

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

THE FATHER'S LOVE TO HIS DYING SON.

A Sermon

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DELIVERED BY

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"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again."—John x. 17.

OUR Lord Jesus here speaks of himself in his complex personality as God and Man, the Mediator between God and men. As such, he comes to us first at Bethlehem, "wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger." We behold him a babe, a child, a man, a worker, a sufferer, a witness for the truth, and a victim condemned to die upon the tree. We behold him dead in the grave, and risen again as the Interposer between God and man. In that capacity we shall think of him during this discourse. It is the voice of the Man Christ Jesus, the eternal Son of God, which says, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again." The Father feels boundless love to him who, for us men, and for our redemption, came down from heaven, and took upon himself our nature, and being found in fashion as a man, became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him," or, to use his own words, "Therefore doth my Father love me."

At this time we shall not keep strictly to the text, but shall introduce other truths related to it. The run of our discourse will be somewhat as follows:—First, *consider the Father's love to Jesus because of his death and resurrection*; secondly, *consider the Father's complacency in us on that account*. Then, thirdly, *consider our love to Jesus on this account*; and, fourthly, *consider our consequent fellowship with the Father*.

I. First, CONSIDER THE FATHER'S LOVE TO CHRIST JESUS BECAUSE OF HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION. This love was exceeding sweet to Jesus. Persecuted by men, and sometimes depressed in his own spirit, he comforts himself with this, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again." To be well-pleasing to the Father was everything with our Lord Jesus Christ. In heaviest toil, in darkest slander, in deepest perplexity, if

his Father only said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," Jesus was refreshed with meat which others knew not of. Beloved, let us be like our Lord Jesus in this—let the love of the Father to us be our comfort, our joy, our strength, our hope, our heaven. What more can men or angels have than the love of God? Let that love be shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost, and even the celestial city cannot afford me a more pure and substantial delight. O my God, thy love is precious beyond all estimate! "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee."

But to come back to our Lord. The Father took the greatest delight in his Son as laying down his life, first, *because of the delight of Jesus in his Father's plans*. Exceeding high are the thoughts of God in reference to his dealings with the sinful sons of men. Jehovah could with a word make creatures that should be perpetually innocent of sin; he could also make creatures which he foreknew would choose evil ways, and depart into rebellion; but a simple act of creation would not produce the character of elect man. A weapon may be struck from the anvil at a blow; but a Damascus blade needs special annealing, to produce the temper needed in a champion's sword. The chosen were to be a race who had eaten the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and so knew good and evil by actual practice; especially knew the result of evil in their own persons; for they would even die spiritually, but would be restored from death, and hell, and sin, and would be made haters of transgression, lovers of righteousness. Though left to their own free agency, yet when the work of grace was complete in them, they would be of a character to which sin would be impossible, since they would so deeply abhor it. These persons would be raised to the peerage of the divine kingdom, and bear the name and dignity of sons of God, being in very deed brothers in blood to him who is one with God. They were to be brothers of the Son of God by birth, and yet never to be the subjects of pride. It will be infinitely safe for the Lord to entrust us with all the privileges, and royalties, and liberties of his own household. For this end it was needful that the chosen from among men should undergo a marvellous process, much more complex and intricate than that which follows the fiat of power: we must in Jesus die, and be made alive again in him.

Beloved, it was needful, in order to the completion of the plan of grace, that God himself, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, should take manhood into eternal union with Godhead. The Son agreed to do this, and was born of the Virgin. But when he took manhood into union with himself, he took therewith all that belonged to manhood. Now, sin having attached itself to manhood, the Christ, in becoming man, took our sin upon himself, as it is written, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." He could not be actually guilty—God forbid the thought!—but he became legally amenable to the penalty due for our transgression. He was willing even to make this stoop of condescension. When the divine plan was proposed to him, this was his answer: "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God!" Do you wonder that the Father loved him, when he saw in him such

sympathetic union with himself? It was the Son's highest pleasure to become subservient to the sacred plan of glorious grace, in which, to ages to come, Jehovah would show forth the glory of his nature, the splendour of his eternal purpose. All the plan was acceptable to Jesus; and he was eager to carry it out at his own expense. Though he knew that the work involved his death upon the shameful tree, yet he felt so one with the Father that he cried, "I delight to do thy will; yea, thy law is within my heart."

