, I can say that no fear of public opinion, nor of private opinion, has ever turned me aside from that which I hold to be the truth of my Lord and Master. I have preached to you the precious things of the gospel. I have endeavoured to the utmost of my ability to preach grace in all its fulness. I know the preciousness of that doctrine in my own experience; God forbid that I should preach any other. If we are not saved by grace, we can never be saved at all. If from first to last the work of salvation be not in God's hands, none of us can ever see God's face with acceptance. I preach this doctrine, not from choice, but from absolute necessity, for if this doctrine be not true, then are we lost souls; your faith is vain, our preaching is vain, and we are still in our sins, and there we must continue until the end. But, on the other hand, I can say also, I have not shunned to exhort, to invite, to entreat. I have bidden the sinner come to Christ. I have been urged not to do so, but I could not resist it. With bowels yearning over perishing sinners, I could not conclude without crying: "Come to Jesus, sinner, come." With eyes weeping for sinners, I am compelled to bid them come to Jesus. It is not possible for me to dwell upon doctrine without invitation. If you come not to Christ it is not for want of calling, or because I have not wept over your sins, and travailed in birth for the souls of men. The one thing I have to ask of you is this:—bear me witness, my hearers, bear me witness, that in this respect I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have preached all that I know of the whole counsel of God. Have I known a single sin which I have not rebuked? Has there been a doctrine that I have believed which I have kept back? Has there been a part of the Word, doctrinal or experimental, which I have wilfully concealed? I am very far from perfect, again with weeping I confess my unworthiness; I have not served God as I ought to do; I have not been so earnest with you as I could desire. Now that my three years' ministry here is over, I could have wished that I might begin again, that I might fall on my knees before you and beseech you to regard the things that make for your peace. But here, again, I do repeat it, that while as to earnestness I plead guilty, yet as to truth and honesty I can challenge the bar of God, I can challenge the elect angels, I can call you all to witness, that I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God.

It is easy enough, if one wills to do it, to avoid preaching an objectionable doctrine, by simply passing over the texts which teach it. If

an unpleasant truth thrusts itself on you, it is not hard to put it aside, imagining that it would disturb your previous teaching. Such concealment may, for a while succeed, and possibly your people will not find it out for years. But if I have studied after anything, I have sought always to bring out that truth which I have neglected beforehand; and if there has been any one truth that I have kept back hitherto, it shall be my earnest prayer that from this day forth it may be made more prominent, that so it may be the better understood and seen. Well, I simply ask you this question, and if I indulge in some little egotism, if on this parting day "I am become a fool in glorying;" it is not for the sake of glorying, it is with a better motive—my hearer, I put this question to you. There may come sad disasters to many of you. In a little time some of you may be frequenting places where the gospel is not preached. You may embrace another and a false gospel. I only ask this thing of you: Bear me witness that it was not my fault,—that I have been faithful and have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God. In a little time some here who have been restrained by the fact of having attended a place of worship, seeing the chosen minister has gone, may not go anywhere else afterwards. You may become careless. Perhaps next Sabbath day you may be sitting at home, lolling about and wasting the day. But there is one thing I should like to say before you make up your mind not to attend the house of God again:—Bear me witness that I have been faithful with you. It may be that some here who have professedly run well for a time while they have been hearing the Word, may go back; some of you may go right into the world again; you may become drunkards, swearers and the like. God forbid that it be so! But I charge you, if you plunge into sin, do at least say this one thing for him who desires nothing so much as to see you saved—say, I have been honest with you; that I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God. Oh, my hearers, some of you in a little time will be on your dying-beds. When your pulse is feeble, when the terrors of grim death are round about you, if you are still unconverted to Christ, there is one thing I shall want you to add to your last will and testament; it is this—the exclusion of the poor minister who stands before you this day from any share in that desperate folly of yours which has led you to neglect your own soul. Oh, have I not cried to you to repent? Have I not bidden you look to it ere death surprised you? Have I not exhorted you, my hearers, to flee for a refuge to the hope set before you? Oh, sinner, when thou art wading through the black river, cast back no taunt on me as though I was thy murderer, for in this thing I can say: "I wash my hands in innocence; I am clear of your blood." But the day is coming when we shall all meet again. This great assembly shall be submerged into a greater, as the drop loses itself in the ocean. And I shall stand on that day to take my trial at God's bar. If I have not warned you, I have been an unfaithful watchman, and your blood will be required at my hands; if I have not preached Christ to you, and bidden you flee for refuge, then, though you perish, yet shall your soul be required of me. I beseech you, if you laugh at me, if you reject my message, if you despise Christ, if you hate his gospel, if you will be damned, yet at least give me an acquittal of your blood. I see some before me who do not often hear me; and yet I can say concerning them, they have been the subject of my private prayers; and often, too, of my tears, when I see them going on in their iniquities. Well, I do ask this one thing, and as honest men you cannot deny it me. If you will have your sins, if you will be lost, if you will not come to Christ, at least, amid the thunders of the great day, when I stand for trial at God's bar, acquit me of having destroyed your souls.

What can I say more? How shall I plead with you? Had I an angel's tongue, and the heart of the Saviour, then would I plead; but I cannot say more than I have often done. In God's name I beseech you flee to Christ for refuge. If all hath not sufficed before, let this suffice thee now. Come, guilty soul, and flee away to him whose wide open arms are willing to receive every soul that fleeth to him with penitence and faith. In a little time the preacher himself will lie stretched upon his bed. A few more days of solemn meeting, a few more sermons, a few more prayers, and I think I see myself in yon upper chamber, with friends watching around me. He who has preached to thousands now needs consolation for himself. He who has cheered many in the article of death is now passing through the river himself. My hearers, shall there be any of you whom I shall see upon my death bed who shall curse me with being unfaithful? Shall these eyes be haunted with the visions of men whom I have amused, and interested, but into whose hearts I have never sought to plunge the truth? Shall I lie there, and shall these mighty congregations pass in dreary panorama before me, and as they subside before my eyes, one after the other, shall each one curse me as being unfaithful? God forbid. I trust you will do me this favour: that when I lie a-dying you will allow that I am clear of the blood of all men, and have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God. I see myself standing at the last great day a prisoner at the bar. What if this shall be read against me:—"Thou hast had many to listen to thee; thousands have crowded to hear the words which fell from my lips; but thou hast misled, thou hast deceived, thou hast wilfully mistaught this people." Thunders such as have been never heard before must roll over this poor head, and lightnings more terrific than have ever scathed the fiend shall blast this heart, if I have been unfaithful to you. My position—if I had but one preached the Word to these crowds, not to speak of many thousands of times—my position were the most awful in the whole universe if I were unfaithful. Oh may God avert that worst of ills—unfaithfulness—from my head. Now, as here I stand, I make this my last appeal: "I pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God." But if ye will not be, I ask you this single favour—and I think you will not deny it me—take the blame of your own ruin, for I am pure from the blood of all men, since I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

This much by way of calling you to witness. Now, I come to put up a request. I have a favour to ask of all here present. If in aught you have been profited, if in anything you have ever had comfort, if you have found Christ in any way during the preaching of the gospel here, I beg you, even though you should not listen to my words again, I beg you to carry me up in your heart before the throne of God in prayer. It is by the prayers of our people that we live. God's ministers owe more to the prayers of their people than they ever know. I love my people for their prayerfulness for me. Never minister was so much prayer for as I have been. But will those of you who will be compelled to separate from us by reason of distance, and the like, will you still carry me in your thoughts before God, and let my name be ungraven on your bosoms as often as you present yourselves before the mercy seat. It is a little thing I ask. It is simply that you say: "Lord, help thy servant to win souls to Christ." Ask that he may be made more useful than he has ever been; that if he is in aught mistaken he may be set right. If he has not comforted you, ask that he may do so in the future; but if he has been honest with you, then pray that your Master may have him in his holy keeping. And while I ask you to put up this request for me, it is for all those that preach the truth in Jesus. Brethren, pray for us. We would labour for you as those that must give account. Ah, it is no little thing to be a minister if we are true to our calling. As Baxter once said, when someone told him the ministry was easy work: "Sir, I wish you would take my place, if you think so, and try it." If to agonize with God in prayer, if to wrestle for the souls of men, if to be abused and not to reply, if to suffer all manner of rebukes and slanders, if this be rest, take it, sir, for I shall be glad to get rid of it. I do ask that you would pray for all ministers of Christ, that they may be helped and upheld, maintained and supported, that their strength may be equal to their day.

And, then, having put up this request for myself, and therefore a selfish one, I have an entreaty to put up for others. My hearers, I cannot shut my eyes to the fact, that there are still many of you who have long listened to the Word here, but who have still not given your hearts to Christ. I am glad to see you here, even though it should be for the last time. If you should never tread the hallowed

courts of God's house again, never hear his Word, never listen to hearty invitation or honest warning, I have one entreaty to put up for you. Mark, not a request, but an entreaty; and such a one, that if I were begging for my life I could not be more honest and intensely earnest about it. Poor sinner, stop awhile, and think. If thou hast heard the gospel and been profited by it, what wilt thou think of all thy lost opportunities when thou art on thy dying bed? What wilt thou think when thou art cast into hell, when this thought shall come ringing in thy ears: "Thou didst hear the gospel, but thou didst reject it;" when the devils in hell shall laugh in thy face, and say: "We never rejected Christ, we never despised the Word," and they shall thrust thee into a deeper hell than ever they themselves experienced. I entreat thee, stop, and think of this. Are the joys that thou hast in this world worth living for? Is not this world a dull and dreary place? Man, turn over a fresh leaf. I tell thee, there is no joy for thee here, and there is none hereafter whilst thou art what thou art. Oh, may God teach thee that the mischief lies in thy sin. Thou hast unforgiven sin about thee. As long as thy sin is unforgiven, thou canst neither be happy here, nor in the world to come. My entreaty is, go to thy chamber; if thou knowest thyself to be guilty, make a full confession there before God; ask him to have mercy upon thee, for Jesus' sake. And he will not deny thee. Man, he will not dent thee; he will answer thee; he will put all thy sins away; he will accept thee; he will make thee his child. And as thou shalt be more happy here, so shalt thou be blessed in the world to come. Oh, Christian men and women, I entreat you, implore the Spirit of God to lead many in this crowd to full confession, to real prayer, and humble faith; and if they have never repented before, may they now turn to Christ. Oh, sinner, thy life is short, and death is hastening. Thy sins are many, and if judgment has leaden feet, yet has it a sure and heavy hand. Turn, turn, turn, I beseech thee. May the Holy Spirit turn thee. Lo, Jesus is lifted up before thee now. By his five wounds, I beseech thee, turn. Look thou to him and live. Believe on him and thou shalt be saved, for whosoever believeth on the Son of Man hath everlasting life, and he shall never perish, neither shall the wrath of God rest upon him.

May the Spirit of God now command his own abiding blessing, even life for evermore, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

At the commencement of the Service, Mr. SPURGEON said:—"The service of this morning will partake very much of the character of a farewell discourse and a farewell meeting. However sorrowful it is to me to part with many of you, whose faces I have so long seen in the throng of my hearers, yet for Christ's sake, for the sake of consistency and truth, we are compelled to withdraw from this place, and on next Sabbath morning hope to worship God in Exeter Hall. On two occasions before, as our friends are aware, it was proposed to open this place in the evening, and I was then able to prevent it by the simple declaration, that if so I should withdraw. That declaration suffices not at this time; and you can therefore perceive that I should be a craven to the truth, that I should be inconsistent with my own declarations, that in fact, my name would cease to be SPURGEON, if I yielded. I neither can nor will give way in anything in which I know I am right; and in the defence of God's holy Sabbath, the cry of this day is, 'Arise, let us go hence!'"

## Bonus Sermons

### Love

Delivered on Sabbath Morning, December 19th, 1858, by the

REV. C. H. Spurgeon

At the Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens.

"We love him, because he first loved us."—1 John 4:19.

DURING the last two Sabbath days I have been preaching the gospel to the unconverted. I have earnestly exhorted the very chief of sinners to look to Jesus Christ, and have assured them that as a preparation for coming to Christ, they need no good works, or good dispositions, but that they may come, just as they are, to the foot of the cross, and receive the pardoning blood and all-sufficient merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. The thought has since occurred to me, that some who were ignorant of the gospel might, perhaps, put this query:—Is this likely to promote morality? If the gospel be a proclamation of pardon to the very chief of sinners, will not this be a license to sin? In what respects can the gospel be said to be a gospel according to holiness? How will such preaching operate? Will it make men better? Will they be more attentive to the laws which relate to man and man? Will they be more obedient to the statutes which relate to man and God? I thought, therefore, that we would advance a step further, and endeavour to show, this morning, how the proclamation of the gospel of God, though in the commencement it addresses itself to men who are utterly destitute of any good, is, nevertheless, designed to lead these very men to the noblest heights of virtue, yea, to ultimate perfection in holiness. The text tells us, that the effect of the gospel received in the heart is, that it compels and constrains such a heart to love God. "We love him, because he first loved us." When the gospel comes to us it does not find us loving God, it does not expect anything of us, but coming with the divine application of the Holy Ghost, it simply assures us that God loves us, be we never so deeply immersed in sin; and then, the after effect of this proclamation of love is, that "we love him because he first loved us."

Can you imagine a being placed halfway between this world and heaven? Can you conceive of him as having such enlarged capacities that he could easily discern what was done in heaven, and what was done on earth? I can conceive that, before the Fall, if there had been such a being, he would have been struck with the singular harmony which existed between God's great world, called heaven, and the little world, the earth. Whenever the chimes of heaven rang, the great note of those massive bells was *love*; and when the little bells of earth were sounded, the harmonies of this narrow sphere, rang out their note, it was just the same—*love*. When the bright spirits gathered around the great throne of God in heaven to magnify the Lord, at the same time, there was to be seen the world, clad in its priestly garments, offering its sacrifice of purest praise. When the cherubim and seraphim did continually cry, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of armies," there was heard a note, feebler, perhaps, but yet as sweetly musical, coming up from paradise, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of armies." There was no jar, no discord; the thunder peals of heaven's melodies were exactly in accord with the whispers of earth's harmonies. There was "glory to God in the highest," and on earth there was glory too; the heart of man was as the heart of God; God loved man, and man loved God. But imagine that same great Spirit to be still standing between the heavens and the earth, how sad must he be, when he hears the jarring discord, and feels it grate upon the ear! The Lord saith, "I am reconciled to thee, I have put away thy sin;" but what is the answer of this earth? The answer of the world is, "Man is at enmity with God: God may be reconciled, but man is not. The mass of men are still enemies to God by wicked works." When the angels praise God, if they list to the sounds that are to be heard on earth, they hear the trump of cruel war; they hear the bacchanalian shout and the song of the

lascivious, and what a discord is this in the great harmony of the spheres? The fact is this,—the world was originally one great string in the harp of the universe, and when the Almighty swept that harp with his gracious fingers there was nothing to be heard but praise; now that string is snapped, and where it has been reset by grace, still it is not wholly restored to its perfect tune, and the note that cometh from it hath but little of sweetness, and very much of discord. But, O bright Spirit, retain thy place, and live on. The day is hastening with glowing wheels, and the axle thereof is hot with speed. The day is coming, when this world shall be a paradise again. Jesus Christ, who came the first time to bleed and suffer, that he might wash the world from its iniquity, is coming a second time to reign and conquer, that he may clothe the earth with glory; and the day shall arrive, when thou, O Spirit, shall hear again the everlasting harmony. Once more the bells of earth shall be attuned to the melodies of heaven; once more shall the eternal chorus find that no singer is absent, but that the music is complete.

But how is this to be? How is the world to be brought back? How is it to be restored? We answer, the reason why there was this original harmony between earth and heaven was, because there was *love* between them twain, and our great reason for hoping that there shall be at last re-established an undiscordant harmony between heaven and earth is simply this, that God hath already manifested his love towards us, and that in return, hearts touched by his grace do even now love him; and when they shall be multiplied, and love re-established, then shall the harmony be complete.

Having thus introduced my text, I must now plunge into it. We shall notice the *parentage*, the *nourishment*, and the *walk of love*; and shall exhort all believers here present, to love God, because he hath first loved them.

1. In the first place, **THE PARENTAGE OF TRUE LOVE TO GOD.** There is no light in the planet but that which cometh from the sun; there is no light in the moon but that which is borrowed, and there is no true love in the heart but that which cometh from God. Love is the light, the life, and way of the universe. Now, God is both life, and light, and way, and, to crown all, *God is love*. From this overflowing fountain of the infinite love of God, all our love to God must spring. This must ever be a great and certain truth, that we love him, for no other reason than because he first loved us. There are some that think that God might be loved by simple contemplation of his works. We do not believe it. We have heard a great deal about admiring philosophers, and we have felt that admiration was more than possible when studying the works of God. We have heard a great deal about wondering discoverers, and we have acknowledged that the mind must be base indeed which does not wonder when it looks upon the works of God; and we have sometimes heard about a love to God which has been engendered by the beauties of scenery, but we have never believed in its existence. We do believe that where love is already born in the heart of man, all the wonders of God's providence and creation may excite that love again, it being there already; but we do not and we cannot believe, because we never saw such an instance, that the mere contemplation of God's works could ever raise any man to the height of love. In fact, the great problem has been tried, and it has been solved in the negative. What saith the poet,

"What though the spicy breezes blow soft o'er Java's isle;

Where every prospect pleases, and only man is vile."

Where God is most resplendent in his works, and most lavish in his gifts, there man has been the vilest and God is the most forgotten.

