

The New Park Street Pulpit.

ADOPTION.

A Sermon

DELIVERED AT EXETER HALL, STRAND, BY THE

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"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will."—Ephesians i. 5.

It is at once a doctrine of Scripture and of common sense, that whatever God does in time he predestined to do in eternity. Some men find fault with divine predestination, and challenge the *justice* of eternal decrees. Now, if they will please to remember that predestination is the counterfoil of history, as an architectural plan, the carrying out of which we read in the facts that happen, they may perhaps obtain a slight clue to the unreasonableness of their hostility. I never heard any one among professors wantonly and wilfully find fault with God's dealings, yet I have heard some who would even dare to call in question the equity of his counsels. If the thing itself be right, it must be right that God intended to do the thing; if you find no fault with facts, as you see them in providence, you have no ground to complain of decrees, as you find them in predestination, for the decrees and the facts are just the counterparts one of the other. Have you any reason to find fault with God, that he has been pleased to save you, and save me? Then why should you find fault because Scripture says he pre-determined that he would save us? I cannot see, if the fact itself is agreeable, why the decree should be objectionable. I can see no reason why you should find fault with God's foreordination, if you do not find fault with what does actually happen as the effect of it. Let a man but agree to acknowledge an act of providence, and I want to know how he can, except he runs in the very teeth of providence, find any fault with the predestination or intention that God made concerning that providence. Will you blame me for preaching this morning? Suppose you answer, No. Then can you blame me that I formed a resolution last night that I would preach? Will you blame me for preaching on this particular subject? Do, if you please, then, and find me guilty for intending to do so; but if you say I am perfectly right in selecting such a subject, how can you say I was not perfectly right in intending to preach upon it? Assuredly you cannot find fault with God's predestination, if you do not find fault with the effects that immediately spring from it. Now, we are taught in Scripture, I affirm again, that all things that God choseth to do in time were most certainly intended by him to be done in eternity, and he predestined such things should be done. If I am called, I believe God intended before all worlds that I should be called; if in his mercy he has regenerated me, I believe that from all eternity he intended to regenerate me; and if in his loving-kindness he shall at last perfect me and carry me to heaven, I believe it always was his intention to do so. If you cannot find fault with the thing itself that God does, in the name of reason, common sense, and Scripture, how dare you find fault with God's intention to do it?

But there are one or two acts of God which, while they certainly are decreed as much as other things, yet they bear such a special relation to God's predestination that it is rather difficult to say whether they were done in eternity or whether they were done in time. *Election* is one of those things which were done absolutely in eternity; all who were elect, were elect as much in eternity as they are in time. But you may say, Does the like affirmation apply to *adoption* or *justification*? My late eminent and now glorified predecessor, Dr. Gill, diligently studying these doctrines, said that adoption was the act of God in eternity, and that as all believers were elect in eternity, so beyond a doubt they were adopted in eternity.

He went further than that to include the doctrine of justification, and he said that inasmuch as Jesus Christ was before all worlds justified by his Father, and accepted by him as our representative, therefore all the elect must have been justified in Christ from before all worlds. Now, I believe there is a great deal of truth in what he said, though there was a considerable outcry raised against him at the time he first uttered it. However, that being a high and mysterious point, we would have you accept the doctrine that all those who are saved at last were elect in eternity when the means as well the end were determined. With regard to adoption, I believe we were predestined thereunto in eternity; but I do think there are some points with regard to adoption which will not allow me to consider the act of adoption to have been completed in eternity. For instance, the positive translation of my soul from a state of nature into a state of grace is a part of adoption, or at least it is an effect of it, and so close an effect that it really seems to be a part of adoption itself. I believe that this was designed, and in fact that it was virtually carried out in God's everlasting covenant; but I think that it was not actually then brought to pass in all its fulness. So with regard to justification, I must hold, that in the moment when Jesus Christ paid my debts, my debts were cancelled—in the hour when he worked out for me a perfect righteousness it was imputed to me, and therefore I may as a believer say I was complete in Christ before I was born, accepted in Jesus, even as Levi was blessed in the loins of Abraham by Melchisedec; but I know likewise that justification is described in the Scriptures as passing upon me at the time I believe. "Being justified by faith," I am told, "I have peace with God, through Jesus Christ." I think, therefore, that adoption and justification, while they have a very great alliance with eternity, and were virtually done then, yet have both of them such a near relation to us in time, and such a bearing upon our own personal standing and character, that they have also a part and parcel of themselves actually carried out and performed in time in the heart of every believer. I may be wrong in this exposition; it requires much more time to study this subject than I have been able yet to give to it, seeing that my years are not yet many; I shall no doubt by degrees come to the knowledge more fully of such high and mysterious points of gospel doctrine. But nevertheless, while I find the majority of sound divines holding that the works of justification and adoption are done in our lives, I see, on the other hand, in Scripture, much to lead me to believe that both of them were done in eternity; and I think the fairest view of the case is, that while they were virtually done in eternity, yet both adoption and justification are actually passed upon us, in our proper persons, consciences, and experiences, in time,—so that both the Westminster confession and the idea of Dr. Gill can be proved to be Scriptural, and we may hold them both without any prejudice the one to the other.