When he actually appeared as a child he went up to the temple, and amazed his human parents with the words, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Such a Son as this, so intent upon the Father's plan, is it wonderful that we read, "Therefore doth my Father love me"?

But his Father also loved him for *the constancy and perseverance with which he pursued his life-work*, making it his meat and his drink to do the will of him that sent him. He underwent many rehearsals of his passion before it actually came. When he said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit:" he was passing through a baptism of soul-trouble. The shadow of his death fell on him often, ere he actually carried the cross. But his face was steadfastly set to go unto Jerusalem. The plaudits of the people never made him turn aside, and aspire to be a king; their denunciations never made him tremble, and seek shelter in obscurity. His was a spirit constant to its high intent. To the last he was firm as a rock. The manhood in him shuddered at death—it had not been true manhood if it had not; but, overcoming his natural horror, he took the cup, and drank it to its dregs, with "Not as I will, but as thou wilt." He did say, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me"; and he therein warranted us in saying that there was no other way of accomplishing the divine purpose, except by his death. Redemption could not be accomplished except by the Substitute bearing the penalty and dying, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God. The Lord Jesus from the beginning knew what it all meant, for he often told his disciples what would surely happen to him. He did not go to a suffering of which he was not aware. He was not, as one said, like a man who went in among machinery to set it right, and was caught in a great wheel which was too strong for him, and so was dragged to death. My brethren, our Lord knew all about the strength of that great wheel: he foretasted all the woe which the accomplishment of his Father's purpose would cost him; but he went forward, resolutely laying down his life, that he might take it again; therefore his Father loved him, as well he might. Victim by intent! Redeemer by resolve! Be thou glorified for ever! Let me put to you a little picture. No doubt our Queen has a strong affection for her sons. She loves them as her children; but if it should so befall, that one of the princes was found upon the sea-coast in the hour of storm, endeavouring to save men from a wreck; and if the prince, when others stood back, bravely ventured his life to rescue the perishing, would not his royal mother love him for his humanity? If he threw himself into the surf in his eagerness to save; if, foreseeing the consequences, he persevered in giving his own life that he might

bring poor perishing men to shore—would not his mother feel that she loved him anew for his heroism? I think so. Would not any of us love with renewed affection a dear son who had displayed a sacred self-denial for the good of men? Now turn your thought, reverently, to the great Father of spirits, who loves his Son as his Son, but yet loves him specially, because, out of pure, unselfish love, he laid down his life without debate. Marvel not that he said, “Therefore doth my Father love me.”

The chief source of this peculiar love was his actual death as *the perfecting of his obedience*. He had become a servant, and he served to the end. In all his life no single disobedience ever occurred: the great Father’s will was the rule absolute. Now comes in the last clause of the obedience: he must lay down his life, for so has God appointed; and even unto this last he fails not, but willingly yields up the ghost. Jesus went to the garden and the bloody sweat; to the high priest’s hall and the false accusing; to Pilate’s hall and the scourging; to Herod and the setting at nought; to the cross with its nails, its scorn, its darkness, its fever, its death-agony—he went to it all as a lamb goes willingly to the slaughter. On the way to death he was careful to obey: he would not die until every Scripture had been accomplished. His last words, “I thirst,” were spoken that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. He carefully observed the Father’s will in all things—in the detail as well as in the gross; and to prove that he obeyed even to the end, he said, “It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.” The Father is infinitely delighted with the perfect obedience of the Son. He is a holy God, and he sees in Jesus holiness perfected by patience, and therefore he calls him “Mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth.”