Others have taught, if not exactly in doctrine, yet their doctrine necessarily leads to it, that human nature may of itself attain unto love to God. Our simple reply is, we have never met with such an instance. We have curiously questioned the people of God, and we believe that others have questioned them in every age, but we have never had but one answer to this question, "Why hast thou loved God?" The only answer has been, "Because he first loved me." I have heard men preach about free-will, but I never yet heard of a Christian who exalted free-will in his own experience. I have heard men say, that men of their own free-will may turn to God, believe, repent, and love, but I have heard the same persons, when talking of their own experience, say, that they did not so turn to God, but that Jesus sought them when they were strangers, wandering from the fold of God. The whole matter may look specious enough, when preached, but when felt it is found to be a phantom. It may *seem* right enough for a man to tell his fellow that his own free-will may save him; but when he comes to close dealing with his own conscience, he himself, however wild in his doctrine, is compelled to say, "Oh! yes, I do love Jesus, because he first loved me." I have wondered at a Wesleyan brother, who has sometimes railed against this doctrine in the pulpit, and then has given out this very hymn, and all the members of the church have joined in singing it most heartily, while at the same time they were tolling the death-knell of their own peculiar tenets; for if that hymn be true Arminianism must be false. If it be the certain fact, that the only reason for our loving God is that his love has been shed abroad in our hearts, then it cannot be true anyhow, that man ever did or ever will love God, until first of all God has manifested his love towards him.

But without disputing any longer, do we not all admit that our love to God is the sweet offspring of God's love to us? Ah! beloved, cold admiration every man may have; but the warmth of love can only be kindled by the fires of God's Spirit. Let each Christian speak for himself, we shall all hold this great and cardinal truth, that the reason of our love to God is, the sweet influence of his grace. Sometimes I wonder that such as we should have been brought to love God at all. Is our love so precious that God should court our love, dressed in the crimson robes of a dying Redeemer? If we had loved God, it would have been no more than he deserved. But when we rebelled, and yet he sought our love, it was surprising indeed. It was a wonder when he disrobed himself of all his splendours, and came down and wrapt himself in a mantle of clay; but methinks the wonder is excelled yet, for after he had died for us, still we did not love him; we rebelled against him; we rejected the proclamation of the gospel; we resisted his Spirit; but he said, I *will* have their hearts; and he followed us day after day, hour after hour. Sometimes he laid us low, and he said, "Surely they will love me if I restore them!" At another time he filled us with corn and with wine, and he said "Surely they will love me now," but we still revolted, still rebelled. At last he said, "I will strive no longer, I am Almighty, and I will not have it that a human heart is stronger than I am. I turn the will of man as the rivers of water are turned," and lo! he put forth his strength, and in an instant the current changed, and we loved him, because we then could see the love of God, in that he sent his Son to be our Redeemer. But we must confess, beloved, going back to the truth with which we started, that never should we have had any love towards God, unless that love had been sown in us by the sweet seed of his love to us. If there be any one here that hath a love to Christ, let him differ from this doctrine here, but let him know that he shall not differ hereafter; for in heaven they all sing, praise to free grace. They all sing,

"Salvation to our God and to the Lamb."

II. Love, then, has for its parent the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. But after it is divinely born in our heart it must be divinely **NOURISHED.** Love is an exotic; it is not a plant that will nourish naturally in human soil. Love to God is a rich and rare thing; it

would die if it were left to be frost-bitten by the chilly blasts of our selfishness, and if it received no nourishment but that which can be drawn from the rock of our own hard hearts it must perish. As love comes from heaven, so it must feed on heavenly bread. It cannot exist in this wilderness, unless it is nurtured from above, and fed by manna from on high. On what, then, does love feed? Why, it feeds on *love*. That which brought it forth becomes its food. "We love him because he first loved us." The constant motive and sustaining power of our love to God is his love to us. And here let me remark that there are different kinds of food, in this great granary of love. When we are first of all renewed, the only food on which we can live is milk, because we are but babes, and as yet have not strength to feed on higher truths.

The first thing, then, that our love feeds upon, when it is but an infant, is a sense of favours received. Ask a young Christian why he loves Christ, and he will tell you, I love Christ because he has bought me with his blood! Why do you love God the Father? I love God the Father because he gave his Son for me. And why do you love God the Spirit? I love him because he has renewed my heart. That is to say we love God for what he has given to us. Our first love feeds just on the simple food of a grateful recollection of mercies received. And mark, however much we grow in grace this will always constitute a great part of the food of our love.

But when the Christian grows older and has more grace, he loves Christ for another reason. He loves Christ because he feels Christ deserves to be loved. I trust I can say, I have in my heart now a love to God, These men did not merely love Christ because of what he had done for them; but you will find in their sonnets and in their letters—that their motive of love was, that he had communed with them, he had showed them his hands and his side; they had walked with him in the villages; they had lain with him on the beds of spices; they had entered into the mystic circle of communion; and they felt that they loved Christ, because he was all over glorious, and was so divinely fair, that if all nations could behold him, sure they must be constrained to love him too.

This, then, is the food of love; but when love grows rich—and it does sometimes—the most loving heart grows cold towards Christ. Do you know that the only food that ever suits sick love, is the food on which it fed at first. I have heard say by the physicians, that if a man be sick there is no place so well adapted for him as the place where he was born; and if love grow sick and cold, there is no place so fit for it to go to as the place where it was born, namely, the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Where was love born? Was she born in the midst of romantic scenery, and was she nursed with wondrous contemplations upon the lap of beauty? Ah! no. Was she born on the steeps of Sinai, when God came from Sinai and the holy one from mount Paran, and melted the mountains with the touch of his foot, and made the rocks flow down like wax before his terrible presence? Ah! no. Was love born on Tabor, when the Saviour was transfigured, and his garment became whiter than wool, whiter than any fuller could make it? Ah! no; darkness rushed o'er the sight of those that looked upon him then, and they fell asleep, for the glory overpowered them. Let me tell you where love was born. Love was born in the garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus sweat great drops of blood, it was nurtured in Pilate's hall, where Jesus bared his back to the ploughing of the lash, and gave his body to be spit upon and scourged. Love was nurtured at the cross, amid the groans of an expiring God, beneath the droppings of his blood—it was there that love was nurtured. Bear me witness, children of God. Where did your love spring from, but from the foot of the cross? Did you ever see that sweet flower growing anywhere but at the foot of Calvary? No; it was when ye saw "love divine, all loves excelling," outdoing its own self; it was when you saw love in bondage to itself, dying by its own stroke, laying down its life, though it had power to retain it and to take it up again; it was there your love was born; and if you wish your love, when it is sick, to be recovered, take it to some of those sweet places; make it sit in the shade of the olive trees, and make it stand on the pavement and gaze, while the blood is still gushing down. Take it to the cross, and bid it look and see afresh the bleeding lamb; and surely this shall make thy love spring from a dwarf into a giant, and this shall fan it from a spark into a flame.

And then, when thy love is thus recruited, let me bid thee give thy love full exercise; for it shall grow thereby. You say, "Where shall I exercise the contemplation of my love, to make it grow?" Oh! Sacred Dove of love, stretch thy wings, and play the eagle now. Come! open wide thine eyes, and look full in the Sun's face, and soar upward, upward, upward, far above the heights of this world's creation, upwards, till thou art lost in eternity. Remember, that God loved thee from before the foundation of the world. Does not this strengthen thy love? Ah! what a bracing air is that air of eternity? When I fly into it for a moment, and think of the great doctrine of election—of

"That vast unmeasured love,  
Which from the days of old,  
Did all the chosen seed embrace,  
like sheep within the fold."

It makes the tears run down one's cheeks to think that we should have an interest in that decree and council of the Almighty Three, when every one that should be blood-bought had its name inscribed in God's eternal book. Come, soul, I bid thee now exercise thy wings a little, and see if this does not make thee love God. He thought of thee before thou hadst a being. When as yet the sun and the moon were not,—when the sun, the moon, and the stars slept in the mind of God, like unborn forests in an acorn cup, when the old sea was not yet born, long ere this infant world lay in its swaddling bands of mist, then God had inscribed thy name upon the heart and upon the hands of Christ indelibly, to remain for ever. And does not this make thee love God? Is not this sweet exercise for thy love? For here it is my text comes in, giving, as it were, the last charge in this sweet battle of love, a charge that sweeps everything before it. "We love God, because he first loved us," seeing that he loved us before time began, and when in eternity he dwelt alone.

And when thou hast soared backward into the past eternity, I have yet another flight for thee. Soar back through all thine own experience, and think of the way whereby the Lord thy God has led thee in the wilderness, and how he hath fed and clothed thee every day—how he hath borne with thine ill manners—how he hath put up with all thy murmurings, and all thy longings after the flesh-pots of Egypt—how he has opened the rock to supply thee, and fed thee with manna that came down from heaven. Think of how his grace has been sufficient for thee in all thy troubles—how his blood has been a pardon to thee in all thy sins—how his rod and his staff have comforted thee. And when thou hast flown over this sweet field of love, thou mayest fly further on, and remember that the oath, the covenant, the blood, have something more in them than the past, for though "he first loved us," yet this doth not mean that he shall ever cease to, love, for he is Alpha and he shall be Omega, he is first, and he shall be *last*; and therefore bethink thee, when thou shalt pass through the valley of the shadow of death, thou needest fear no evil, for he is with thee. When thou shalt stand in the cold

floods of Jordan, thou needest not fear, for death cannot separate thee from his love; and when thou shalt come into the mysteries of eternity thou needest not tremble, for "I am persuaded that neither principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." And now, soul is not thy love refreshed? Does not this make thee love him? Doth not a flight over those illimitable plains of the ether of love, inflame thy heart, and compel thee to delight thyself in the Lord thy God? Here is the food of love. "We love him, because he first loved us," and because in that first love there is the pledge and promise that he will love us even to the end.

III. And now comes the third point, the **WALK OF LOVE**. "We love him." Children of God, if Christ were here on earth, what would you do for him? If it should be rumoured to-morrow that the Son of Man had come down from heaven, as he came at first, what would you do for him? If there should be an infallible witness that the feet that trod the holy acres of Palestine were actually treading the roads of Great Britain, what would you do for him? Oh, I can conceive that there would be a tumult of delighted hearts—a superabundance of liberal hands—that there would be a sea of streaming eyes to behold him. "Do for him!" says one; "Do for him! Did he hunger, I would give him meat, though it were my last crust. Did he thirst, I would give him drink, though my own lips were parched with fire. Was he naked, I would strip myself and shiver in the cold to clothe him. Do for him! I should scarcely know what to do. I would hurry away, and I would cast myself at his dear feet, and I would beseech him, if it would but honour him, that he would tread upon me, and crush me in the dust, if he would but be raised one inch the higher thereby. Did he want a soldier, I would enlist in his army; did he need that some one should die, I would give my body to be burned, if he stood by to see the sacrifice and cheer me in the flames." O ye daughters of Jerusalem! would ye not go forth to meet him? would ye not rejoice with the tabret, and in the dance? Dance then ye might, like Miriam, by the side of Egypt's waters, red with blood. We, the sons of men, would dance, like David before the ark, exulting for joy, if Christ were come. Ah! we think we love him so much that we should do all that; but there is a grave question about the truth of this matter after all. Do you not know that Christ's wife and family are here? And if ye love him, would it not follow as a natural inference, that you would love his bride and his offspring? "Ah!" says one, "Christ has no bride on earth." Has he not? Has he not espoused unto himself *his church*? Is not his church, the mother of the faithful, his own chosen wife? And did he not give his blood to be her dower? And has he not declared that he never will be divorced from her, for he hates to put away, and that he will consummate the marriage in the last great day, when he shall come to reign with his people upon the earth. And has he no children here? "The daughters of Jerusalem and the sons of Zion who hath begotten me these?" Are not they the offspring of the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, the child born, the son given? Surely they are; and if we love Christ, as we think we do, as we pretend we do, we shall love his church and people. And do you love his *church*? Perhaps you love the part to which you belong. You love the hand. It may be a hand that is garnished with many a brilliant ring of noble ceremonies, and you love that. You may belong to some poor, poverty-stricken denomination—it may be the foot—and you love the foot; but you speak contemptuously of the hand, because it is garnished with greater honours. Whilst perhaps ye of the hand are speaking lightly of those who are of the foot. Brethren, it is a common thing with us all to love only a part of Christ's body, and not to love the whole; but if we love *him* we should love all his people.

When we are on our knees in prayer, I fear that when we are praying for the church we do not mean all that we say. We are praying for *our* church, our section of it. Now, he that loves Christ, if he be a Baptist, he loves the doctrine of baptism, because he knows it to be Scriptural; but, at the same time wherever he sees the grace of God to be in any man's heart, he loves him because he is a part of the living church, and he does not withhold his heart, his hand, or his house from him, because he happens to differ on some one point. I pray that the church in these days may have a more loving spirit towards herself. We ought to delight in the advance of every denomination. Is the Church of England rousing from its sleep? Is she springing like a phoenix, from her ashes? God be with her, and God bless her! Is another denomination leading the van, and seeking by its ministers to entice the wanderer into the house of God? God be with it! Is the Primitive Methodist labouring in the hedge and ditch, toiling for his Master? God help Him! Is the Calvinist seeking to uphold Christ crucified in all his splendours? God be with him! And does another man with far less knowledge preach much error, but still hold that "by grace are ye saved through faith," then God bless him, and may success be with him evermore. If ye loved Christ better ye would love *all* Christ's church, and all Christ's people.

Do you not know that Christ hath now a mouth on earth, and hath left a hand on earth and a foot on earth still, and that if ye would prove your love to him, ye would not think that ye cannot feed him—ye need not imagine that ye cannot fill his hand, or that ye cannot wash his feet? Ye can do all this to-day. He has left his poor and afflicted people, and their mouths are hungry, for they need bread, and their tongue is parched for they need water. You meet them; they come to you; they are destitute and afflicted. Do ye refuse them? Do you know who it was ye denied at your door? "Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye did it not to me." In rejecting the petition of the poor when you might have helped them, you rejected Christ. Christ was virtually the man to whom you parsimoniously refused the needed alms, and your Saviour was thus rejected at the door of one for whom he himself had died. Do you want to feed Christ? Open your eyes, then, and you shall see him everywhere; in our back streets, in our lanes, in our alleys, in all our churches, connected with every branch of Christ's people, ye shall find the poor and the afflicted. If ye want feed Christ, feed *them*. But ye say that ye are willing to wash Christ's feet Ah! well, and ye may do it. Has he no fallen children? Are there no brethren who have sinned, and who are thus defiled? If Christ's feet were foul, ye say ye would wash them; then if a Christian man has stepped aside, seek to restore him, and lead him once more in the way of righteousness. And do you want to fill Christ's hands with your liberality? His Church is the treasure-house of his alms, and the hand of his church is outstretched for help, for she always needs it. She has a work to do which must be accomplished. She is straitened because your help is withheld from her; pour your gifts into her treasury, for all that ye can give unto her is given to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Finally, to stimulate your love, let me remind you that Christ Jesus had two trials of his love, which he endured with firmness, but which are often too much for us. When Christ was high, and glorious, I marvel that he loved *us*. I have known many a man who loved his friend when he was in the same low estate; but he has risen, and he has disdained to know the man at whose table he had fed. A lofty elevation tries the love which we bear to those who are inferior to us in rank. Now, Christ Jesus, the Lord of heaven and the King of angels, condescended to notice us before he came on earth, and always called us brethren: and since he has ascended up to heaven, and has re-assumed the diadem, and once more sits down at the right hand of God, he never has forgotten us. His high estate has never made him slight a disciple. When he rode into Jerusalem in triumph, we do not read that he disdained to confess that the humble fishermen were his followers. And "now, though he reigns exalted high, his love is still as great;" still he calls us brethren, friends; still he recognizes the kinship of the one blood. And yet, strange to say, we have known many Christians who have forgotten much of their love to Christ when they have risen in the world. "Ah!" said a woman, who had been wont to do much for Christ in

poverty, and who had had a great sum left her, "I cannot do as much as I used to do." "But how is that?" said one. Said she, "When I had a shilling purse I had a guinea heart, and now I have a guinea purse I have only a shilling heart." It is a sad temptation to some men to get rich. They were content to go to the meeting-house and mix with the ignoble congregation, while they had but little; they have grown rich, there is a Turkey carpet in the drawing-room, they have arrangements now too splendid to permit them to invite the poor of the flock, as once they did, and Christ Jesus is not so fashionable as to allow them to introduce any religious topic when they meet with their new friends. Besides this, they say they are now obliged to pay this visit and that visit, and they must spend so much time upon attire, and in maintaining their station and respectability, they cannot find time to pray as they did. The house of God has to be neglected for the party, and Christ has less of their heart than ever he had. "Is this thy kindness to thy friend?" And hast thou risen so high that thou art ashamed of Christ? and art thou grown so rich, that Christ in his poverty is despised? Alas! poor wealth! alas! base wealth! vile wealth! 'Twere well for thee if it should be all swept away, if a descent to poverty should be a restoration to the ardency of thine affection.

But once again: what a trial of love was that, when Christ began to suffer for us! There are many men, I doubt not, who are true believers, and love their Saviour, who would tremble to come to the test of suffering. Imagine yourself my brother, taken to-day into some dark dungeon of the Inquisition; conceive that all the horrors of the dark ages are revived, you are taken down a long dark staircase, and hurried you know not whither, at last you come to a place, far deep in the bowels of the earth, and round about you see hanging on the walls the pincers, the instruments of torture of all kinds and shapes. There are two inquisitors there who say to you, "Are you prepared to renounce your heretical faith, and to return to the bosom of the church?" I conceive my brethren and sisters, that you would have strength of mind and grace enough to say, "I am not prepared to deny my Saviour." But when the pincers began to tear the flesh, when the hot coals began to scorch, when the rack began to dislocate the bones; when all the instruments of torture were wreaking their hellish vengeance, unless the supernatural hand of God should be mightily upon you, I am sure that in your weakness you would deny your Master, and in the hour of your peril would forsake the Lord that bought you. True, the love of Christ in the heart, when sustained by his grace, is strong enough to bear us through; but I am afraid that with many of us here present, if we had no more love than we have now, we should come out from the inquisition miserable apostates from the faith. But now, remember Christ. He was exposed to tortures, which were really more tremendous, far. There is no engine of Romish cruelty that can equal that dreadful torture which forced a sweat of blood from every pore. Christ was scourged and he was crucified; but there were other woes unseen by us, which were the soul of his agonies. Now, if Christ in the hour of sore trial had said, "I disown my disciples, I will not die," he might have come down from the cross; and who could accuse him of evil? He owed us nothing; we could do nothing for him. Poor worms would be all that he would disown. But our Master, even when the blood-sweat covered him as with a mantle of gore, never thought of disowning us—NEVER. "My Father," said he once, "if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." But there was always the "If it be possible." If it be possible to save without it, let the cup pass; but if not thy will be done. You never hear him say in Pilate's hall one word that would let you imagine that he was sorry he had undertaken so costly a sacrifice for us; and when his hands are pierced, and when he is parched with fever, and his tongue is dried up like a potsherd, and his whole body is dissolved into the dust of death, you never hear a groan or a shriek that looks like going back. It is the cry of one determined to go on, though he knows he must die on his onward march. It was love that could not be stayed by death, but overcame all the horrors of the grave.