Well now, beloved, leaving then the predestination, let us come to as full a consideration as the hour shall enable us to give of the doctrine of "the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will."

First, then, *adoption—the grace of God displayed in it*; secondly, *adoption—the privileges which it brings*; thirdly, *adoption—the duties which it necessarily places upon every adopted child*.

I. First, ADOPTION—THE GRACE OF IT.

Adoption is that act of God, whereby men who were by nature the children of wrath, even as others, and were of the lost and ruined family of Adam, are from no reason in themselves, but entirely of the pure grace of God, translated out of the evil and black family of Satan, and brought actually and virtually into the family of God; so that they take his name, share the privileges of sons, and they are to all intents and purposes the actual offspring and children of God.

This is an act of pure grace. No man can ever have a right in himself to become adopted. If I had, then I should receive the inheritance in my own right—but inasmuch as I have no right whatever to be a child of God, and can by no possibility claim so high a privilege in and of myself, adoption is the pure gratuitous effect of divine grace, and of that alone. I could suppose that justification might be by works under the old covenant; but I could not suppose adoption to be under the old covenant at all. I could imagine a man keeping the law perfectly, and being justified by it, if Adam had not fallen; but even upon such a supposition, Adam himself would have had no right to adoption—he would still have been only a servant, and not a son. Above all contradiction and controversy, that great and glorious act whereby God makes us of his family, and unites us to Jesus Christ as

our covenant head, that so we may be his children, is an act of pure grace. It would have been an act of sovereign grace, if God had adopted some one out of the best of families; but in this case he has adopted one who was a child of a rebel. We are by nature the children of one who was attainted for high treason; we are all the heirs, and are born into the world the natural heirs of one who sinned against his Maker, who was a rebel against his Lord. Yet mark this—withstanding the evil of our parentage, born of a thief, who stole the fruit from his master's garden—born of a proud traitor, who dared to rebel against his God,—withstanding all—God has put us into the family. We can well conceive, that when God considered our vile original he might have said within himself, "How can I put thee among the children!" With what gratitude should we remember that, though we were of the very lowest original, grace has put us into the number of the Saviour's family. Let us give all thanks to the free grace which overlooked the hole of the pit whence we were digged, and which passed over the quarry whence we were hewn, and put us among the chosen people of the living God. If a king should adopt any into his family, it would likely be the son of one of his lords—at any rate, some child of respectable parentage; he would scarce take the son of some common felon, or some gipsy child, to adopt him into his family; but God, in this case, has taken the very worst to be his children. The saints of God all confess that they are the last persons they should ever have dreamed he would have chosen. They say of themselves—

"What was there in us that could merit esteem,
Or give the Creator delight?
Twas 'Even so, Father,' we ever must sing,
'Because it seemed good in thy sight.'"

Again, let us think not only of our original lineage, but of our personal character. He who knows himself, will never think that he had much to recommend him to God. In other cases of adoption there usually is some recommendation. A man, when he adopts a child, sometimes is moved thereto by its extraordinary beauty, or at other times by its intelligent manners and winning disposition. But, beloved, when God passed by the field in which we were lying, he saw no tears in our eyes till he put them there himself; he saw no contrition in us until he had given us repentance; and there was no beauty in us that could induce him to adopt us—on the contrary, we were everything that was repulsive; and if he had said, when he passed by, "Thou art cursed, be lost for ever," it would have been nothing but what we might have expected from a God who had been so long provoked, and whose majesty had been so terribly insulted. But no; he found a rebellious child, a filthy, frightful, ugly child; he took it to his bosom, and said, "Black though thou art, thou art comely in my eyes through my son Jesus; unworthy though thou art, yet I cover thee with his robe, and in thy brother's garments I accept thee;" and taking us, all unholy and unclean, just as we were, he took us to be his—his children, his for ever. I was passing lately by the seat of a nobleman, and some one in the railway carriage observed, that he had no children, and he would give any price in the world if he could find some one who would renounce all claim to any son he might have, and the child was never to speak to his parents any more, nor to be acknowledged, and this lord would adopt him as his son, and leave him the whole of his estates, but that he had found great difficulty in procuring any parents who would forswear their relationship, and entirely give up their child. Whether this was correct or not, I cannot tell; but certainly this was not the case with God. His only-begotten and well-beloved son was quite enough for him; and if he had needed a family, there were the angels, and his own Omnipotence was adequate enough to have created a race of beings far superior to us; he stood in no need whatever of any to be his darlings. It was then, an act of simple, pure, gratuitous grace, and of nothing else, because he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and because he delights to show the marvellous character of his condescension. Did you ever think what a high honour it is to be called a son of God. Suppose a judge of the land should have before him some traitor who was about to be condemned to die; suppose that equity and law demanded that the wretch should shed his blood by some terrible punishment; but suppose it were possible for the judge to step from his throne, and to say, "Rebel thou art, but I have found out a way whereby I can forgive thy rebellions: man! thou art pardoned!" There is a flush of joy upon his cheek. "Man! thou art