Remember, also, that the death of our Lord Jesus was not only the perfection of obedience, but *the vindication of God’s righteous law*. Some would have a God without law, that he might be love alone. This might suit anarchists, and the like; let them, like the heathen, have a god of their own making. Is it not well spoken by the Psalmist, “They that make them are like unto them”? A lawless man fashions for himself a lawless god. But he who knows that society cannot exist unless there be law, and unless law be sanctioned with reward and punishment, delights to see that this is, also, the mind of God. God has the deepest concern for order and law. There was no anger in God against men, as men; for while they abode in purity, he communed with them; but the thrice-holy God must hate evil in every form, and he must abhor it even in his most favoured creatures. If the Lord should forgive sinners without demanding a penalty, he would weaken the foundations of moral government. In his magisterial capacity the Judge of all the earth perceived that he could by no means spare the guilty. It would not have been an act of mercy to the race of men if God had winked at human sin in any case. It would have been in conflict with the fundamental law of the universe. Every rank of angels, and intelligent beings in all worlds, would have been affected—affected mischievously—had it been proved that Jehovah had in any case set aside his own perfect law, and allowed the breach of it to go unpunished. It is not a case of private offence against an

individual, it is rebellion against the highest authority. Sin must be punished, therefore; and Jesus came to do honour to the broken law. He was innocent; but he voluntarily submitted himself as the Representative for men, to suffer so that God could righteously forgive. The law must be magnified, and made honourable, and when the Law-maker himself died under the penalty of the law, then a sufficient vindication was given to the vital principle of moral government. The law became more illustrious in righteousness by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ than if every guilty son of Adam had been cast into hell because of his transgressions. His sufferings were unto the law of God a full justification for the free pardon of guilty men: and as the Father looks at the Son, and sees him lay down his life that he might take it again, he is well content in justice to forgive, and in righteousness to justify, the sinner. Truly said the Lord Jesus, "Therefore doth my Father love me."

Beloved, my heart delights in the thought that he who is a consuming fire against all sin, yet, when he looks on Christ, sees such a vindication given to his law, that he can justly sheathe his sword, and smile on those whom once he was bound to smite.

Once more, I think we may say that the Father loves the Son in his death and resurrection, because *he herein manifested his supreme love to men*. We may say of our Lord Jesus, "Yea, he loved the people. All his saints are in his hand." The love of Jesus to his chosen is no new thing; no idea that sprang up yesterday, to perish to-morrow. Long ages ago, when the mountains were not brought forth, and the ancient hills had not lifted their heads, the saints had a dwelling-place in the heart of God. He saw us in the glass of his foreknowledge, and loved us according to the predestination of his will. From of old the Father loved us so as to give us his Son, and the Son loved us so as to give his life a ransom for us; and because of this love to one chosen object there was a fresh display of love to each other. I said, in the opening of my discourse, that the Father always loved the Son as God, but in our text we have a love of him as Man and God in one wondrous personality, in which are blended the two natures of holy God and perfect Man. The Mediator loved us so that he died for us, a sacrifice unto God, presented by infinite love in our room, and place, and stead; and he says, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life."

Only this word more—the resurrection is mentioned as ensuring the result, and as therefore being another opportunity for love to break forth. Jesus says, "I lay down my life, that I might take it again." If that prince, of whom I spoke just now, had leaped from the side of a vessel to save a drowning man, it would have been a grand action; but if he sank never to rise again, his memory would have been enshrined in the grief of the Queen's heart; but he would not have been able to say, "Therefore does my mother love me." Jesus sinks into the dark wave, but he rises again. I see him make the great plunge into the abyss; but he cries, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." He lifts his head above the black billows, he strikes out for the shore, he lands in safety with those whom he has rescued. How the

Lord must delight in the risen Jesus, and in all that follows upon his victory over the grave! Now is death defeated by the death of the Well-beloved. Now is a new life ensured for dead sinners. Now is the clearance of all the once condemned published both to hell and heaven. Say who is he that has passed the iron gate, descended into the abodes of death, and then returned triumphant to the upper air. Who is this, ye angel-watchers, at the gates of glory? Who is this kingly Conqueror? "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." The Lord of hosts, the Lord mighty in battle, has laid down his life, and taken it again. He has done it as readily and effectually as once he laid down his garments, and anon girt them about him again, after that he had washed the feet of his disciples. Having redeemed and cleansed us by his blood, he puts on again the human body, which for a while, he had cast aside. Jesus is glorified in all whom he has saved by his death and rising; but his greatest glory is that the Father loves him. Sweet are the songs of the saved on earth, and blessed are the anthems of the redeemed in heaven; but to Jesus, the best reward which is possible lies in this word—"Therefore doth my Father love me." Before me, in this divine love, I see a great deep, which I may not attempt to explore: I have but brushed the surface as with a swallow's wing.