Now, what say we to this? We who live in these gentler times, are we about to give up our Master, when we are tried and tempted for him? Young man in the workshop! it is your lot to be jeered at because you are a follower of the Saviour; and will you turn back from Christ because of a jeer? Young woman! you are laughed at because you profess the religion of Christ, shall a laugh dissolve the link of love that knits your heart to him, when all the roar of hell could not divert his love from you. And you who are suffering because you maintain a religious principle, are you cast out from men; will you not bear that the house should be stripped, and that you shall eat the bread of poverty, rather than dishonour such a Lord? Will you not go forth from this place, by the help of God's Spirit, vowing and declaring that in life, come poverty, come wealth—in death, come pain, or come what may, you are and ever must be the Lord's; for this is written on your heart, "We love him, because he first loved us."

## Free Grace

Delivered on Sabbath Morning, January 9th, 1859, by the

REV. C. H. Spurgeon

At the Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens.

"Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel."—Ezekiel 36:32.

here are two sins of man that are bred in the bone, and that continually come out in the flesh. One is self-dependence and the other is self-exaltation. It is very hard, even for the best of men, to keep themselves from the first error. The holiest of Christians, and those who understand best the gospel of Christ, find in themselves a constant inclination to look to the power of the creature, instead of looking to the power of God and the power of God alone. Over and over again, Holy Scripture has to remind us of that which we never ought to forget, that salvation is God's work from first to last, and is not of man, neither by man. But so it is, this old error—that we are to save ourselves, or that we are to do something in the matter of salvation—always rises up, and we find ourselves continually tempted by it to step aside from the simplicity of our faith in the power of the Lord our God. Why, even Abraham himself was not free from the great error of relying upon his own strength. God had promised to him that He would give him a son—Isaac, the child of promise. Abraham believed it, but at last, weary with waiting, he adopted the carnal expedient of taking to himself Hagar, to wife, and he fancied that Ishmael would most certainly be the fulfillment of God's promise; but instead of Ishmael's helping to fulfill the promise, he brought sorrow unto Abraham's heart, for God would not have it that Ishmael should dwell with Isaac. "Cast out," said the Scripture, "the bondwoman and her son; for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman." Now we, in the matter of salvation, are apt to think that God is tarrying long in the fulfillment of His promise, and we set to work ourselves to do something, and what do we do? sink ourselves deeper in the mire and pile up for ourselves a store of future troubles and trials. Do

we not read that it grieved Abraham's heart to send Ishmael away? Ah! and many a Christian has been grieved by those works of nature which he accomplished with the design of helping the God of grace. Oh, beloved, we shall find ourselves very frequently attempting the foolish task of assisting Omnipotence and teaching the Omniscient One. Instead of looking to grace alone to sanctify us, we find ourselves adopting Philosophic rules and principles which we think will effect the Divine work. We shall but mar it; we shall bring grief into our own spirits. But if, instead thereof, we in every work look up to the God of our salvation for help, and strength, and grace, and succor, then our work will proceed to our own joy and comfort, and to God's glory. That error, then, I say is in our bone, and will always dwell with us, and hence it is that the words of the text are put as an antidote against that error. It is distinctly stated in our text that salvation is of God. "Not for your sakes do I this." He says nothing about what we have done or can do. All the preceding and all the succeeding verses speak of what God does. "I will take you from among the heathen." "I will sprinkle clean water upon you." "I will give you a new heart." "I will put my Spirit within you." It is all of God: therefore, again recall to our recollection this doctrine, and give up all dependence upon our own strength and power.

The other error to which man is very prone, is that of relying upon his own merit. Though there is no righteousness in any man, yet in every man there is a proneness to truth in some fancied merit. Strange that it should be so, but the most reprobate characters have yet some virtue as they imagine, upon which they rely. You will find the most abandoned drunkard pride himself that he is not a swearer. You will find the blaspheming drunkard pride himself that at least he is honest. You will find men with no other virtue in the world, exalt what they imagine to be a virtue—the fact that they do not profess to have any; and they think themselves to be extremely excellent, because they have honesty or rather impudence enough to confess that they are utterly vile. Somehow the human mind clings to human merit; it always will hold to it, and when you take away everything upon which you think it could rely, in less than a moment it fashions some other ground for confidence out of itself. Human nature with regard to its own merit, is like the spider, it bears its support in its own bowels, and it seems as if it would keep spinning on to all eternity. You may brush down one web, but it soon forms another, you may take the thread from one place, and you will find it clinging to your finger, and when you seek to brush it down with one hand you find it clinging to the other. It is hard to get rid of; it is ever ready to spin its web and bind itself to some false ground of trust. It is against all human merit that I am this morning going to speak, and I feel that I shall offend a great many people here. I am about to preach a doctrine that is gall and vinegar to flesh and blood, one that will make righteous moralists gnash their teeth, and make others go away and declare that I am an Antinomian, and perhaps scarcely fit to live. However, that consequence is one which I shall not greatly deplore, if connected with it there should be in other hearts a yielding to this glorious truth, and a giving up to the power and grace of God, who will never save us, unless we are prepared to let Him have all the glory.

First, I shall endeavor to *expound at large the doctrine contained in this text*; in the next place I shall endeavour to *show its force and truthfulness*; and then in the third place I shall seek God's Holy Spirit to *apply the useful, practical lessons which are to be drawn from it*.

I. I shall endeavour to EXPOUND THIS TEXT. "Not for your sakes do I this saith the Lord God." The motive for the salvation of the human race is to be found in the breast of God, and not in the character or condition of man. Two races have revolted against God—the one angelic, the other human. When a part of this angelic race revolted against the Most High, justice speedily overtook them; they were swept from their starry seats in Heaven, and henceforth they have been reserved in darkness unto the great day of the wrath of God. No mercy was ever presented to them, no sacrifice ever offered for them; but they were without hope and mercy, forever consigned to the pit of eternal torment. The human race, far inferior in order of intelligence, sinned as atrociously; at any rate, if the sins of manhood that we have heard of be put together and rightly weighed, I can scarcely understand how even the sins of devils could be much blacker than the sin of mankind. However, the God who in His infinite justice passed over angels, and suffered them forever to expiate their offences in the fires of hell, was pleased to look down on man. Here was election on a grand scale; the election of manhood, and the reprobation of fallen angelhood. What was the reason for it? The reason was in God's mind, an inscrutable reason which we do not know, and which if we knew probably we could not understand. Had you and I been put upon the choice of which should have been spared, I do think it probable we should have chosen that fallen angels should have been saved. Are they not the brightest? Have they not the greatest mental strength? If they had been redeemed, would it not have glorified God more, as we judge, than the salvation of worms like ourselves? Those bright beings—Lucifer, son of the morning, and those stars that walked in his train—if they had been washed in His redeeming blood, if they had been saved by sovereign mercy, what a song would they have lifted up to the Most High and everlasting God! But God, who doeth as He wills with His own, and giveth no account of His matters, but who deals with His creatures as the potter deals with his clay, took not upon Him the nature of angels, but took upon Him the seed of Abraham, and chose men to be the vessels of His mercy. This fact we know, but where is its reason? certainly not in man. "Not for your sakes do I this. O house of Israel, be ashamed and be confounded for your own ways."

Here, very few men object. We notice that if we talk about the election of men and the non-election of fallen angels, there is not a cavil for a moment. Every man approves of Calvinism till he feels that he is the loser by it; but when it begins to touch his own bone and his own flesh then he kicks against it. Come, then, we must go further. The only reason why one man is saved, and not another, lies not, in any sense, in the man saved, but in God's bosom. The reason why this day the gospel is preached to you and not the heathen far away, is not because, as a race, we are superior to the heathen; it is not because we deserve more at God's hands; His choice of Britain, in the election of outward privilege, is not caused by the excellency of the British nation, but entirely because of His own mercy and His own love. There is not reason in us why we should have the gospel preached to us more than any other nation. Today, some of us have received the gospel, and have been changed by it, and have become the heirs of light and immortality, whereas others are left still to be the heirs of wrath. But there is no reason in us why we should have been taken and others left.

"There was nothing in us to merit esteem,

Or give the Creator delight.

'Twas 'Even so, Father!' we ever must sing,

Because it seem'd good in thy sight."

And now, let us review this doctrine at length. We are taught in Holy Scripture that, long before this world was made, God foreknew and foresaw all the creatures He intended to fashion; and there and then foreseeing that the human race would fall into sin, and deserve His anger, determined, in His own sovereign mind, that an immense portion of the human race should be His children, and

should be brought to Heaven. As to the rest, He left them to their own deserts. to sow the wind and reap the whirlwind, to scatter crime and inherit punishment. Now, in the great decree of election, the only reason why God selected the vessels of mercy must have been because He would do it. There was nothing in any one of them which caused God to choose them. We all were alike, all lost, all ruined by the fall; all without the slightest claim upon His mercy; all, in fact, deserving His utmost vengeance. His choice of any one, and His choice of all His people, are causeless, so far as anything in them was concerned. It was the effect of His sovereign will, and of nothing which they did, could do, or even would do; for thus saith the text: "Not for your sakes do I this, O house of Israel!"

As for the fruit of our election, in due time Christ came into this world, and purchased with His blood all those whom the Father hath chosen. Now come ye to the cross of Christ; bring this doctrine with you, and remember that the only reason why Christ gave up His life to be a ransom for His sheep was because He loved His people, but there was nothing in His people that made Him die for them. I was thinking as I came here this morning, if any man should imagine that the love of God to us was caused by anything in us, it would be as if a man should look into a well to find the springs of the ocean, or dig into an anthill to find an Alp. The love of God is so immense, so boundless and so infinite, that you cannot conceive for a moment that it could have been caused by anything in us. The little good that is in us—the no good that is in us—for there is none, could not have caused the boundless, bottomless, shoreless, summitless love which God manifests to His people. Stand at the foot of the cross, ye merit-mongers, ye that delight in your own works; and answer this question: Do you think that the Lord of life and glory could have been brought down from Heaven, could have been fashioned like a man, and have been led to die through any merit of yours? Shall these sacred veins be opened with any lancet less sharp than His own infinite love? Do you conceive that your poor merits, such as they are, could be so efficacious as to nail the Redeemer to the tree, and make Him bend His shoulders beneath the enormous load of the world's guilt? You cannot imagine it. The consequence is so great, compared with what you suppose to be the case, that your logic fails in a moment. You may conceive that a coral insect rears a rock by its multitude, and by its many years of working; but you cannot conceive that all the accumulated merits of manhood, if there were such things, could have brought the Eternal from the throne of His majesty, and bowed Him to the death of the cross: that is a thing as clearly impossible to any thoughtful mind, as impossibility can be. No; from the cross comes the cry—"Not for your sakes do I this, O house of Israel."

After Christ's death, there comes, in *the next place, the work of the Holy Spirit*. Those whom the Father hath chosen, and whom the Son has redeemed, in due time the Holy Spirit calls "out of darkness into marvelous light." Now, the calling of the Holy Spirit is without any regard to any, merit in us. If this day the Holy Spirit shall call out of this congregation a hundred men, and bring them out of their estate of sin into a state of righteousness, you shall bring these hundred men, and let them march in review, and if you could read their hearts, you would be compelled to say, "I see no reason why the Spirit of God should have operated upon these. I see nothing whatever that could have merited such grace as this—nothing that could have caused the operations and motions of the Spirit to work in these men." For, look ye here. By nature, men are said to be dead in sin. If the Holy Spirit quickens, it cannot be because of any power in the dead men, or any merit in them, for they are dead, corrupt and rotten in the grave of their sin. If then, the Holy Spirit says, "Come forth and live," it is not because of anything in the dry bones, it must be for some reason in His own mind, but not in us. Therefore, know ye this, men and brethren, that we all stand upon a level. We have none of us anything that can recommend us to God; and if the Spirit shall choose to operate in our hearts unto salvation, He must be moved to do it by His own supreme love, for He cannot be moved to do it by any good will, good desire, or good deed, that dwells in us by nature.

To go a little further: this truth, which holds good so far, *holds good all the way*. God's people, after they are called by grace, are preserved in Christ Jesus; they are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation;" they are not suffered to sin away their eternal inheritance, but as temptations arise they have strength given with which to encounter them, and as sin blackens them they are washed afresh, and again cleansed. But mark, the reason why God keeps His people is the same as that which made them His people—His own free sovereign grace. If, my brother, you have been delivered in the hour of temptation, pause and remember that you were not delivered for your own sake. There was nothing in you that deserved the deliverance. If you have been fed and supplied in your hour of need, it is not because you have been a faithful servant of God, nor because you have been a prayerful Christian; it is simply and only because of God's mercy. He is not moved to anything He does for you by anything .that you do for Him; His motive for blessing you lies wholly and entirely in the depths of His own bosom. Blessed be God, His people shall be kept.

"Nor death, nor Hell shall e'er remove

His favourites from His breast;

In the dear bosom of His love

They must forever rest."

But why? Because they are holy? Because they are sanctified? Because they serve God with good works? No, but because he in his sovereign grace has loved them, does love them, and will love them, even to the end.

And to conclude my exposition of this text. This shall hold good in Heaven itself. The day is coming when every blood-bought, blood-washed child of God shall walk the golden streets arrayed in white. Our hands shall soon bear the palm; our ears shall be delighted with celestial melodies, and our eyes filled with the transporting visions of God's glory. But mark, the only reason why God shall bring us to Heaven shall be His own love, and not because we deserved it. We must fight the fight, but we do not win the victory because we fight it; we must labour, but the wage at the days' end shall be a wage of grace, and not a debt. We must honour God here, looking for the recompense of the reward; but that recompense will not be given on a legal ground, because we merited it, but given to us entirely because God had loved us, for no reason that was in us. When you and I and each of us shall enter Heaven, our song shall be, "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be all the glory;" and that shall be true, it shall not be a mere exaggeration of gratitude. It shall be true; we shall be compelled to sing it, because we could not sing anything else. We shall feel that we did nothing, and that we were nothing, but that God did it all—that we had nothing in us to be the motive of his doing it, but that His motive lay in Himself; therefore unto Him shall be every particle of the honour forever and ever.

Now, this, I take it, is the meaning of the text; distasteful it is to the great majority, even of professing Christians in this age. It is a doctrine that requires a great deal of salt, or else few people will receive it. It is very unsavory to them. However, there It stands. "Let God be true, and every man a liar." His truth we must preach, and this we must proclaim. Salvation is "not of men, neither by man;

not of the will of the flesh, nor of blood," nor of birth, but of the sovereign will of God, and God alone.

## II. And now, in the second place, I have to ILLUSTRATE AND ENFORCE THIS TEXT.

Consider a moment man's character. It will humble us, and it will tend to confirm this truth in our minds. Let me take an illustration. I will consider man as a criminal. He certainly is such in the sight of God, and I shall not slander him. Suppose now that some great criminal is at last overtaken in his sin, and shut up in Newgate. He has committed high treason, murder, rebellion, and every possible iniquity. He has broken all the laws of the realm—every one of them. The public cry is everywhere—"This man must die; the laws cannot be maintained unless he shall be made an example of their rigour. He who beareth not the sword in vain must this time let the sword taste blood. The man must die; he richly deserves it." You look through his character: you cannot see one solitary redeeming trait. He is an old offender; he has so long persevered in his iniquity that you are compelled to say, "The case is hopeless with this man; his crimes have such aggravation we cannot make an apology for him, even should we try. Not jesuitical cunning itself could devise any pretence of excuse, or any hope of a plea for this abandoned wretch; let him die!" Now, if her Majesty the Queen, having in her hands the sovereign power of life and death, chooses that this man shall not die, but that he shall be spared, do you not see as plain as daylight, that the only reason that can move her to spare that man, must be her own love, her own compassion? For, as I have supposed already that there is nothing in that man's character that can be a plea for mercy, but that, contrariwise, his whole character cries aloud for vengeance against his sin. Whether we like it or not, this is just the truth concerning ourselves. This is just our character and position before God. Ah! my hearer, you may turn upon your heel, disgusted and offended; but there are some here who feel it to be solemnly true in their own experience, and they will therefore drink in the doctrine, for it is the only way whereby they can be saved. My hearer, your conscience perhaps is telling you this morning that you have sinned so heinously that there is not an inlet for a solitary ray of hope in your character. You have added to your sins this great one, that you have rebelled against the Most High wantonly and wickedly. If you have not committed all the sins in the calendar of crime, it has been because providence has stayed your hand, Your heart has been black enough for it all. You feel that the vileness of your imagination and desires has achieved the consummation of human guilt, and further you could not go. Your sins have prevailed against you, and have gone over your head. Now, man, the only ground upon which God can save you is His own love. He cannot save you because you deserve it, for you do not deserve it, because there is no excuse that might be made for your sin. No, you are without any excuse, and you feel it. Oh! bless His dear name, that He has devised this way, whereby He can save you upon the basis of His own sovereign love and unbounded grace, without anything in you. I want you to go back to Newgate again to this criminal. We suppose now that this criminal is visited by her Majesty in person. She goes to him, and she says to him, "Rebel, traitor, murderer, I have in my heart compassion for you; you deserve it not; but I am come this day to you, to tell you that if you repent you shall have mercy at my hands." Suppose this man, springing up, should curse her—curse this angel of mercy to her face, spit upon her, and utter blasphemies, and imprecate curses upon her head. She retires; she is gone; but so great is her compassion, that the next day she sends a messenger, and days, and weeks, and months, and years, she continually sends messengers, and these go to him, and they say, "If you will repent of your transgressions you shall have mercy; not because you deserve it, but because her Majesty is compassionate, and out of her gracious soul she desires your salvation. Will you repent?" Suppose this man should curse at the messenger, stop his ears against the message, spit upon him, tell him he does not care for him at all. Or to suppose a better case—suppose he turns upon his seat and says, "I don't care whether I am hanged or not; I'll take my chance along with other people; I shall take no notice of you." And suppose more than that, rising from his seat, he indulges again in all the crimes for which he has already been condemned, and plunges headlong afresh into the very sins which have brought his neck under the rope of the gallows. Now, if her Majesty would spare such a man as that, on what terms can she do it? You say, "Why, she cannot, unless she does it out of love; she cannot because of any merit in him, because such a beast as that ought to die." And now what are you and I by nature but like this? And my unconverted hearer, what is this but a picture of you? Has not God Himself visited your conscience? and has He not said to you, "Sinner! come now, let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as wool." And what have you done? Stopped your ear against the voice of conscience—cursed and swore at God, blasphemed His holy name, despised His Word, and railed against His ministers. And this day, again, with tears in his eyes, a servant of God is come to you, and his message is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved; as I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, but had rather that he should turn unto me and live." And what will you do. Why, if left to yourselves you will laugh at the message—despise it. It will glance off from you like an arrow from a man that is girt about with mail, and you will go away to despise God again, as you have done before. Do you not see, then, that if God ever shall save you, it cannot be for your sakes; but must be from His own infinite love; it cannot be from any other reason, since you have rejected Christ, despised His gospel, trodden under foot the blood of Jesus, and have refused to be saved. If He saves you, it must be free grace, and free grace alone.