II. Secondly, CONSIDER THE FATHER'S COMPLACENCY IN US ON ACCOUNT OF HIS DELIGHT IN HIS SON. Beloved, the Father loves his Son so much that his love overflows its banks, and covers all of us whom the Lord Jesus has taken to be his own. The Father's love is like a great beacon-light kindled in honour of the Well-beloved, but shedding its radiance far and wide to enlighten those who sit in darkness, and in the valley of the shadow of death. Let us contemplate this fact so fraught with blessing to all believers.

First, as our Lord Jesus is Man, the Father places his work to man's account. The Lord had made man in his own image; he had created him a remarkable being of united matter and spirit; but man made a revolt from him, so that "it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth." When the Lord looks upon our race at this moment, he cannot take satisfaction in creatures who have made themselves so vile. Our nature is prone to evil, and it cannot but be abhorrent unto the thrice-holy Jehovah. Yet is not man blotted out from the list of beings, for there is one Man, true man, born of a woman, made under the law, a partaker of flesh and blood, who is in himself so well-pleasing to the Lord, that he makes up for all the displeasure felt towards the rest of our race. This Man was so obedient, so self-sacrificing, so pure, so devout, so gentle, so everything that is admirable, that when the Father considers him, the virtues of that one Man's life and death endear to him the race; so that for his sake he forgets the sins of men, and is well pleased to accept all who are united to him. "By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." The savour of this one Man's sacrifice has sweetened all the offerings of his fellows. It was a Man who, for the sake of the divine glory, sweat, as it were, great drops of blood, and died upon the cross; and therefore is the Lord well pleased, even with guilty

men for whom Jesus stood as the second Adam, and for whom he has won acceptance before the throne.

Next, remember that *the Lord Jesus has so glorified the Father, that his great achievements are made to redound to our benefit.* All the works of God's hands praise him; all the deeds of his providence extol him; but redemption brings him his highest honours. In the person of the Redeemer, Jehovah is best made known.

“God, in the person of his Son,
Has all his mightiest works outdone.”

When the Father hears dishonour put upon the divine name by blasphemers, or false teachers; when he sees the drunkenness and lust, the pride and cruelty of men; he is grieved at his heart: but on the other hand, all the dishonour is covered and put away by the glory of the character and work of the Man, Christ Jesus. I cannot utter my own thoughts on this point; much less can I think adequately upon such a theme. It is as if the millions of the redeemed were so many evil lamps all pouring forth darkness, and death-shade, and filling the universe with blackness; and then, on the other side, this one blessed lamp of God stood alone, pouring forth light; and the sacred light was so powerful that it banished all the darkness of the myriad night-makers, and created eternal and unclouded day. I will change the figure, and say that all of us were as the Dead Sea, full of foul waters, reeking with deadly odours, and the life of Jesus, poured out for us, has turned that lake of death into a pure and sparkling sea of life. The purity of Jesus suffices to purify all the multitudes of the human race who put their trust in him. God loves his Son because he getteth a glory from him which cancels the dishonour wrought by all the sins of men.

Note, again, that *as God has great complacency in his Son, it runs over to us, because we are one with Jesus.* I say not this of you all; for some of you have nothing to do with Christ at this present; but of as many as believe in Jesus, I may say, “We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.” The Father's love to his Son extends to all the members of his Son's mystical body. What though we should be only comparable to the soles of our Lord's feet, and are still in the mire, yet, if we are in the body, we share with the Head in all its glories. You know the old proverb, “Love me, love my dog”; and certainly the Lord Jesus Christ might well say, “Love me, love the least of my people.” The Father, like David, loves every lame Mephibosheth of the household, for the sake of his Jonathan. Brethren, as many of us as are joined unto the Lord by a living faith are one with Jesus, by eternal union one. When he died, we died; when he rose, we rose; we were condemned and justified in him; and now that the Father loves him, we also are beloved in him. What a blessed thing it is that the Father loves One who has such an intimate relation to us as to be our Representative and Head! Meditate upon this overflow of the Father's love to the elect whom he has given to his Son. He so loved the Chief Beloved, that, for his sake, we are accepted, beloved, perfected, and at last glorified. This is true of myriads of men; myriads! You speak of great congregations; but all that ever assemble

here are a mere handful. Look at the countless congregation redeemed by our Lord's death: "a multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues." Remember the multitudes who have died in infancy, redeemed by precious blood from all the consequences of the fall. Consider the multitudes of converts in the latter days, when the glory of the Lord shall be revealed. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous:" how many, human arithmetic fails to tell.

Now, call to mind the number and the variety of sins which have been committed by the redeemed company. All those sins are washed away by the blood of Christ. The love of God in Christ Jesus sees no iniquity in Jacob, for the atonement has put away all manner of offences. The love of the Father to Jesus has made us comely in his comeliness, despite the multitude of deformities which were found in us. O sea of love, in which so vast a host of sins was swallowed up! How greatly doth the Father love the Son when, for his dear sake, he covers all the myriad causes of displeasure, and makes us precious in his sight!

Then remember that, while Jesus has redeemed so many, and cleansed them from so many sins, he has done more; for by the Father's love to him they are made partakers of very many most costly blessings. Could you calculate the wealth of benefits wherewith the Lord daily loadeth his redeemed? Covenant mercies, who shall weigh them? Yet they all come through the Father's love of Jesus.

Above all, reflect that we have eternal life through our Lord's death. God so loves Jesus that, because of his temporary death, he has given endless life to all the redeemed. Jesus died once, and therefore we live for ever. Because the Father's love to him can never die, and he ever lives, we shall live also. His passing sorrow brings us eternal glory. Because of Christ's death, millions and millions of years hence we shall still be the children of God, and shall be with Jesus where he is, beholding the glory which the Father has given him. Admire the measureless merit of the Lord Jesus! Meditate with reverence upon the overflowing torrents of the Father's love to his Son! Because of his death he is unspeakably beloved, and we are beloved in him. Here it were well to pause. No tongue can ever tell out this matchless story. We are "accepted in the Beloved." How greatly beloved must he have been to cover such base things as we are with divine acceptance! Think it over! Think it over! In heaven you will need no fuller or loftier subject of meditation than the love of the Father to the Only-begotten, enwrapping in its folds the whole family of love. "Therefore doth my Father love me." Oh, how he must love Jesus, since for his sake he loves multitudes of sinners, and loves them all the way from the door of hell to the gate of heaven! By the bliss eternal, by the rivers of pleasure that are at God's right hand, by the glory without bounds, we may form some idea of the love of the Father to him who laid down his life that he might take it again.

III. In the third place, CONSIDER OUR LOVE TO THE LORD JESUS ON THIS ACCOUNT. Beloved, *his death is the great fact for which we*

love our Lord Jesus. The individual love of each believer wells up when he can say, "He loved me, and gave himself for me." This, also, is the crowning evidence of God's love to believers in general, for "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish." His laying down his life is the central display of his love, and the chief cause of our affection. We love him for the holiness of his character, for the tenderness of his heart, for the excellence of his teaching; and, indeed, we love him for everything about his blessed person and work; but, if the secret must be told, our hearts were chiefly won when our Beloved put on the crimson vesture, and stood before us decked with wounds, and pale in death. Then did we sing of him—

"White and ruddy is my Beloved."

Oh, the beauties of our King when he stands beneath the purple canopy of sacrifice! Then is our heart won and held in joyful captivity when we can say, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." That text often thrills my heart wherein we read, "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." Calvary reveals the great fountain of our love. The cross is the pole whereon is uplifted the banner of love, both his and ours. We love him because he first loved us, and Golgotha is the window through which his love looketh.

The connection of our text enhances our Lord's love. *It stands connected with the Good Shepherd.* It is he that lays down his life; he giveth it for the sheep. Will a man die for sheep? Yes, that may be. But could the Son of God die for such base creatures as we are? We were, of ourselves, by no means so great a treasure to Christ as a sheep is to a man; and yet he thought far more of us than shepherds do of their flocks. We were by nature only as so many foxes, or serpents, or creeping things; but yet the Lord Christ, having set his love upon us, would not rest till he had laid down his life for us. Alas! we were as ungrateful as we were unworthy. We even opposed the efforts of our Saviour. We acted more like goats than sheep, for we butted with our horns against our Shepherd. We were stray sheep, and did not return at his call: we did not follow him, but we went farther and farther away. We were lame as to returning; but "when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." We are sheep, too, that still go astray very grievously. Woe is me that this should be true of me! After having been brought back on his shoulders, after having been pastured by his care, yet still we go astray! We are sheep that were lost; we are sheep that would lose themselves again, if they could; sheep that make a very poor return to him that shepherds us. "Is this thy kindness to thy Friend?" is a question which might often awake sad memories in our hearts. Beloved, let us love our Lord more! Surely, we cannot help it, as we perceive our own undesert, and the greatness of his love whereby he laid down his life for us.