But now picture a little more about this criminal at Newgate. Not content with having added sin to sin, and having rejected mercy for himself, this wretch industriously employs himself in going round to all the cells where others are confined, and hardening their hearts also against the mercy of the Queen. He can scarce see a person but he begins to taint him with the blasphemy of his own heart; he utters injurious things against the majesty that spares him, and endeavours to make others as vile as himself. Now, what does justice say? If this man ought not to die on his own account, yet he ought to die for the sake of others; and if he be spared, is it not as plain as a pike—staff that he cannot be spared because of any reason in him? It must be because of the unconquerable compassion of the Sovereign. And now look you here: is not this the case of some here present? Not only do you sin yourselves, but lead others into sin? I know this was one of my plagues and torments, when first God brought me to Himself, that I have led others into temptation. Are there not men here that have taught others to swear? Are there not fathers here that have helped to destroy their own children's souls? Are there not some of you that are like the deadly Upas tree? You stretch out your branches, and from every leaf there drops poison upon those who come beneath its deadly range. Are there not some here who have seduced the virtuous, that have misled those who were seemingly pious, and that are perhaps so hardened that they even glory in it? Not content with being damned yourselves, you are seeking to lead others to the pit also. Thinking it not enough yourselves to be at enmity with God, you want to imitate Satan by dragging others with you. O my hearer, is not this thy case? Does not thy heart confess it? And does not the tear flow down thy cheek? Remember, then, this must be true: if God shall save thee, it must be because He will do it. It cannot be because there is anything good in thee, for thou deservedst now to die, and if He spare thee it must be sovereign love and sovereign grace.

I will just use one other illustration, and then, I think I shall have made the text clear enough. There is not so much difference between black and a darker shade of black as there is between pure white and black. Every one can see that. Then there is not so much difference between man and the devil as there is between God and man. God is perfection; we are black with sin. The devil is

only a darker shade of black; and great as may be the difference between our sin and the sin of Satan, yet it is not so great as the difference between the perfection of God and the imperfection of man. Now, imagine for a minute that somewhere in Africa there should be a tribe of devils living, that you and I had it in our power to save these devils from some threatened wrath which must overtake them. If you or I should go there and die to save those devils, what could be our motive? From what we know of the character of a devil, the only motive that could make us do that must be love. There could not be any other. It must be simply because we had such big hearts that we could even embrace fiends within them. Well, now, there is not so much difference between man and the devil as between God and man. If, then, the only motive that could make men save a devil must be man's love, does it not follow with irresistible force, that the only motive that could lead God to save men must be God's own love. At any rate, if that reason be not cogent the fact is indisputable—"Not for your sakes do I this, O house of Israel." God sees us, abandoned, evil, wicked, and deserving His wrath; if He saves us, it is His boundless, fathomless love that leads Him to do it—nothing whatever in us.

III. And now, having thus preached this doctrine, and enforced it, I come to a very solemn PRACTICAL APPLICATION. And here may God the Holy Spirit help me labour with your hearts!

First, since this doctrine is true, how *humble* a Christian man ought to be. If thou be saved, thou hast had nought to do with it; God has done it. If thou be saved, thou hast not deserved it. It is mercy undeserved which thou hast received. I have sometimes been delighted when I have seen the gratitude of abandoned characters to any who have assisted them. I remember visiting a house of refuge. There was a poor girl there who had fallen into sin long, and when she found herself kindly addressed and recognized by society, and saw a Christian minister longing after her soul's good, it broke her heart. What should a man of God care about her? she was so vile. How could it be that a Christian should speak to her? Ah! but how much more should that feeling rise in our hearts? My God! I have rebelled against thee, and yet thou hast loved me, unworthy *me!* How can it be? I cannot lift myself up with pride, I must bow down before Thee in speechless gratitude. Remember, my dear brethren, that not only is the mercy which you and I have received undeserved, but it was *unasked*. It is true you prayed, but not till free grace made you pray. You would have been, to this day, hardened in heart, without God, and without Christ, had not free grace saved you. Can you be proud then?—proud of mercy which, if I may use the term, has been forced upon you?—proud of grace which has been given you against your will, until your will was changed by sovereign grace? And think again. All the mercy you have you once refused, Christ sups with you; be not proud of His company. Remember, there was a day when He knocked, and you refused—when He came to the door and said, "My head is wet with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night; open to me, my beloved;" and you barred it in His face and would not let Him enter. Be not proud, then, of what thou hast, when thou rememberest that thou didst once reject Him. Does God embrace Thee in His arms of love? Remember, once thou liftedst up thine hand of rebellion against Him. Is thy name written in His book? Ah! there was a time when, if it had been in thy power, thou wouldst have erased the sacred lines that contained thine own salvation. Can we, dare we, lift up our wicked head with pride, when all these things should make us hang our heads down in the deepest humility? That is one lesson: let us learn another.

This doctrine is true, and therefore it should be a subject of the greatest *gratitude*. When meditating upon this text yesterday, the effect it had upon me was one of transport and joy. Oh! I thought, upon what other condition could I have been saved? And I looked back upon my past estate; I saw myself piously trained and educated, but revolting against all that. I saw a mother's tears shed over me in vain, and a father's admonition lost upon me, and yet I found myself saved by grace, and I could only say, "Lord, I bless Thee that it is by grace, for if it had been by merit I had never been saved. If thou hadst waited till there was something good in me, thou wouldst have waited till I sank into the hopeless perdition of hell, for good in man there never would have been, unless thou hadst first put it there." And then I thought immediately, "Oh! how I could go and preach that to the poor sinner!" Ah! let me try if I cannot. O sinner! you say you dare not come to Christ because you have nothing to recommend you. He does not want anything to recommend you; He will not save you, if you have anything to recommend you, for His says, "Not for your sake do I this." Go to Christ with earrings in your ears, and jewels upon you; wash your face, and array yourself with gold and silver, and go before Him and say, "Lord, save me; I have washed myself and clothed myself; save me!" "Get you gone! Not for your sakes will I do this." Go to Him again, and say, "Lord, I have put a rope about my neck, and sackcloth about my loins; see how repentant I am, see how I feel my need; now save me!" "No," saith He, "I would not save you on account of your flaunting robes, and now I will not save you because of your rags; I will save you for nothing about you; if I do save you, it will be from something in my heart, not from anything you feel. Get ye gone!" But if today you go to Christ and say, "Lord Jesus, there is no reason in the world why I should be saved—there is one in Heaven; Lord, I cannot urge any plea, I deserve to be lost, I have no excuse to make for all my sins, no apology to offer; Lord, I deserve it, and there is nothing in me why I should be saved, for if thou wouldst save me I should make but a poor Christian, after all; I fear that my future works will be no honour to Thee—I wish they could be, but thy grace must make them good, else they will still be bad. But, Lord, thou I have nothing to bring, and nothing to say for myself, I do say this: I have heard that thou hast come into the world to save sinners—  
O Lord, save me!

'I the chief of sinners am.'

I confess I do not feel this as I ought, I do not mourn it as I ought; I have no repentance to recommend me; nay, Lord, I have no faith to recommend me either, for I do not believe thy promise as I ought; but oh! I cling to this text. Lord, thou hast said thou wilt not do it for my sake. I thank Thee thou hast said that. Thou couldst not do it for my sake, for I have no reason why thou shouldst. Lord, I claim thy gracious promise. "Be merciful to me, a sinner." Ah! you good people, this doctrine does not suit some of you; it is too humbling, is it not? You that have kept your churches regularly, and been to meetings so piously, you that never broke the Sabbath, or never swore an oath, or did anything wrong, this does not suit you. You say it will do very well to preach to harlots, and drunkards, and swearers, but it will not suit such good people as we are. Ah! well, this is your text—"I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." You are "whole"—you are; you "need not a physician, but they that are sick." Go your way. Christ came to save such as you are. You think you can save yourselves. Do it, and perish in the doing of it. But I feel that the same gospel that suits a harlot suits me, and that that free grace which saved Saul of Tarsus must save me, else I am never saved. Come, let us all go together. We are all guilty—some more, some less, but all hopelessly guilty. Let us go together to the footstool of His mercy, and though we dare not look up, let us lie there in the dust, and sigh out again, "Lord have mercy upon us for whom Jesus died."

"Just as I am, without one plea,

But that thy blood was shed for me,

And that thou bidst me come to Thee,

O Lamb of God, I come, I come."

Sinner, come now; come now, I beseech thee; I entreat thee, come now. O Spirit of the living God, draw them now! Let these feeble weak words be the means of drawing souls to Christ. Will you reject my Master again? Will you go out of this house hardened once more? You may never again have such feelings as those which are aroused in your soul. Come, now, receive His mercy; now bend your willing necks to His yoke; and then I know you shall go away to taste His faithful love, and at last to sing in Heaven the song of the redeemed—"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, unto him be glory forever. Amen."

"O thou great eternal Jesus,  
High and mighty Prince of Peace,  
How Thy wonders shine resplendent,  
In the wonders of Thy grace:  
Thy rich gospel scorns conditions,  
Breathes salvation free as air;  
Only breathes triumphant mercy,  
Baffling guilt, and all despair.  
"O the grandeur of the gospel,  
How it sounds the cleansing blood;  
Shows the bowels of a Saviour,  
Shows the tender heart of God.  
Only treats of love eternal,  
Swells the all-abounding grace,  
Nothing knows but life and pardon,  
Full redemption, endless peace."

### **Jacob and Esau**

Delivered on Sabbath Morning, January 16th, 1859, by the

REV. C. H. Spurgeon

At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

"Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."—Romans 9:15.

DO NOT IMAGINE for an instant that I pretend to be able thoroughly to elucidate the great mysteries of predestination. There are some men who claim to know all about the matter. They twist it round their fingers as easily as if it were an everyday thing; but depend upon it, he who thinks he knows all about this mystery, knows but very little. It is but the shallowness of his mind that permits him to see the bottom of his knowledge; he who dives deep, finds that there is in the lowest depth to which he can attain a deeper depth still. The fact is, that the great questions about man's responsibility, free-will, and predestination, have been fought over, and over, and over again, and have been answered in ten thousand different ways; and the result has been, that we know just as much about the matter as when we first began. The combatants have thrown dust into each other's eyes, and have hindered each other from seeing; and then they have concluded, that because they put other people's eyes out, they could therefore see.

Now, it is one thing to refute another man's doctrine, but a very different matter to establish my own views. It is very easy to knock over one man's hypothesis concerning these truths, not quite so easy to make my own stand on a firm footing. I shall try to-night, if I can, to go safely, if I do not go very fast; for I shall endeavour to keep simply to the letter of God's Word. I think that if we kept more simply to the teachings of the Bible, we should be wiser than we are; for by turning from the heavenly light of revelation, and trusting to the deceitful will-o'-the-wisps of our own imagination, we thrust ourselves into quags and bogs where there is no sure footing, and we begin to sink; and instead of making progress, we find ourselves sticking fast. The truth is, neither you nor I have any right to want to know more about predestination than what God tells us. That is enough for us. If it were worth while for us to know more, God would have revealed more. What God has told us, we are to believe, but to the knowledge thus gained, we are too apt to add our own vague notions, and then we are sure to go wrong. It would be better, if in all controversies, men had simply stood hard and fast by "Thus saith the Lord," instead of having it said, "Thus and thus I think." I shall now endeavour, by the help of the Holy Spirit, to throw the light of God's Word upon this great doctrine of divine sovereignty, and give you what I think to be a Scriptural statement of the fact, that some men are chosen, other men are left,—the great fact that is declared in this text,—"Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."

It is a terrible text, and I will be honest with it if I can. One man says the word "hate" does not mean hate; it means "love less:"—"Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I loved less." It may be so: but I don't believe it is. At any rate, it says "hate" here; and until you give me another version of the Bible, I shall keep to this one. I believe that the term is correctly and properly translated; that the word "hate" is not stronger than the original; but even if it be a little stronger, it is nearer the mark than the other translation which is offered to us in those meaningless words, "love less." I like to take it and let it stand just as it is. The fact is, God loved Jacob, and he did not love Esau; he did choose Jacob, but he did not choose Esau; he did bless Jacob, but he never blessed Esau; his mercy followed Jacob all the way of his life, even to the last, but his mercy never followed Esau; he permitted him still to go on in his sins, and to prove that dreadful truth, "Esau have I hated." Others, in order to get rid of this ugly text, say, it does not mean Esau and Jacob; it means the nation; it means Jacob's children and Esau's children; it means the children of Israel and Edom. I should like to know where the difference lies. Is the difficulty removed by extending it? Some of the Wesleyan brethren say, that there is a national election; God has chosen one nation and not another. They turn round and tell us it is unjust in God to choose one man and not another. Now, we ask them by everything reasonable, is it not equally unjust of God to choose one nation and leave another? The argument which they imagine overthrows us overthrows them also. There never was a more foolish subterfuge than that of trying to bring out national election. What is the election of a nation but the election of so many *units*, of so many people? and it is tantamount to the same thing as the particular election of individuals. In thinking, men cannot see clearly that if—which we do not for a moment believe—that if there be any injustice in God choosing one man and not another, how much more must there be injustice in his choosing one nation and not another. No! the difficulty cannot be got rid of thus, but is greatly increased by this foolish wresting of God's Word. Besides, here is the proof that that is not correct; read the verse preceding it. It does not say anything at all about nations, it says, "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth; It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger,"—referring to the children, not to the nations. Of course the threatening was afterwards fulfilled in the position of the two nations; Edom was made to serve Israel. But this text means just what it says; it does not mean nations, but it means the persons mentioned. "Jacob,"—that is the man whose name was Jacob—"Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." Take care my dear friends, how any of you meddle with God's Word. I have heard of folks altering passages they did not like. It will not do, you know, you cannot alter them; they are really just the same. Our only power with the Word of God is simply to let it stand as it is, and to endeavour by God's grace to accommodate ourselves to that. We must never try to make the Bible bow to us, in fact we cannot, for the truths of divine revelation are as sure and fast as the throne of God. If a man wants to enjoy a delightful prospect, and a mighty mountain lies in his path, does he commence cutting away at its base, in the vain hope that ultimately it will become a level plain before him? No, on the contrary, he diligently uses it for the accomplishment of his purpose by ascending it, well knowing this to be the only means of obtaining the end in view. So must we do; we cannot bring down the truths of God to our poor finite understandings; the mountain will never fall before us, but we can seek strength to rise higher and higher in our perception of divine things, and in this way only may we hope to obtain the blessing.