Bethink you well that the *Lord laid down his life of his own free will, and under no constraint whatever.* If you or I were to die for other people, we should be only doing a little sooner what we shall be obliged to do one day; for death is the debt of nature which, sooner

or later, all must pay. If a man yields his life for another, he only anticipates by a short season the time when he must lose it. But Jesus needed not to die at all, so far as he himself was concerned. "Messiah was cut off, but not for himself." What love is this! He wills to die. He saith of his life, "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." Herein is love indeed, free love, deliberate, and resolute. I see the bullocks going to the altar of the temple; poor, dumb, driven cattle, they know not that they are to be a sacrifice: they cannot throw into their deaths the merit of devout intent. Behold our Lord going to the slaughter as a sheep for patience, but not like a sheep for knowledge and purpose: he knew what that slaughter meant, and why he must endure it. "Lama sabachthani!" was in its meaning known to him before he uttered the cry. He foresaw the death of the cross: he was made a curse for us, knowing what the curse meant, and calmly resolving to bear it. For this deliberation of love he has our inexpressible gratitude and love. Do we not each one love him?

We should love him, for Jesus *laid down his life for each one of his people*. This love in general is a delightful theme; but how tender and touching it becomes when each one sees his own participation in it, and cries, "He loved me, and gave himself for me"! Love delights in personal pronouns, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." Love is most of all excited and called forth by a personal sense of gracious gifts received. It is a heart-moving song when we can sing, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given." Remember that, to save one single soul, our Lord would have had to die, and yet to save all men in the world he could have done no more; and if there had been as many worlds of sinners as there are grains of sand upon the sea-shore, his one death would have been a sufficient vindication of the law on account of them all. We can imagine no limit to the value of Christ's atoning sacrifice; its object could not have been attained by anything less than the laying down of his life. He died for his flock, and for each one of his sheep in particular; so that we may each one say to-day, "He loved me, and gave himself for me"; and each one know that for himself, with special intent, the Lord Jesus bore the agony and bloody sweat, the cross and passion. Therefore we must, each one of us, love him to our heart's utmost capacity.

Indulge yourself with a sight of his love as it hangs bleeding on the tree. It may be, poor soul! this morning, thou art bowed down with trouble because of sin, and yet thou art a child of God: see, then, how Jesus loves! Do what thou didst at first, when, in thy soul's dark hour, thou didst look to Jesus. Look to his cross. Look wholly to the slain Jesus.

"His blood hath made peace,
And brought us release;
And now the old bondage for ever must cease.
Who trust in his might
He leads into light;
Nor can any enemy break on his right."

Blessed, for ever blessed, be thy dear name, O Jesus! There is none like it in heaven, nor in the heaven of heavens. How shall we praise him? Our tears of gratitude come to our rescue; if we cannot speak his praises, we will weep them.

IV. I shall conclude by saying, CONSIDER WHAT A FELLOWSHIP IS OPENED UP BETWEEN THE SAVED ONES AND THE FATHER. The Father loveth the Son, and we love him also, after our measure. Brethren, we are agreed with the great God with whom once we were at enmity. Since we have seen our Lord lay down his life for us, we love him; how can we do otherwise? For the same reason the Father loves him. The very strongest love is confirmed when a common object of affection becomes a rivet between the two parties. Two hearts may be one in married love; but their union is intensified when a baby's cry is heard in the house. Seldom are they parted by divorce who have blended their love in watching over a company of little children.