Now, I shall have two things to notice to-night. I have explained this text to mean just what it says, and I do not want it to be altered—"Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." To take off the edge of this terrible doctrine that makes real some people bite their lips so, I must just notice that *this is a fact*; and, after that, I shall try to answer the question,—*Why was it that God loved Jacob and hated Esau?*

I. First, then, THIS IS FACT. Men say they do not like the doctrine of election. Verily, I do not want them to; but is it not a fact that God has elected some? Ask an Arminian brother about election, and at once his eye turns fiercely upon you, and he begins to get angry, he can't bear it; it is a horrible thing, like a war-cry to him, and he begins to sharpen the knife of controversy at once. But say to him, "Ah, brother! was it not divine grace that made you to differ? Was it not the Lord who called you out of your natural state, and made you what you are? "Oh, yes," he says, "I quite agree with you there." Now, put this question to him: "What do you think is the reason why one man has been converted, and not another?" "Oh," he says, "the Spirit of God has been at work in this man." Well, then, my brother, the fact is, that God *does* treat one man better than another; and is there anything wonderful in this fact? It is a fact we recognize every day. There is a man up in the gallery there, that work as hard as he likes, he cannot earn more than fifteen shillings a week; and here is another man that gets a thousand a year; what is the reason of this? One is born in the palaces of kings, while another draws his first breath in a roofless hovel. What is the reason of this? God's providence. He puts one man in one position, and another man in another. Here is a man whose head cannot hold two thoughts together, do what you will with him; here is another who can sit down and write a book, and dive into the deepest of questions; what is the reason of it? God has done it. Do you not see the fact, that God does not treat every man alike? He has made some eagles, and some worms; some he has made lions, and some creeping lizards; he has made some men kings, and some are born beggars. Some are born with gigantic minds and some verge on the idiot. Why is this? Do you murmur at God for it? No, you say it is a fact, and there is no good in murmuring. What is the use of kicking against facts? It is only kicking against the pricks with naked feet, and you hurt yourself and not them. Well, then, election is a positive fact; it is as clear as daylight, that God does, in matters of religion, give to one man more than to another. He gives to me opportunities of hearing the word, which he does not give to the Hottentot. He gives to me, parents who, from infancy, trained me in the fear of the Lord. He does not give that to many of you. He places me afterwards in situations where I am restrained from sin. Other men are cast into places where their sinful passions are developed. He gives, to one man a temper and disposition which keeps him back from some lust, and to another man he gives such impetuosity of spirit, and depravity turns that impetuosity so much aside, that the man runs headlong into sin. Again, he brings one man under the sound of a powerful ministry, while another sits and listens to a preacher whose drowsiness is only exceeded by that of his hearers. And even when they are hearing the gospel, the fact is God works in one heart when he does not in another. Though, I believe to a degree, the Spirit works in the hearts of all who hear the Word, so that they are all without excuse, yet I am sure he works in some so powerfully, that they can no longer resist him, but are constrained by his grace to cast themselves at his feet, and confess him Lord of all; while others resist the grace that comes into their hearts; and it does not act with the same irresistible force that it does in the other case, and they perish in their sins, deservedly and justly condemned. Are not these things facts? Does any man deny them? *can* any man deny them? What is the use of kicking against facts? I always like to know when there is a discussion, what is the fact. You have heard the story of King Charles the Second and the philosophers—King Charles asked one of them, "What is the reason why, if you had a pail of water, and weighed it, and then put a fish into it, that the weight would be the same?" They gave a great many elaborate reasons for this. At last one of them said, "Is it the fact?" And then they found out that the water did weigh more, just as much more as the fish put into it. So all their learned arguments fell to the ground. So, when we are talking about election, the best thing is to say, "Put aside the doctrine for a moment, let us see what is the fact?" We walk abroad; we open our eyes; we see, there is the fact. What, then, is the use of our discussing any longer? We had better believe it, since it is an undeniable truth. You may alter an opinion, but you cannot alter a fact. You may change a mere

doctrine, but you cannot possibly change a thing which actually exists. There it is—God does certainly deal with some men better than he does with others. I will not offer an apology for God; he can explain his own dealings; he needs no defence from me,

"God is his own interpreter,

And he will make it plain;"

but there stands the fact. Before you begin to argue upon the doctrine, just recollect, that whatever you may think about it, you cannot alter it; and however much you may object to it, it is actually true that God did love Jacob, and did not love Esau.

For now look at Jacob's life and read his history; you are compelled to say that, from the first hour that he left his father's house, even to the last, God loved him. Why, he has not gone far from his father's house before he is weary, and he lies down with a stone for his pillow, and the hedges for his curtain, and the sky for his canopy; and he goes to sleep, and God comes and talks to him in his sleep; he sees a ladder, whereof the top reaches to heaven, and a company of angels ascending and descending upon it; and he goes on his journey to Laban. Laban tries to cheat him, and as often as Laban tries to wrong him, God suffers it not, but multiplies the different cattle that Laban gives him. Afterwards, you remember, when he fled unawares from Laban, and was pursued, that God appears to Laban in a dream, and charges him not to speak to Jacob either good or bad. And more memorable still, when his sons Levi and Simeon have committed murder in Shethem, and Jacob is afraid that he will be overtaken and destroyed by the inhabitants who were rising against him, God puts a fear upon the the people, and says to them, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophet no harm." And when a famine comes over the land, God has sent Joseph into Egypt, to provide corn in Goshen for his brethren, that they should live and not die. And see the happy end of Jacob—"I shall see my son Joseph before I die." Behold the tears streaming down his aged cheeks, as he clasps his own Joseph to his bosom! See how magnificently he goes into the presence of Pharaoh, and blesses him. It is said, "Jacob blessed Pharaoh." He had God's love so much in him, that he was free to bless the mightiest monarch of his times. At last he gave up the ghost, and it was said at once, "This was a man that God loved." There is the fact that God did love Jacob.

On the other hand, there is the fact that God did not love Esau. He permitted Esau to become the father of princes, but he has not blessed his generation. Where is the house of Esau now? Edom has perished. She built her chambers in the rock, and cut out her cities in the flinty rock; but God has abandoned the inhabitants thereof, and Edom is not to be found. They became the bond-slaves of Israel; and the kings of Edom had to furnish a yearly tribute of wool to Solomon and his successors; and now the name of Esau is erased from the book of history. Now, then, I must say, again, this ought to take off at least some of the bitterness of controversy, when we recollect that it is the fact, let men say what they will, that God did love Jacob, and he did not love Esau.

II. But now the second point of my subject is, WHY IS THIS? Why did God love Jacob? why did he hate Esau? Now, I am not going to undertake too much at once. You say to me, "Why did God love Jacob? and why did he hate Esau?" We will take one question at a time; for the reason why some people get into a muddle in theology is, because they try to give an answer to two questions. Now, I shall not do that; I will tell you one thing at a time. I will tell you why God loved Jacob; and, then, I will tell you why he hated Esau. But I cannot give you the same reason for two contradictory things. That is wherein a great many have failed. They have sat down and seen these facts, that God loved Jacob and hated Esau, that God has an elect people, and that there are others who are not elect. If, then, they try to give the same reason for election and non-election, they make sad work of it. If they will pause and take one thing at a time, and look to God's Word, they will not go wrong.

The first question is, *why did God love Jacob?* I am not at all puzzled to answer this, because when I turn to the Word of God, I read this text;—"Not for your sakes, do I this saith the Lord God, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways O house of Israel." I am not at a loss to tell you that it could not be for any good thing in Jacob, that God loved him, because I am told that "the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election might stand, not of works but of him that calleth." I can tell you the reason why God loved Jacob; *It is sovereign grace.* There was nothing in Jacob that could make God love him; there was everything about him, that might have made God hate him, as much as he did Esau, and a great deal more. But it was because God was infinitely gracious, that he loved Jacob, and because he was sovereign in his dispensation of this grace, that he chose Jacob as the object of that love. Now, I am not going to deal with Esau, until I have answered the question on the side of Jacob. I want just to notice this, that Jacob was loved of God, simply on the footing of free grace. For, come now, let us look at Jacob's character; I have already said in the exposition, what I think of him. I do think the very smallest things of Jacob's character. As a natural man, he was always a bargain-maker.

I was struck the other day with that vision that Jacob had at Bethel: it seemed to me a most extraordinary development of Jacob's bargain-making spirit. You know he lay down, and God was pleased to open the doors of heaven to him, so that he saw God sitting at the top of the ladder, and the angels ascending and descending upon it. What do you suppose he said as soon as he awoke? Well, he said, "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." Why, if Jacob had had faith, he would not have been afraid of God: on the contrary, he would have rejoiced that God had thus permitted him to hold fellowship with him. Now, hear Jacob's bargain. God had simply said to him, "I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed." He did not say anything about what Jacob was to do: God only said, *I will do it,*—"Behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." Now, can you believe, that after God had spoken face to face with Jacob, that he would have had the impudence to try and make a bargain with God? But he did. He begins and says, "*If*—There now, the man has had a vision, and an absolute promise from God, and yet he begins with an "*If*." That is bargain-making with a vengeance! "*If* God will be with me, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my Father's house in peace, *then*"—not without—mark, he is going to hold God to his bargain—"then shall, the Lord be my God: and this stone which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." I marvel at this! If I did not know something about my own nature, I should be utterly unable to understand it. What! a man that has talked with God, then begin to make a bargain with him! that has seen the only way of access between heaven and earth, the ladder Christ Jesus, and has had a covenant made between himself and God, a covenant that is all on God's part—all a promise—and yet wants after that to hold God to the bargain: as if he were afraid God would break his promise! Oh! this was vile indeed!

Then notice his whole life. While he lived with Laban, what miserable work it was. He had got into the hands of a man of the world;

and whenever a covetous Christian gets into such company, a terrible scene ensues! There are the two together, greedy and grasping. If an angel could look down upon them, how would he weep to see the man of God fallen from his high place, and become as bad as the other. Then, the device that Jacob used, when he endeavoured to get his wages was most extraordinary. Why did he not leave it to God, instead of adopting such systems as that? The whole way through we are ashamed of Jacob; we cannot help it. And then, there is that grand period in his life, the turning point, when we are told, that "Jacob wrestled with God, and prevailed." We will look at that—I have carefully studied the subject, and I do not think so much of him as I did. I thought Jacob wrestled with God, but I find it is the contrary; he did not wrestle with God; God wrestled with him. I had always set Jacob up, in my mind, as the very model of a man wrestling in prayer; I do not think so now. He divided his family, and put a person in front to appease Esau. He did not go in front himself, with the holy trust that a patriarch should have felt; guarded with all the omnipotence of heaven, he might boldly have gone to meet his brother, but no! he did not feel certain that the latter would bow at his feet, although the promise said, "The elder shall serve the younger." He did not rest on that promise; it was not big enough for him. Then he went at night to the brook Jabbok. I do not know what for, unless he went to pray; but I am afraid it was not so. The text says, "And Jacob was left alone: and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." There is a great deal of difference between a man wrestling with me, and my wrestling with him. When I strive with anyone, I want to gain something from him, and when a man wrestles with me, he wants to get something out of me. Therefore, I take it, when the man wrestled with Jacob, he wanted to get his cunning and deceit out of him, and prove what a poor sinful creature he was, but he could not do it. Jacob's craft was so strong, that he could not be overcome; at last, the angel touched his thigh, and showed him his own hollowness. And Jacob turned round and said, "Thou hast taken away my strength, now I will wrestle with *thee*;" and when his thigh was out of joint, when he fully felt his own weakness, then, and not till then, is he brought to say, "I will not let *thee* go, except thou bless me." He had had full confidence in his own strength, but God at last humbled him, and when all his boasted power was gone, then it was that Jacob became a prevailing prince. But, even after that, his life is not clear. Then you find him an unbelieving creature; and we have all been as bad. Though we are blaming Jacob, brethren, we blame ourselves. We are hard with him, but we shall be harder with ourselves. Do you not remember the memorable speech of the patriarch, when he said, "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me?" Ah, Jacob, why cannot you believe the promise? All other promises have been fulfilled. But no! he could not think of the promise; he was always wanting to live by sight.

Now, I say if the character of Jacob, be as I have described it, and I am sure it is—we have got it in God's word—there was, there could have been nothing in Jacob, that made God love him; and the only reason why God loved him, must have been because of his own grace, because "he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy." And rest assured, the only reason why any of us can hope to be saved is this, the sovereign grace of God. There is no reason why I should be saved, or why you should be saved, but God's own merciful heart, and God's own omnipotent will. Now that is the doctrine; it is taught not only in this passage, but in multitudes of other passages of God's Word. Dear friends, receive it, hold fast by it, and never let it go.

Now, the next question is a different one: *Why did God hate Esau?* I am not going to mix this question up with the other, they are entirely distinct, and I intend to keep them so, one answer will not do for two questions, they must be taken separately, and then can be answered satisfactorily. Why does God hate any man? I defy anyone to give any answer but this, because that man deserves it; no reply but that can ever be true. There are some who answer, divine sovereignty; but I challenge them to look that doctrine in the face. Do you believe that God created man and arbitrarily, sovereignly—it is the same thing—created that man, with no other intention, than that of damning him? Made him, and yet, for no other reason than that of destroying him for ever? Well, if you can believe it, I pity you, that is all I can say: you deserve pity, that you should think so meanly of God, whose mercy endureth for ever. You are quite right when you say the reason why God loves a man, is because God does so; there is no reason in the man. But do not give the same answer as to why God hates a man. If God deals with any man severely, it is because that man deserves all he gets. In hell there will not be a solitary soul that will say to God, O Lord, thou hast treated me worse than I deserve! But every lost spirit will be made to feel that he has got his deserts, that his destruction lies at his own door and not at the door of God; that God had nothing to do with his condemnation, except as the Judge condemns the criminal, but that he himself brought damnation upon his own head, as the result of his own evil works. Justice is that which damns a man; it is mercy, it is free grace, that saves; sovereignty holds the scale of love; it is justice holds the other scale. Who can put that into the hand of sovereignty? That were to libel God and to dishonour him;

Now, let us look at Esau's character, says one, "did he deserve that God should cast him away?" I answer, he did. What we know of Esau's character, clearly proves it. Esau lost his birthright. Do not sit down and weep about that, and blame God. Esau sold it himself; he sold it for a mess of pottage. Oh, Esau, it is in vain for thee to say, "I lost my birthright by decree." No, no. Jacob got it by decree, but you lost it because you sold it yourself—didn't you? Was it not your own bargain? Did you not take the mess of red pottage of your own voluntary will, in lieu of the birthright? Your destruction lies at your own door, because you sold your own soul at your own bargain, and you did it yourself. Did God influence Esau to do that? God forbid, God is not the author of sin. Esau voluntarily gave up his own birthright. And the doctrine is, that every man who loses heaven gives it up himself. Every man who loses everlasting life rejects it himself. God denies it not to him—he will not come that he may have life. Why is it that a man remains ungodly and does not fear God? It is because he says, "I like this drink, I like this pleasure, I like this sabbath-breaking, better than I do the things of God." No man is saved by his own free-will, but every man is damned by it that is damned. He does it of his own will; no one constrains him. You know, sinner, that when you go away from here, and put down the cries of conscience, that you do it yourself. You know that, when after a sermon you say, "I do not care about believing in Christ," you say it yourself—You are quite conscious of it, and if not conscious of it, it is notwithstanding a dreadful fact, that the reason why you are what you are, is because you *will* to be what you are. It is your own will that keeps you where you are, the blame lies at your own door, your being still in a state of sin is voluntary. You are a captive, but you are a voluntary captive. You will never be willing to get free until God makes you willing. But you are willing to be a bond slave. There is no disguising the fact, that man loves sin, loves evil, and does not love God. You know, though heaven is preached to you through the blood of Christ, and though hell is threatened to you as the result of your sins, that still you cleave to your iniquities; you will not leave them, and will not fly to Christ. And when you are cast away, at last it will be said of you, "you have lost your birthright." But you sold it yourself. You know that the ball-room suits you better than the house of God: you know that the pot-house suits you better than the prayer-meeting; you know you trust yourself rather than trust Christ; you know you prefer the joys of the resent time to the joys of the future. It is your own choice—keep it Your damnation is your own election, not God's; you richly deserve it.

But, says one, "Esau repented." Yes, he did, but what sort of a repentance was it? Did you ever notice his repentance? Every man who

repents and believes will be saved. But what sort of a repentance was his? As soon as he found that his brother had got the birthright, he sought it again with repentance, he sought it with tears, but he did not get it back. You know he sold his birthright for a mess of pottage; and he thought he would buy it back by giving his father a mess of pottage. "There," he says, "I will go and hunt venison for my father. I have got over him with my savoury meat, and he will readily give me my birthright again." That is what sinners say: "I have lost heaven by my evil works: I will easily get it again by reforming. Did I not lose it by sin? I will get it back by giving up my sins." "I have been a drunkard," says one, "I will give up drinking, and I will now be a teetotaler." Another says, "I have been an awful swearer; I am very sorry for it, indeed; I will not swear any more." So all he gives to his father is a mess of pottage, the same as that for which he sold it. No, sinner, you may sell heaven for a few carnal pleasures, but you cannot buy heaven by merely giving them up. You can get heaven only on another ground, viz., the ground of free-grace. You lose your soul justly, but you cannot get it back by good works, or by the renunciation of your sins.

You think that Esau was a sincere penitent. Just let me tell you another thing. This blessed penitent, when he failed to get the blessing, what did he say? "The days of mourning for my father are at hand: then will I slay my brother Jacob." There is a penitent for you. That is not the repentance that comes from God the Holy Spirit. But there are some men like that. They say they are very sorry they should have been such sinners as that, very sorry that they should have been brought into such a sad condition as that; and then they go and do the same that they did before. Their penitence does not bring them out of their sin, but it leaves them in it, and, perhaps, plunges them still deeper into guilt. Now, look at the character of Esau. The only redeeming trait in it was that he did begin with repentance, but that repentance was even an aggravation of his sin, because it was without the effects of evangelical repentance. And I say, if Esau sold his birthright he did deserve to lose it; and, therefore, am I not right in saying, that if God hated Esau, it was because he deserved to be hated. Do you observe how Scripture always guards this conclusion? Turn to the ninth chapter of Romans, where we have selected our text, see how careful the Holy Spirit is here, in the 22nd verse. "What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory." But it does not say anything about *fitting* men for destruction; they fitted themselves. *They* did that: God had nothing to do with it. But when men are saved, God fits them for that. All the glory to God in salvation; all the blame to men in damnation.

If any of you want to know what I preach every day, and any stranger should say, "Give me a summary of his doctrine," say this, "He preaches salvation all of grace, and damnation all of sin. He gives God all the glory for every soul that is saved, but he won't have it that God is to blame for any man that is damned." That teaching I cannot understand. My soul revolts at the idea of a doctrine that lays the blood of man's soul at God's door. I cannot conceive how any human mind, at least any Christian mind, can hold any such blasphemy as that. I delight to preach this blessed truth—salvation of God, from first to last—the Alpha and the Omega; but when I come to preach damnation, I say, damnation of man, not of God; and if you perish, at your own hands must your blood be required. There is another passage. At the last great day, when all the world shall come before Jesus to be judged, have you noticed, when the righteous go on the right side, Jesus says, "Come, ye blessed of my father,"—"of my father," mark,—"*inherit the kingdom prepared*"—(mark the next word)—"*for you*, from before the foundation of the world." What does he say to those on the left? "Depart, ye cursed." He does not say, "ye cursed of my father, but, ye cursed." And what else does he say? "into everlasting fire, prepared"—(*not for you*, but)—"*for the devil and his angels*." Do you see how it is guarded, here is the salvation side of the question. It is all of God. "Come, ye blessed of my father." It is a kingdom prepared for them. There you have election, free grace in all its length and breadth. But, on the other hand, you have nothing said about the father—nothing about that at all. "Depart, ye cursed." Even the flames are said not to be prepared for sinners, but for the devil and his angels. There is no language that I can possibly conceive that could more forcibly express this idea, supposing it to be the mind of the Holy Spirit, that the glory should be to God, and that the blame should be laid at man's door.

Now, have I not answered these two questions honestly? I have endeavoured to give a scriptural reason for the dealings of God with man. He saves man by grace, and if men perish they perish justly by their own fault. "How," says some one, "do you reconcile these two doctrines?" My dear brethren, I never reconcile two friends, never. These two doctrines are friends with one another; for they are both in God's Word, and I shall not attempt to reconcile them. If you show me that they are enemies, then I will reconcile them. "But," says one, "there is a great deal of difficulty about them." Will you tell me what truth there is that has not difficulty about it? "But," he says, "I do not see it." Well, I do not ask you to see it; I ask you to believe it. There are many things in God's Word that are difficult, and that I cannot see, but they are there, and I believe them. I cannot see how God can be omnipotent and man be free; but it is so, and I believe it. "Well," says one, "I cannot understand it. My answer is, I am bound to make it as plain as I can, but if you have not any understanding, I cannot give you any; there I must leave it. But then, again, it is not a matter of understanding; it is a matter of faith. These two things are true; I do not see that they at all differ. However, if they did, I should say, if they appear to contradict one another, they do not really do so, because God never contradicts himself. And I should think in this I exhibited the power of my faith in God, that I could believe him, even when his word seemed to be contradictory. That is faith. Did not Abraham believe in God even when God's promise seemed to contradict his providence? Abraham was old, and Sarah was old, but God said Sarah should have a child. How can that be? said Abraham, for Sarah is old; and yet Abraham believed the promise, and Sarah had a son. There was a reconciliation between providence and promise; and if God can bring providence and promise together, he can bring doctrine and promise together. If I cannot do it, God can even in the world to come.

Now, let me just practically preach this for one minute. Oh, sinners, if ye perish, on your own head must be your doom. Conscience tells you this, and the Word of God confirms it. You shall not be able to lay your condemnation at any man's door but your own. If you perish you perish by suicide. You are your own destroyers, because you reject Christ, because you despise the birthright and sell it for that miserable mess of pottage—the pleasures of the world. It is a doctrine that thrills through me. Like a two-edged sword, I would make it pierce to the dividing asunder of the joints and marrow. If you are damned it shall be your own fault. If you are found in hell, your blood shall be on your own head. You shall bring the faggots to your own burning; you shall dig the iron for your own chains; and on your own head will be your doom. But if you are saved, it cannot be by your merits, it must be by grace—free, sovereign grace. The gospel is preached to you; it is this: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

May grace now be given to you to bring you to yield to this glorious command. May you now believe in him who came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. Free grace, who shall tell thy glories? who shall narrate thy achievements, or write thy victories? Thou hast carried the cunning Jacob into glory, and made him white as the angels of heaven, and thou shalt carry many a black sinner there also, and make him glorious as the glorified. May God prove this doctrine to be true in your own experience! If there still

remains any difficulty upon your minds about any of these points, search the Word of God, and seek the illumination of his Spirit to teach you. But recollect after all, these are not the most important points in Scripture. That which concerns you most, is to know whether you have an interest in the blood of Christ? whether you really believe in the Lord Jesus. I have only touched upon these, because they cause a great many people a world of trouble, and I thought I might be the means of helping some of you to tread upon the neck of the dragon. May God grant that it may be so for Christ's sake.

## Distinguishing Grace

Delivered on Sabbath Evening, February 6th, 1859, by the

REV. C. H. Spurgeon

at the Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens.

"For who maketh thee to differ from another?"—1 Corinthians 4:7.

OR, AS IT IS in the Greek: "For who distinguisheth thee?" "Who giveth thee distinguishing and discriminating mercy?" "Who maketh thee to differ from another?" Pride is the inherent sin of man, and yet it is of all sins the most foolish. A thousand arguments might be used to show its absurdity; but none of these would be sufficient to quench its vitality. Alive it is in the heart, and there it will be, till we die to this world and rise again without spot or blemish. Yet many are the arrows which may be shot at the heart of our boasting.

Take for instance the argument of creation; how strongly that thrusts at our pride. There is a vessel upon the potter's wheel, would it not be preposterous for that clay which the potter fashioneth to boast itself and say, "How well am I fashioned! how beautifully am I proportioned; I deserve much praise!" Why, O lump of clay, whatever thou art, the potter made thee; however elegant thy proportions, however matchless thy symmetry, the glory is due to him that made thee, not to thyself; thou art but the work of his hands. And so let us speak unto ourselves. We are the thing formed; shall we say of ourselves that we deserve honor because God hath formed us excellently and wondrously? No, the fact of our creation should extinguish the sparks of our pride. What are we, after all, but as grasshoppers in his sight, as drops of the bucket, as lumps of animated dust; we are but the infants of a day when we are most old; we are but the insects of an hour when we are most strong; we are but the wild ass's colt when we are most wise, we are but as folly and vanity when we are most excellent—let that tend to humble us. But surely if these prevail not to clip the pinions of our high soaring pride, the Christian man may at least bind its wings with arguments derived from the distinguishing love and peculiar mercies of God. "*Who maketh thee to differ from another?*"—This question should be like a dagger put to the throat of our boasting;—"and *what trust thou that thou didst not receive;*"—it would be like a sword thrust through the heart of our self-exaltation and pride.

We shall now for a moment or two endeavor to put down our pride by observing wherein God hath distinguished us and made us to differ, and then by noticing that all this cometh of him, and should be a reason for humiliation, and not for boasting.

1. Many of us differ from others in God's providential dealings towards us. Let us think a moment how many there are of God's precious and dearly beloved children, who at this moment are in the depths of poverty. They are not walking about in sheepskins and goatskins, persecuted, afflicted, and tormented; but still they are hungry, and no man gives them to eat; they are thirsty, and no man furnishes them with drink, their fires are wasted in poverty and their years in distress. Some there are of God's children who were once in affluence but have been suddenly plunged into the lowest depths of penury; they knew what it was to be respected among the sons of men, but now they are among the dogs of the flock, and no man careth for them. There are some of us who are here present who have all that heart can wish: God hath given us food and raiment, the lines have fallen unto us in pleasant places, and we have a goodly heritage. Let us gratefully ask—"Who maketh us to differ?" "Let us recollect that all we have is the gift of his providence. Not to you, O my hands, do I sacrifice because ye have toiled for bread; not to you, O ye brains, will I offer incense, because ye have thought for my daily livelihood; not to you, O my lips, will I offer my adulation, because ye have been the means of furnishing me with words. No; unto God, who giveth power to get, and to have, and to enjoy; unto him be all the praise for what he hath done for us. Never let our songs cease, for his goodness is an ever flowing stream. Perhaps none of us can ever know, until the great day shall reveal it, how much some of God's servants are tried. To this day they have "perils by land, and perils by sea, and perils by false brethren;" to this hour they are pinched by want, they are deserted by friends, they know what despondency means, and all the ill which dejection and disappointment can bring to them; they have dived into the lowest depths of the sea of trouble, and have walked for many a league over the hot sand of the desert of affliction. And if God hath delivered us from these things, and hath made our path more pleasant, and hath led us beside the still waters, and into the green pastures,—if he hath distinguished us by the common gifts of his providence above many others of his children who are far better and far more holy than we, what shall we say? It is owing only to his grace towards us, and we will not exalt ourselves above our fellows, we will not be high-minded, but condescend to men of low estate; we will not lift our necks with the proud, but we will bow down our brows with the humble; every man shall be called our brother, not merely those who are arrayed in goodly raiment, but those who are clothed in the habiliments of toil, they shall be confessed to be our kindred, sprung from the same stock; for what have we that we have not received, and what maketh us to differ from another? I wish that some of the stiff-necked gentry of our churches would at times recollect this. Their condition is smooth as oil, and as soft as young down, but their hearts are as high as poplars, and their manners as stiff as hedge-stakes. There have been many who would do well if they would learn that they have nothing beyond what God has given them. And the more God has given them, the more they are in debt. Why should a man boast because he is deeper in debt than another? Do the debtors in the Queen's Bench say to one another, "You are only a hundred pounds in debt, and I a thousand, therefore I am a greater gentleman than you?" I think not. But, nevertheless, if they did so, they would be as wise as men who boast beyond their fellow-creatures because they happen to have more of rank, wealth, honor, and position, in this world. "Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?"

But the best way for you to feel this part of the discourse is, to go to-morrow into the hospital, and walk along the wards, and see how poor men's bodies suffer, and then go into the operating-room and see what flesh and blood may have to endure. Then when you have done, go round the neighborhood to see the sick who have lain for ten, or twelve, or fifteen years upon the same bed, and after that go and visit some of God's poverty-stricken children who just exist in this world, and it is but a bare existence, maintained on bread and butter and a little tea, and but too little of even such things as those. Go and see their poor, miserable, unfurnished rooms,

their cellars and their attics, and that will be a better sermon to you than anything I can utter. You will come home and say, "Oh my God, I bless thee for thy kindness towards me. These temporal mercies which I once thought so little of, I must heartily bless thee for. I must thank thee for what thou hast given to me, and I will ascribe it all to thy love, for thou makest me to differ. I have nothing that I have not received."

2. But this is not the most important point for us to observe. We are now going to look at, not matters of providence, but the things of God's grace. Here it is that we who are now assembled as a church have most reason to bless God, and to say, "Who maketh us to differ from others?" Take, my dear friends, in your mind's eye the cases of the careless, the hardened, and the thoughtless, of even this present congregation. Side-by-side with you, my brother, there may sit a man, a woman, who is dead in trespasses and sins. To such the music of the gospel is like singing to a dead ear, and the dropping of the word is as dew upon a rock. There are many in this congregation whose position in society, and whose moral character are extremely excellent, and yet before God their state is awful. They attend the house of God as regularly as we do. They sing as we sing, sit as we sit, and come and go as we do, and yet are they without God and without hope in the world—strangers from the commonwealth of Israel, and aliens from the covenant of promise. Yet what maketh us to differ? Why is it that I this day am not sitting down a callous hearer, hardened under the gospel? Why am I not at this very hour hearing the Word with my outward ear but rejecting it in my inward heart? Why is it that I have not been suffered to reject the invitation of Christ to despise his grace—to go on, Sunday after Sunday, hearing the Word and yet being like the deaf adder to it. Oh, *have I made myself to differ?* God forbid that such a proud, blaspheming thought should defile our hearts.

No, beloved;

"'Twas the same love which spread the feast,

That sweetly forced us in;

Else we had still refused to taste,

And perished in our sin."

The only reason, my brother, why thou art at this time an heir of God, a joint-heir with Christ, a partaker of sweet fellowship with Jesus, an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, is because HE hath made thee to differ. Thou wast an heir of wrath, even as others, born in sin and shapen in iniquity. Therefore must thou give all the glory to his holy name, and cry—"Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be all the praise." Even this one thought when fully masticated and digested might feed up our gratitude and make us humbly bow before the footstool of God's throne with joyful thanksgiving.

3. Will you please, however, to think of other cases? Who maketh thee to differ from others of this assembly who are more hardened than those to whom we have alluded? There are some men and women of whose salvation, if it were to be wrought by man, we must indeed utterly despair; for their hearts are harder than the most stubborn steel. The hammer of the Word makes no impression on such souls. The thunders of the law roll over their heads, but they can sleep in the midst of the tumult—the lightnings of Sinai flash against their hearts, but even those mighty flames seem as if they recoiled from the attack. Do you not know such? they are your own children, your husband, your wife, some of your own family, and as you look upon them, though you have longed, prayed, and wept, and sighed for their souls, you are compelled to say in your heart, "I half fear that I shall never see them converted." You say with sorrow, "Oh, if they are saved it will be a wonder of divine grace indeed. Surely they will never yield their souls to God. They seem as callous as if their conscience were seared with a hot iron; they appear to have the stamp of condemnation upon their brow, as if they were marked and sealed, and had the earnest of the pit upon their hearts before they came there. Ay, but stop—"Who maketh thee to differ?" Why am I not at this day among the most hardened of men? How is it that my heart is melted so that I can weep at the recollection of the Redeemer's suffering? Why is it that my conscience is tender, and that I am led to self-examination by a searching sermon? How is it that I know how to pray and to groan before God on account of sin? What has brought the water from these eyes, but the selfsame power which brought the water from the rock? And what hath put life into my heart but the self-same Omnipotence which scattered manna in a hungry desert? Our hearts had still been like the wild beasts of the forest, if it had not been for Divine grace. Oh! I beseech you, my dear friend, every time you see a hardened sinner, just say within yourself, "There is the picture of what I should have been, what I must have been, if all-subduing, all-conquering love had not melted and sanctified my heart." Take these two cases then, and you have, heaven knows, reason enough to sing to the praise of sovereign grace.

4. But now another, the lowest class of sinners do not mingle with our congregations, but are to be seen in our back streets and lanes, and sometimes in our highways. How frightful is the sin of drunkenness, which degrades a man into a beast, which sinks him lower than the brutes themselves! How shameful is the iniquity of blasphemy, which without any object or any chance of profit brings a curse upon its own head! How awful are the ways of the lascivious wretch who ruins both body and soul at once, and not content with his own destruction ruins others with him. Cases that come under our observation in the daily newspapers, and that assail us in our daily observation and hearing are too vile to be told. How often is our blood chilled with the sound of an imprecation, and how frequently our heart is made to palpitate with the daring impieties of the blasphemous. Now let us stop; "Who maketh thee to differ?" Let us recollect that if we live very near to Christ, we should have lived quite as near to hell if it had not been for saving grace. Some of you here present are special witnesses of this grace, for you have yourself experienced redemption from these iniquities. Look back some four years with some of you and recollect how different were your surroundings then to what they are now. Mayhap four years ago you were in the tap-room singing the song of the drunkard as readily as any; but a little while ago you cursed that Saviour whom now you love. Only a few months have flitted over your head since you ran with the multitude to do evil; but now, "Who maketh thee to differ?" "Who hath brought this miracle of grace. Who has led you to the stool of the penitent and the table of communion, who hath done it? Beloved, you are not slow to answer, for the verdict of your heart is undivided; you do not give the glory in part to man and in part to God. No, you cry loudly in your hearts, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, and ye have been washed in the Redeemer's blood, and sanctified with the Spirit. Ye have been made to differ, and ye will confess it; ye have been made to differ by distinguishing grace, and distinguishing grace alone. And what upholds the rest of us from being what these my reclaimed brethren once were, and what they will become again unless saving grace keeps them? What preserves the preacher this day from being a lecturer to Infidels, dishonoring the grace of God which now he glories to magnify? What prevents the deacon from being an assistant in the courts of Satan? What forbids those who open the doors at the house of our God,

and who serve him on the Sabbath-day, from being door-keepers in the tents of the sons of Belial? Why nothing; they had been there unless grace had prevented them. Grace hath done it, and nothing else. When we pass a prostitute in the street, we say, "O poor creature! I can pity you. I have not a harsh word for you, for I had been as you are had not God preserved me." And when you see the reeling drunkard, be not too hasty to condemn, recollect you had been as a beast before God unless the Lord had kept you, and when ye hear the oath and shudder at it, imagine not that you are superior in yourself to the man who curses God, for perhaps you once cursed him too; and certainly you would have done had not the Holy Spirit sanctified you and implanted in you a hatred of that which the wicked so greedily follow. Have you seen a man hanged for murder? Have you seen another transported for the most infamous of crimes? If you hear of one who sins against society so foully that mankind excommunicate him, pause, and say, "Oh! but I should have gone as low as that, I should have been as black as he, unless restraining grace had kept me back in my unregeneracy, and unless constraining grace had pushed me forward in the heavenly race, ever since I have known the will of Jesus."

5. And now we will pause again, and think over another evil which stares us in the face in connection with every church. There are most melancholy cases of backsliding in so large a church as this. We are compelled often to discover the character of men and women who once seemed fair for heaven, but who manifested that they never had the root of the matter in them. Oh! well did the poet say,—

"When any turn from Zion's way,  
Alas! what numbers do!"

No trial is greater to the true minister than the apostacy of his flock. All the rage of men is quite unable to bring tears to our eyes, but this has done it. Alas! when those whom I have loved have turned aside from the way of God, when those who have sat with us at the same table, and have joined with us in church communion, have gone out from us, and have brought dishonor upon the Church, and upon the name of Christ, there has been woe in my inmost spirit. Sometimes there are cases as glaring as they are painful, and as vile as they are grievous. Some of those, who were once in the midst of God's sanctuary, have become drunkards and whoremongers—and

God in heaven only knows what. They have sinned against everything that is seemly, as well as everything that is holy. At the recollection of these our eyes are filled with tears. "Oh that our head were waters, and our eyes fountains of tears, that we might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of our people." No mischief-makers are so powerful as deserters. None cause so much agony as those who have nestled beneath our wings, and then have flown away to feed with carrion vultures on the putrid carcasses of lust and sin.

But now let us pause. How is it that the minister has not forsaken his profession, and gone back like a dog to his vomit, and like the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire? How is it that the deacons of this church have not turned aside unto crooked ways, and denied the faith, and become worse than infidels? How is it that so many members of this church have been kept so that the wicked one toucheth them not? O beloved! I can say for myself, I am a continual miracle of divine grace. If thou leave me, Lord, for a moment, I am utterly undone.