Beloved, when the Father looks on Jesus, he sees One who is altogether lovely to him, and when we look on Jesus in our poor, half-blinded manner, we also are charmed by his beauties. No enmity can remain between a soul and God when love to Jesus becomes the master-passion of the life. By his cross, our Lord has slain the enmity. His death has cast a bond around the divided ones, and has reconciled us to God. The thrice-glorious Jehovah agrees with the blood-washed sinner in glorifying his Son. In the blood of Jesus we are made clean, and therefore we love him: the Father sees Jesus pouring out his heart's blood to make us clean, and he loves him on that account: thus the two who were apart are agreed in one. Henceforth we desire to honour Christ, and we are grieved if he is not magnified. Whenever you hear a sermon which praises the Lord Jesus, do not your hearts dance like David before the ark? But if your Lord is dishonoured, do you not feel indignant? Could you not bear anything sooner than hear your Lord defamed? In the congregation when his atonement has been decried, have you not found yourself on the move? And if you did not move, but kept your seat, you bit your lip? You love him, and you cannot permit him to be thrust into a second place. If it were in your power, you would set him upon a glorious high throne, and make every knee bow before him. That is what the Father is doing, and will yet do: thus the Father and you are one towards Jesus.

You have also an intense desire to become like your Lord; have you not? Ever since he bought you with his blood, and you knew it, you have longed to be conformed to his image. This, also, is the Father's design, for he desires his Well-beloved to be the "firstborn among many brethren." He loves our Lord Jesus so much that he has predestinated us to be conformed to his image. There cannot be another divine Son, but the Father would have many human sons who shall be like the firstborn. If you have ever stood in the middle of a hall of mirrors, you have seen yourself repeated on all sides; even so shall heaven be full of lovely reflections of him who is altogether lovely; for every blood-washed one shall wear the likeness of the Lord from heaven. The Father can never have too much of his dear Son. He would have him live in ten thousand times ten thousand

beloved ones ; and as this, also, would be your highest joy, you have in this desire a wonderful bond of union between you and the Father.

I think I hear you say, " Now I perceive that the Father himself loved men, for he gave the Son he loved so well to die for them, and loved him for dying on their behalf." This is an instructive discovery. When Abraham called Isaac to go up to Mount Moriah to be offered up as a sacrifice, Isaac could have resisted his father's will ; but he did not. They went both of them together to the place of the offering. Abraham loved Isaac when he bound him ; yes, he loved him all the more for consenting to be bound. Not only did Abraham the father offer his son, but Isaac the son voluntarily surrendered himself ; and his father deeply loved him for that self-surrender. Jesus, the greater Isaac, did actually give up his life in our stead, to achieve his Father's purpose, vindicate his Father's law, and save the people whom his Father had given him. Therefore doth the Father love him, and we love him, and we love the Father who freely delivered him up for us all. Thus love completes its circle, and God and man are made one by Christ's work, even as they are one in his person.

If anyone here has, by believing contemplation, found his way through the process described in my sermon, he is no longer an enemy to God, nor even a stranger to the Most High ; for the death of Jesus has drawn him nigh. If you have followed me in this track, not merely with an attentive ear, but with a willing heart, you are reconciled to God by the death of his Son. You love Jesus because he died, and God loves him for the same reason ; you two have linked hands over the great sacrifice. What a joy is this ! I feel as if I could find no better conclusion than the glowing verse of William Williams :—

" To thee, my God, my Saviour,
Praise be for ever new ;
Let people come to praise thee
In numbers like the dew ;
Oh, that in every meadow
The grass were harps of gold,
To sing to him for coming
To ransom hosts untold ! "

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—John x.

HYMNS FROM " OUR OWN HYMN BOOK "—373, 379, 232.

LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON.

BELOVED FRIENDS,—Kind Providence has brought me safely here ; and I am resting, and endeavouring to gather new stores. Very greatly am I cheered, by news from the Tabernacle, of the very remarkable blessing resting upon the special services under Messrs. Fullerton and Smith. The Lord be praised for using these beloved workers ! May the members of the church see to it, that the good seed is watered !

Having enjoyed the friendship of many of my readers for more than thirty years, I feel bound to send them my affectionate greetings, and to thank them for their long-continued attention to my ministry. I would beg an interest in their daily prayers, for myself and for the work. May the Lord our God arise speedily, for the vindication of his own truth !

Yours in Christ Jesus,

C. H. SPURGEON.