"Leave, O leave me not alone!  
Still support and comfort me"

Let Abraham be deserted by his God, he equivocates and denies his wife. Let Noah be deserted, he becomes a drunkard, and is naked to his shame. Let Lot be left awhile, and, filled with wine, he revels in incestuous embraces, and the fruit of his body becomes a testimony to his disgrace. Nay, let David, the man after God's own heart, be left, and Uriah's wife shall soon show the world that the man after God's own heart hath still an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. Oh! well doth the poet put it—

"Methinks I hear the Saviour say,  
Wilt thou forsake me too?"  
And now let our conscience answer:—  
"Ah, Lord! with such a heart as mine,  
Unless thou hold me fast,  
I feel I must, I shall decline  
And prove like them at last."

Oh be not rashly self-confident, Christian man. Be as confident as you can in your God, but be distrustful of yourself. Ye may yet become all that is vile and vicious, unless sovereign grace prevent and keep you to the end. But remember if you have been preserved, the crown of your keeping belongs to the Shepherd of Israel, and ye know who that is. For he hath said "I the Lord do keep it. I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." "Ye know who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before his presence with exceeding great joy." Then give all glory to the King immortal, invisible, the only wise God your Saviour, who has kept you thus.

6. Allow me one more contrast; once again let your gratitude go with me since you and I have joined the church how many who were once our companions have been damned whilst we have been saved, how many who were no worse than we were by nature have sunk into the lowest pit of hell. Conceive their unutterable torments; imagine their inconceivable woes; depict before the eye of your fancy their indescribable agonies. Descend in spirit for a moment to the gates of fire; enter into the abode of despair where justice reigns supreme on her iron throne; pass by the dreary cell of those who are everlastingly damned. Behold the twisting of that worm that never dies, and the bleeding hearts that are crushed within its coils. Look ye at that flame unquenchable and behold the souls that are sweltering there in torments to us unknown, and look if ye can look, but ye cannot look, for your eyes would be stricken with blindness if ye could see their torments. Your hair should be blanched withbut a moment of that horrible exhibition. Ah! while you stand then and think on that region of death, despair, and damnation, recollect that you would have been there if it had not been for

sovereign grace. You have a harp prepared for you in heaven, a crown laid up for you when you have finished your course. You have a mansion, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Oh, why is it you are not already a fiend; who is it that has given you a good hope through grace that you shall never come into that place of torment. Oh! tell it the wide world over. Tell it in time and in eternity, *free grace* hath done it. Free grace hath done it from the first to the last. I was a brand in the fire, but he plucked me from the burning, quenched me in his blood, and now he declares I shall be with him for ever in heaven. But oh! pause brethren and think that some of your former pot-companions, some of the companions of your revere and debaucheries are now in hell, and you are not there, and by the grace of God never will be there. Oh! why this, why this? Blessed be the Lord my God from this time forth and for ever. Praise ye his name. Grace has done it. Grace has done it all.

No, I never shall wear the chain, I ne'er shall be stretched upon that rack, nor feel that fire—

"But I shall see his face,

And never, never sin,

But from the rivers of his grace

Drink endless pleasures in."

But I most confidently proclaim that the reason why I shall escape and shall be glorified, is not to be found in me, but in him. He hath made me to differ. I have nothing but what I have received.

Now what shall we say to these things. If God has made you to differ, the first prayer we should now utter should be, "Lord, humble us. Take away pride out of us. O God forgive us, that such beasts as we are should ever be proud." We might have been with our father the devil at this very hour, if it had not been for Divine love. And if we are now in the house of our Father which is in heaven shall we be proud? Avaunt thou monster! Go and dwell with the Pharisee. Pride agreeth well enough with the man who has in his own esteem been always virtuous. Go thou away and live with him who has had good works from the first day until now; but away from *me*.

"I the chief of sinners am,"

and saved by sovereign grace shall I be proud. It is not fit that thou shouldst live in my heart, thou monster! Begone! Begone! Find a fitter habitation than my soul. Should I be proud after such mercy, after such ill-deserving, but such God-receiving. Begone, pride! Begone!

Another lesson: if God alone hath made us to differ, why may he not make others to differ too? "After the Lord saved me," said one, "I never despaired of anybody;" and let us each say so too. If you were brought in why not another? Will you ever give up praying for anybody now that you are saved? I once heard one say concerning his child, "I think I must give her up, I can scarcely think she ever will be converted." Why you have been pardoned yourself; and if the Lord can do that, he can do anything. I am sure if the Lord has brought me to his feet there does not remain in the world a case that can ever equal mine; if he has brought me to receive his free grace, his sovereign love, his precious blood, and hath made me to love him, then there can be nothing too hard for him. O Lord, if thou hast melted this metal heart, and dissolved this stony soul, thou canst break anything. If thou hast broken the northern iron and the steel, then what remains beyond thy power? Go back then, Christian, armed with this fact, that God who hath made thee to differ can make anybody to differ. There can be no case beyond his strength; if he brought you in he can bring all in. If he doth but stretch out his hand, no man need despair. Therefore, "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whither shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."

Again, who hath made me to differ? Hath my Lord done it?—then let me serve him more than others. There was a question asked once by our Saviour, "What do ye more than others?" That question might well be put to each child of God here present. My dear friends, we must not be content with doing as much as other people do; in fact, we must never be contented with our doings at all, but always be trying to do more for him who hath done so much for us. Should I give my body to be burned, my flesh piecemeal to the knife, my nerves to the rack, and my heart to the spear, yet should I not give him all that he deserveth. No, if I should pass through the horrors of martyrdom, it were but a poor tribute to love so amazing, so divine. What are you doing my friends, what are you doing my brothers and sisters for Christ? But I will not name you, I censure myself if I censure you; but I will confess my own iniquities and leave you to confess yours. I do try to serve my Master, but I do not serve him as I would. Each act that I perform is marred, either by want of prayer for a blessing upon it, by want of faith in my Lord, or by pride in looking back upon it. I find too continually a tendency to serve myself instead of serving Christ, a constant longing rather to get through the work than to do it acceptably. And oh! when I think upon all, I must say I am an unprofitable servant. Have mercy O gracious Lord on my good works as well as on my bad ones, for my good works are but bad in the best and cannot be acceptable in themselves. I am certain some of you have a little more need to say that than I have. Let us cease boasting any more. I know there are some here who are not serving Christ; some members in this church are doing nothing. You have not thought of doing anything for Christ, have you? You pay your regular subscriptions, you do what you are told to do, but do you give to Christ secretly? do you devote your substance unto him when no one knows it? do you spend your time for him? have you chosen a sphere, and have you said, "This is my work, and by the grace of God I will do it." Oh! ye cannot tell how much there is to do, and how few, there are to do it. I would I could have a church all alive, all active, so that there never could be a want but those who have would be ready to supply, and never a work but those who are qualified would be ready to fulfill. Never fear but we should find too many rather than too few to aid its accomplishment. Oh that we had the good spirit of the ancient church, the spirit to propagate our Christianity everywhere. There needs to be in many of the suburbs of London fresh gospel churches springing up. I can point to many places in my own vicinity, seven or eight, nine or ten in a row, where there is a chapel needed. In each place there are believers living, who do not think about uniting to establish a fresh cause; but as long as their peculiar wants are satisfied, by journeying a long way off perhaps, they forget the hundreds and thousands who are pressing around them. Oh! there is much to be done, and very little time to do it in. A very few weeks, and those of us who have been loved more than others, those of us who have thought we could wash Christ's feet with our tears, and wipe them with the hair of our heads, will have no more opportunities for spreading the name and fame of our glorious Redeemer. Let us give of our substance to his cause, give of our time to his service and have our hearts in his love, and so shall we be blessed, for in returning Christ's love we

shall feel that his love is shed abroad more fully in our hearts and more fully in our understandings.

May the Holy Spirit add his blessing upon these broken words—they have been broken because they have broken my heart, and therefore I could not help their coming out in a broken way. God accept them; and dear brothers and sisters, may he bless them to you by helping you to love him more, who is my hope, my joy, my consolation, and my all.

## The Fainting Warrior

Delivered on Sabbath Morning, January 23rd, 1859, by the

REV. C. H. Spurgeon

At the Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens.

"O wretched man that I am I who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."—  
Romans 7:24, 25.

IF I chose to occupy your time with controversial matter, I might prove to a demonstration that the apostle Paul is here describing his own experience as a Christian. Some have affirmed that he is merely declaring what he was before conversion, and not what he was when he became the recipient of the grace of God. But such persons are evidently mistaken, and I believe wilfully mistaken; for any ample-hearted, candid mind, reading through this chapter, could not fall into such an error. It is Paul the apostle, who was not less than the very greatest of the apostles—it is Paul, the mighty servant of God, a very prince in Israel, one of the King's mighty men—it is Paul, the saint and the apostle, who here exclaims, "O wretched man that I am!"

Now, humble Christians are often the dupes of a very foolish error. They look up to certain advanced saints and able ministers, and they say, "Surely, such men as these do not suffer as I do; they do not contend with the same evil passions as those which vex and trouble me." Ah! if they knew the heart of those men, if they could read their inward conflicts, they would soon discover that the nearer a man lives to God, the more intensely has he to mourn over his own evil heart, and the more his Master honors him in his service, the more also doth the evil of the flesh vex and tease him day by day. Perhaps, this error is more natural, as it is certainly more common, with regard to apostolic saints. We have been in the habit of saying, *Saint Paul*, and *Saint John*, as if they were more saints than any other of the children of God. They are all saints whom God has called by his grace, and sanctified by his Spirit; but somehow we very foolishly put the apostles and the early saints into another list, and do not venture to look on them as common mortals. We look upon them as some extraordinary beings, who could not be men of like passions with ourselves. We are told in Scripture that our Saviour was "tempted in all points like as we are;" and yet we fall into the egregious error of imagining that the apostles, who were far inferior to the Lord Jesus, escaped these temptations, and were ignorant of these conflicts. The fact is, if you had seen the apostle Paul, you would have thought he was remarkably like the rest of the chosen family: and if you had talked with him, you would have said, "Why, Paul, I find that your experience and mine exactly agree. You are more faithful, more holy, and more deeply taught than I, but you have the self same trials to endure. Nay, in some respects you are more sorely tried than I." Do not look upon the ancient saints as being exempt either from infirmities or sins, and do not regard them with that mystic reverence which almost makes you an idolater. Their holiness is attainable even by you, and their faults are to be censured as much as your own. I believe it is a Christian's duty to force his way into the inner circle of saintship; and if these saints were superior to us in their attainments, as they certainly were, let us follow them; let us press forward up to, yea, and beyond them, for I do not see that this is impossible. We have the same light that they had, the same grace is accessible to us, and why should we rest satisfied until we have distanced them in the heavenly race? Let us bring them down to the sphere of common mortals. If Jesus was the Son of man, and very man, "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh;" so were the apostles; and it is an egregious error to suppose that they were not the subjects of the same emotions, and the same inward trials, as the very meanest of the people of God. So far, this may tend to our comfort and to our encouragement, when we find that we are engaged in a battle in which apostles themselves have had to fight.

And now we shall notice this morning, first, *the two natures*, secondly *their constant battle*; thirdly, we shall step aside and look at *the weary warrior*, and hear him cry, "O wretched man that I am;" and then we shall turn our eye in another direction, and see that fainting warrior girding up his loins to the conflict, and becoming *an expectant victor*, while he shouts, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

I. First, then, THE TWO NATURES. Carnal men, unrenewed men, have one nature—a nature which they inherited from their parents, and which, through the ancient transgression of Adam, is evil, only evil, and that continually. Mere human nature, such as is common to every man, has in it many excellent traits, judging of it between man and man. A merely natural man may be honest, upright, kind, and generous, he may have noble and generous thoughts, and may attain unto a true and manly speech; but when we come to matters of true religion, spiritual matters that concern God and eternity, the natural man can do nothing. The carnal mind, whose ever mind it may be, is fallen, and is at enmity to God, does not know the things of God, nor can it ever know them. Now, when a man becomes a Christian, he becomes so through the infusion of a new nature. He is naturally "dead in trespasses and sins," "without God and without hope." The Holy Spirit enters into him, and implants in him a new principle, a new nature, a new life. That life is a high, holy and supernatural principle, it is, in fact the divine nature, a ray from the great "Father of Lights;" it is the Spirit of God dwelling in man. Thus, you see, the Christian becomes a double man—two men in one. Some have imagined that the old nature is turned out of the Christian: not so, for the Word of God and experience teach the contrary, the old nature is in the Christian unchanged, unaltered, just the same, as bad as ever it was; while the new nature in him is holy, pure and heavenly; and hence, as we shall have to notice in me next place—hence there arises a conflict between the two.

Now, I want you to notice what the apostle says about these two natures that are in the Christian, for I am about to contrast them. First, in our text the apostle calls the old nature "the *body* of this death." Why does he call it "the *body* of this death?" Some suppose he means these dying bodies; but I do not think so. If it were not for sin, we should have no fault to find with our poor bodies. They are noble works of God, and are not in themselves the cause of sin. Adam in the garden of perfection, felt the body to be no

encumbrance, nor if sin were absent should we have any fault to find with our flesh and blood. What, then, is it? I think the apostle calls the evil nature within him a body, *first*, in opposition to those who talk of the relics of corruption in a Christian. I have heard people say that there are relics, remainders and remnants of sin in a believer. Such men do not know much about themselves yet. Oh! it is not a bone, or a rag which is left; it is the whole body of sin that is there—the whole of it, "from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot." Grace does not maim this body and cut away its members; it leaves it entire, although blessed be God, it crucifies it, nailing it to the cross of Christ. *And again*, I think he calls it a body because it is something tangible. We all know that we have a body; it is a thing we can feel, we know it is there. The new nature is a spirit subtle, and not easy to detect, I sometimes have to question myself as to whether it is there at all. But as for my old nature, that is a body, I can never find it difficult to recognize its existence, it is as apparent as flesh and bones. As I never doubt that I am in flesh and blood, so I never doubt but what I have sin within me. It is a body—a thing which I can see and feel, and which, to my pain, is ever present with me."

Understand, then, that the old nature of the Christian is a body; it has in it a substance or, as Calvin puts it, it is a *mass* of corruption. It is not simply a shred, a remnant—the cloth of the old garment, but the whole of it is there still. True, it is crushed beneath the foot of grace; it is cast out of its throne; but it is there, there in all its entirety, and in all its sad tangibility, a body of death. But why does he call it a body of *death*? Simply to express what an awful thing this sin is that remains in the heart. It is a body of *death*. I must use a figure, which is always appended to this text, and very properly so. It was the custom of ancient tyrants, when they wished to put men to the most fearful punishments, to tie a dead body to them, placing the two back to back; and there was the living man, with a dead body closely strapped to him, rotting, putrid, corrupting, and this he must drag with him wherever he went. Now, this is just what the Christian has to do. He has within him the new life; he has a living and undying principle, which the Holy Spirit has put within him, but he feels that every day he has to drag about with him this dead body, this body of death, a thing as loathsome, as hideous, as abominable to his new life, as a dead stinking carcase would be to a living man. Francis Quarles gives a picture at the beginning of one of his emblems, of a great skeleton in which a living man is encased. However quaint the fancy, it is not more singular than true. There is the old skeleton man, filthy, corrupt and abominable. He is a cage for the new principle which God has put in the heart. Consider a moment the striking language of our text, "*The body of this death, it is death incarnate, death concentrated*, death dwelling in the very temple of life. Did you ever think what an awful thing death is? The thought is the most abhorrent to human nature. You say you do not fear death, and very properly; but the reason why you do not fear death is because you look to a glorious immortality. Death in itself is a most frightful thing. Now, inbred sin has about it all the unknown terror, all the destructive force, and all the stupendous gloom of death. A poet would be needed to depict the conflict of life with death—to describe a living soul condemned to walk through the black shades of confusion, and to bear incarnate death in its very bowels. But such is the condition of the Christian. As a regenerate man he is a firing, bright, immortal spirit; but he has to tread the shades of death. He has to do daily battle with all the tremendous powers of sin, which are as awful, as sublimely terrific, as even the powers of death and hell.

Upon referring to the preceding chapter, we find the evil principle styled "the old man." There is much meaning in that word "old." But let it suffice us to remark, that in age the new nature is not upon an equal footing with the corrupt nature. There are some here who are sixty years old in their humanity, who can scarce number two years in the life of grace. Now pause and meditate upon the warfare in the heart. It is the contest of an infant with a full-grown man, the wrestling of a babe with a giant. Old Adam, like some ancient oak, has thrust his roots into the depths of manhood; can the divine infant uproot him and cast him from his place? This is the work, this is the labor. From its birth the new nature begins the struggle, and it cannot cease from it until the victory be perfectly achieved. Nevertheless, it is the moving of a mountain, the drying up of an ocean the threshing of the hills, and who is sufficient for these things? The heaven-born nature needs, and will receive, the abundant help of its Author, or it would yield in the struggle, subdued beneath the superior strength of its adversary and crushed beneath his enormous weight.

Again, observe, that the old nature of man, which remains in the Christian is *evil*, and it cannot ever be anything else but evil, for we are told in this chapter that "in me,"—that is, in my flesh—"there dwelleth no good thing." The old Adam-nature cannot be improved; it cannot be made better; it is hopeless to attempt it. You may do what you please with it, you may educate it, you may instruct it, and thus you may give it more instruments for rebellion, but you cannot make the rebel into the friend, you cannot turn the darkness into light; it is an enemy to God, and an enemy to God it ever must be. On the contrary, the new life which God has given us cannot sin. That is the meaning of a passage in John, where it is said, "The child of God sinneth not; he cannot sin, because he is born of God." The old nature is evil only evil, and that continually, the new nature is wholly good; it knows nothing of sin, except to hate it. Its contact with sin brings it pain and misery, and it cries out, "Woe is me that I dwell in Meshech, that I tabernacle in the tents of Kedar."

I have thus given you some little picture of the two natures. Let me again remind you that these two natures are essentially unchangeable. You cannot make the new nature which God has given you less divine; the old nature you cannot make less impure and earthly. Old Adam is a condemned thing. You may sweep the house, and the evil spirit may seem to go out of it, but he will come back again and bring with him seven other devils more wicked than himself. It is a leper's house, and the leprosy is in every stone from the foundation to the roof; there is no part sound. It is a garment spotted by the flesh; you may wash, and wash, and wash, but you shall never wash it clean; it were foolish to attempt it. Whilst on the other hand the new nature can never be tainted—spotless, holy and pure, it dwells in our hearts; it rules and reigns there expecting the day when it shall cast out its enemy, and without a rival it shall be monarch in the heart of man for ever.

II. I have thus described the two combatants; we shall now come in the next place to THEIR BATTLE. There was never deadlier feud in all the world between nations than there is between the two principles, right and wrong. But right and wrong are often divided from one another by distance, and therefore they have a less intense hatred. Suppose an instance: right holds for liberty, therefore right hates the evil of slavery. But we do not so intensely hate slavery as we should do if we saw it before our eyes: then would the blood boil, when we saw our black brother, smitten by the cow-hide whip. Imagine a slaveholder standing here and smiting his poor slave until the red blood gushed forth in a river; can you conceive your indignation? Now it is distance which makes you feel this less acutely. The right forgets the wrong, because it is far away. But suppose now that right and wrong lived in the same house; suppose two such desperate enemies, cribbed, cabined, and confined within this narrow house, *man*; suppose the two compelled to dwell together, can you imagine to what a desperate pitch of fury these two would get with one another. The evil thing says, "I will turn thee out, thou intruder; I cannot be peaceful as I would, I cannot riot as I would, I cannot indulge just as I would; out with thee, I will never be content until I slay thee." "Nay," says the new born nature, "I will kill thee, and drive thee out. I will not suffer stick or stone of thee to remain. I have sworn war to the knife with thee; I have taken out the sword and cast away the scabbard, and will

never rest till I can sing complete victory over thee, and totally eject thee from this house of mine." They are always at enmity wherever they are; they were never friends, and never can be. The evil must hate the good, and the good must hate the evil.

And mark although we might compare the enmity to the wolf and lamb, yet the new-born nature is not the lamb in all respects. It may be in its innocence and meekness, but it is not in its strength; for the new-born nature has all the omnipotence of God about it, whilst the old nature has all the strength of the evil one in it, which is a strength not easily to be exaggerated, but which we very frequently underestimate. These two things are ever desperately at enmity with one another. And even when they are both quiet they hate each other none the less. When my evil nature does not rise, still it hates the newborn nature, and when the new-born nature is inactive, it has nevertheless a thorough abhorrence of all iniquity. The one cannot endure the other, it must endeavor to thrust it forth. Nor do these at any time allow an opportunity to pass from being revenged upon one another. There are times when the old nature is very active, and then how will it ply all the weapons of its deadly armoury against the Christian. You will find yourselves at one time suddenly attacked with anger, and when you guard yourself against the hot temptation, on a sudden you will find pride rising, and you will begin to say in yourself; "Am I not a good man to have kept my temper down?" And the moment you thrust down your pride there will come another temptation, and lust will look out of the window of your eyes, and you desire a thing upon which you ought not to look, and ere you can shut your eyes upon the vanity, sloth in its deadly torpor surrounds you, and you give yourself up to its influence and cease to labor for God. And then when you bestir yourselves once more, you find that in the very attempt to rouse yourself you have awakened your pride. Evil haunts you go where you may, or stand in what posture you choose. On the other hand the new nature will never lose an opportunity of putting down the old. As for the means of grace, the newborn nature will never rest satisfied unless it enjoys them. As for prayer, it will seek by prayer to wrestle with the enemy. It will employ faith, and hope, and love, the threatenings, the promises, providence, grace, and everything else to cast out the evil. Well," says one, "I don't find it so." Then I am afraid of you. If you do not hate sin so much that you do everything to drive it out, I am afraid you are not a living child of God. Antinomians like to hear you preach about the evil of the heart, but here is the fault with them, they do not like to be told that unless they hate that evil, unless they seek to drive it out and unless it is the constant disposition of their new-born nature to root it up, they are yet in their sins. Men who only believe their depravity, but do not hate it, are no further than the devil on the road to heaven. It is not my being corrupt that proves me a Christian, nor knowing I am corrupt, but that I hate my corruption. It is my agonizing death struggle with my corruptions that proves me to be a living child of God. These two natures will never cease to struggle so long as we are in this world. The old nature will never give up; it will never cry truce, it will never ask for a treaty to be made between the two. It will always strike as often as it can. When it lies still it will only be preparing for some future battle. The battle of Christian with Apollyon lasted three hours; but the battle of Christian with himself lasted all the way from the Wicket-gate to the River Jordan. The enemy within can never be driven out while we are here. Satan may sometimes be absent from us, and get such a defeat that he is glad to go howling back to his den, but old Adam abideth with us from the first even to the last. He was with us when we first believed in Jesus, and long ere that, and he will be with us till that moment when we shall leave our bones in the grave, our fears in the Jordan, and our sins in oblivion.

Once more observe, that neither of these two natures will be content in the fight without bringing in allies to assist. The evil nature has old relations, and in its endeavor to drive out the grace that is within, it sends off messengers to all its helpers. Like Chedorlasmeth, the King of Elam, it bringeth other kings with it, when it goeth out to battle. "Ah!" says old Adam, "I have friends in the pit." He sends a missive down to the depths, and willing allies come therefrom—spirits from the vasty deep of hell; devils without number come up to the help of their brother. And then, not content with that, the flesh says:—"Ah! I have friends in this *world*;" and then the world sends its fierce cohorts of temptation, such as the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. What a battle, when sin, Satan, and the world, make a dead-set upon the Christian at once. "Oh," says one, "it is a terrible thing to be a Christian." I assure you it is. It is one of the hardest things in the world to be a child of God; in fact, it is impossible, unless the Lord makes us his children, and keeps us so.

Well, what does the new nature do? When it sees all these enemies, it cries unto the Lord, and then the Lord sends it friends. First comes in to its help, Jehovah, in the everlasting counsel, and reveals to the heart its own interest in the secrets of eternity. Then comes Jesus with his blood. "Thou shalt conquer," says he; "I will make thee more than a conqueror through my death." And then appears the Holy Spirit, the Comforter. With such assistance, this new-born nature is more than a match for its enemies. God will sometimes leave that new nature alone, to let it know its own weakness; but it shall not be for long, lest it should sink in despair. Are you fighting with the enemy to-day, my dear Christian brethren? Are Satan, the flesh, and the world—that hellish trinity—all against you? Remember, there is a divine trinity for you. Fight on, though like Valiant-for-Truth, your blood runs from your hand and glues your sword to your arm. Fight on! for with you are the legions of heaven; God himself is with you; Jehovah Nissi is your banner, and Jehovah Rophi is the healer of your wounds. You shall overcome; for who can defeat Omnipotence, or trample divinity beneath his foot?

I have thus endeavored to describe the conflict; but understand me, it cannot be described. We must say, as Hart does in his hymn, when after singing the emotions of his soul, he says—

"But, brethren, you can surely guess,

For you perhaps have felt the same."

If you could see a plain upon which a battle is fought, you would see how the ground is torn up by the wheels of the cannon, by the horse hoofs, and by the trampling of men. What desolation is where once the golden crops of harvest grew. How is the ground sodden with the blood of the slain. How frightful the result of this terrible struggle. But if you could see the believers' heart after a spiritual battle, you would find it just a counterpart of the battle-field—as much cut up as the ground of the battle-field after the direst conflict that men or fiends have ever waged. For, think: we are combating man with himself; nay, more, man with the whole world; nay, more, man with hell; God with man, against man, the world and hell. What a fight is that! It were worth an angel's while to come from the remotest fields of ether to behold such a conflict.

III. We come now to notice THE WEARY COMBATANT. He lifts up his voice, and weeping he cries, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" It is the cry of a panting warrior. He has fought so long that he has lost his breath, and he draws it in again; he takes breath by prayer. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this

death?" He will not give up the conflict; he knows he cannot, and he dare not. That thought does not enter into his mind; but the conflict is so sore, the battle so furious, that he is almost defeated; he sits down to refresh himself, and thus he sighs out his soul; like the panting hart, longing for the water brook, he says, "O wretched man that I am." Nay, it is more than that. It is the cry of one who is fainting. He has fought till all his strength is spent, and he falls back into the arms of his Redeemer with this fainting gasp, "O wretched man that I am!" His strength has failed him; he is sorely beaten in the battle, he feels that without the help of God he is so totally defeated that he commences his own wail of defeat, "O wretched man that I am." And then he asks this question, "Who shall deliver me?" And there comes a voice from the Law, "I cannot and I will not." There comes a voice from Conscience, "I can make thee see the battle, but I cannot help thee in it." And then there comes a cry from old Human Nature, and that says, "Ah! none can deliver thee, I shall yet destroy thee; thou shalt fall by the hand of thine enemy; the house of David shall be destroyed, and Saul shall live and reign for ever." And the poor fainting soldier cries again, "Who shall deliver me?" It seems a hopeless case, and I believe that sometimes the true Christian may think himself hopelessly given over to the power of sin.

The wretchedness of Paul, I think, lay in two things, which are enough to make any man wretched. Paul believed the doctrine of human responsibility, and yet he felt the doctrine of human inability. I have heard people say sometimes—"You tell the sinner that he cannot believe and repent without the help of the Holy Spirit, and yet you tell him that it is his duty to believe and repent. How are these two to be reconciled? We reply that they do not want any reconciliation; they are two truths of Holy Scripture, and we leave them to reconcile themselves, they are friends, and friends do not need any reconciliation. But what seems a difficulty as a matter of doctrine is clear as daylight as a matter of experience. I know it is my duty to be perfect, but I am conscious I cannot be. I know that every time I commit sin I am guilty, and yet I am quite certain that I must sin—that my nature is such that I cannot help it. I feel that I am unable to get rid of this body of sin and death, and yet I know I ought to get rid of it. These two things are enough to make any man miserable—to know that he is responsible for his sinful nature, and yet to know that he cannot get rid of it—to know that he ought to keep it down, and yet to feel he cannot—to know that it is his business to keep God's law perfectly, and walk in the commandments of the law blameless, and yet to know by sad experience that he is as unable to do so as he is to reverse the motion of the globe, or dash the sun from the center of the spheres. How will not these two things drive any man to desperation? The way in which some men avoid the dilemma, is by a denial of one of these truths. They say, "Well, it is true I am unable to cease from sin;" and then they deny their obligation to do so; they do not cry, "O wretched man that I am;" they live as they like, and say they cannot help it. On the other hand, there are some men who know they are responsible; but then they say, "Ay but I can cast off my sin," and these are tolerably happy. The Arminian and the hyper-Calvinist both of them get on very comfortably; but the man who believes these two doctrines, as taught in God's Word, that he is responsible for sin and yet that he is unable to get rid of it, I do not wonder that when he looks into himself he finds enough to make him sigh and cry, ever, to faintness and despair, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death."

And now says one, "Ah, I would be a Christian, if that is the way in which he faints—it be is always to be fighting with himself; and even until he despairs of victory." Stop a moment. Let us complete the picture. This man is fainting; but he will be restored by-and-bye. Think not that he is hopelessly defeated, he falls to rise, he faints but to be revived afresh. I know a magic, which can awaken his sleeping hopes and shoot a thrill along the freezing current of his blood. Let us sound the promise in his ear, see how soon he revives. Let us put the cordial to his lips; see how he starts up and plays the man again. "I have been almost defeated" says he, "almost driven to despair. Rejoice not over me, O mine enemy; though I fall, yet shall I rise again." And he lets fly against him once more, shouting, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." So on he goes again, more than a conqueror, through him that has loved him.

IV. This brings me to this last point, that THE CHRISTIAN IS TO BE A CONQUEROR AT LAST. Do you think that we are for ever to be the drudges and the slaves of sin? Am I for ever to be the galley-slave of my own nature, to tug for freedom and never to escape? Am I always to have this dead man chained to my back, and sniff the pestiferous exhalations of his putrid body? No, no, no, that which is within my heart, is like a caged eagle; and I know that soon the bars which confine me shall be broken; the door of my cage shall be opened, and I shall mount with my eye upon the sun of glory, soaring upward, true to the line, moving neither to the right hand nor to the left, flying till I reach my eyrie in the everlasting rocks of God's eternal love. No, we that love the Lord are not for ever to dwell in Mesech. The dust may besmear our robes and filth may be upon our brow, and beggared may be our garment, but we shall not be so for ever. The day is coming when we shall rise and shake ourselves from the dust, and put on our beautiful garments. It is true we are now like Israel in Canaan. Canaan is full of enemies; but the Canaanites shall and must be driven out. Amalek shall be slain, Agag shall be hewn in pieces; our enemies shall, every one of them, be dispersed, and the whole land from Dan to Beersheba shall be the Lords. Christians, rejoice! You are soon to be perfect, you are soon to be free from sin, totally free from it, without one wrong inclination, one evil desire. You are soon to be as pure as the angels in light; nay, more, with your Master's garments on you are to be "holy as the holy one." Can you think of that? Is not that the very sum of heaven, the rapture of bliss, the sonnet of the hill-tops of glory—that you are to be perfect? No temptation can reach you from eye, or ear, or hand; nor if the temptation could reach you would you be hurt by it; for there will be nothing in you that could in any way foster sin. It would be as when a spark falls upon an ocean, your holiness would quench it in a moment. Yes, washed in the blood of Jesus, afresh baptized with the Holy Spirit, you are soon to walk the golden streets, white-robed and white-hearted too, and perfect as your Maker, you are to stand before his throne, and sing his praises to eternity.

Now, soldiers of Christ, to arms again! Once more rush into the fight, you cannot be defeated; you must overcome. Though you faint a little, yet take courage; you shall conquer through the blood of the Lamb.

And now, turning aside for a minute, I shall conclude by making an observation or two to many now present. There are some here who say, "I am never disturbed in that fashion." Then I am sorry for you. I will tell you the reason of your false peace. You have not the grace of God in your hearts. If you had you would surely find this conflict within you. Do not despise the Christian because he is in the conflict, despise yourself because you are out of it. The reason why the devil lets you alone is, that he knows you are his. He does not need to trouble you much now; he will have time enough to give you your wages as the last. He troubles the Christian because he is afraid of losing him; he thinks that if he does not tease him here, he shall never have the chance to do it in eternity, so he will bite him, and bark at him while he may. That is why the Christian is vexed more than you are. As for you, you may well be without any pain, for dead men feel no blows. You may well be without prickings of conscience; for men that are corrupt are not likely to feel wounds, though you stab them from head to foot. I pity your condition, for the worm that dieth not is preparing to feed upon you; the eternal vulture of remorse shall soon wet his horrid beak with the blood of your soul. Tremble; for the fires of hell are

hot and unquenchable, and the place of perdition is hideous beyond a madman's dream. Oh that you would think of your last end. The Christian may have an evil present, but he has a glorious future; but your future is the blackness of darkness for ever. I adjure you by the living God, you that fear not Christ, consider your ways. You and I must give an account for this morning's service. You are warned, men; you are warned. Take heed to yourselves, that ye think not this life to be everything. *There* is a world to come; there is "after death the judgment." If you fear not the Lord, there is after judgment eternal wrath and everlasting misery.

And now a word to those who are seeking Christ. "Ah!" says one, "sir, I have sought Christ, but I feel worse than I ever was in my life. Before I had any thoughts about Christ I felt myself to be good, but now I feel myself to be evil." It is all right, my friend; I am glad to hear you say so. When surgeons heal a patient's wound, they always take care to cut away the proud flesh, because the cure can never be radical while the proud flesh remains. The Lord is getting rid of your self-confidence and self-righteousness. He is just now revealing to your soul the deadly cancer which is festering within you. You are on the sure road to healing, if you are on the way to wounding. God wounds before he heals; he strikes a man dead in his own esteem before he makes him alive. "Ah," cries one, "but can I hope that I ever shall be delivered?" Yes, my brother, if you now look to Christ. I care not what your sin nor what your despair of heart; if you will only turn your eye to him who bled upon the tree, there is not only hope for you, but there is a certainty of salvation. I myself, while thinking over this subject, felt a horror of great darkness rush over my spirit, as I thought what danger I was in lest I should be defeated, and I could not get a glimpse of light into my burdened spirit, until I turned my eye, and saw my Master hanging on the tree. I saw the blood still flowing; faith laid hold upon the sacrifice, and I said, "This cross is the instrument of Jesu's victory, and shall be the means of mine." I looked to his blood; I remembered that I was triumphant in that blood, and I rose from my meditations, humbled, but yet rejoicing; cast down, but not in despair; looking for the victory. Do likewise. "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners: believe that. You are an awakened, conscious and penitent sinner; therefore, he came to save you. Believe his word; trust him. Do nothing for your own salvation of yourself, but trust him to do it. Cast yourself simply and only on him; and, as this Bible is true, you shall not find the promise fail you—"He that seeketh findeth; to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

May God help you, by giving you this new life within! May he help you to look to Jesus, and though long and hard be the conflict, sweet shall be the victory.

#### MONERGISM BOOKS

Revival Year Sermons (Expanded Version) by C. H. Spurgeon, Copyright © 2015

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. By payment of the required fees, you have been granted the non-exclusive, non-transferable right to access and read the text of this e-book on-screen. No part of this text may be reproduced, transmitted, downloaded, decompiled, reverse engineered, or stored in or introduced into any information storage and retrieval system, in any form or by any means, whether electronic or mechanical, now known or hereinafter invented, without the express written permission of Monergism Books.

ePub and .mobi Editions September 2015 Requests for information should be addressed to: Monergism Books, PO Box 491, West Linn, Or 97068