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made rich: see, there is wealth!" Another smile passes over the countenance. "Man! thou art made so strong that thou shalt be able to resist all thine enemies." He rejoices again. "Man!" saith the judge at last, "thou art made a prince; thou art adopted into the royal family, and thou shalt one day wear a crown. Thou art now as much the son of God as thou art the son of thine own father." You can conceive the poor creature fainting with joy at such a thought; that he whose neck was just ready for the halter should have his head now ready for a crown—that he who expected to be clothed in the felon's garb, and taken away to death, is now to be exalted and clothed in robes of honour. So, Christian, think what thou didst deserve,—robes of shame and infamy,—but thou art to have those of glory. Art thou in God's family now? Well said the poet—

"It doth not yet appear,
How great we must be made."

We do not know the greatness of adoption yet. Yea, I believe that even in eternity we shall scarce be able to measure the infinite depth of the love of God in that one blessing of "adoption by Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." Still, methinks there is some one here who says, "I believe, sir, that men are adopted because God foresees that they will be holy, righteous, and faithful, and therefore, doubtless, God adopted them on the foresight of that." That is an objection I often have to reply to. Suppose, my friends, you and I should take a journey into the country one day, and should meet with a person, and should say to him, "Sir, can you tell me why the sails of yonder windmill go round?" He would of course reply, "It is the wind." But, suppose you were to ask him, "What makes the wind?" and he were to reply, "the sails of the windmill," would you not just think that he was an idiot? In the first place, he told you that the wind caused the revolution of the sails, and then, afterwards, he tells you that the sails make the wind—that an effect can be the parent of that which is its own cause! Now, any man you like to ask, will say, that faith is the gift of God—that good works are God's workmanship. Well, then, what is the cause of good works in a Christian? "Why, grace," they say. Then, how can good works be the cause of grace? By all that is rational, where are your heads? It is too foolish a supposition for any man to reply to without making you laugh, and that I do not choose to do; and therefore, I leave it. I say again, beloved, if the fruits upon a Christian be caused by the root, how can the fruit, in any degree, be the cause of the root? If the good works of any man be given him of grace, how can they, by any pretence whatever, be argued as the reason why God gives him grace? The fact is, we are by nature utterly lost and ruined, and there is not a saint in heaven that would not have been damned, and that did not deserve to be damned in the common doom of sinners. The reason why God hath made a distinction is a secret to himself; he had a right to make that distinction if he pleased, and he has done it. He hath chosen some unto eternal life, to the praise of his glorious grace; he hath left others to be punished for their sins, to the praise of his glorious justice; and in one as in the other, he has acted quite rightly, for he has a right to do as he wills with his own creatures. Seeing they all deserved to be punished, he has a right to punish them all. So too, as he hath reconciled justice with mercy or mated it with judgment, he has a right to forgive and pardon some, and to leave the others to be unwashed, unforgiven, and unsaved—wilfully to follow the error of their ways, to reject Christ, despise his gospel, and ruin their own souls. He that does not agree with that, agreeth not with Scripture. I have not to prove it—I have only to preach it; he that quarrelleth with that, quarrelleth with God—let him fight his quarrel out himself.

II. The second thing is, THE PRIVILEGES WHICH COME TO US THROUGH ADOPTION.

For the convenience of my young people—members of the church—I shall, just for a moment, give you a list of the privileges of adoption, as they are to be found in our old *Confession of Faith*,* which most of you have, and which I am sure most of you will study at home this afternoon, if you have opportunity, looking out all the passages. It is the Twelfth Article, upon adoption, where we read—"All those that are justified, God vouchsafed, in and for the sake of his only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption, by which they are

* The Baptist Confession of Faith.—Spurgeon's Edition,—price Fourpence. May be had of Passmore and Alabaster.

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taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of children of God, have his name put upon them, receive the spirit of adoption, have access to the throne of grace with boldness, are enabled to cry Abba, Father, are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by him as a Father, yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption, and inherit the promises as heirs of everlasting salvation."

I shall commence, then, with the privileges of adoption. And there is one privilege not mentioned in the Confession, which ought to be there. It is this:—When a man is adopted into a family, and comes thereby under the regime of his new father, he has nothing whatever to do with the old family he has left behind, and he is released from subjection to those whom he has left. And so, the moment I am taken out of the family of Satan, the Prince of this world has nothing to do with me as my father, and he is no more my father; I am not a son of Satan, I am not a child of wrath. The moment I am taken out of the legal family, I have nothing whatever to do with Hagar. If Hagar comes to meddle with me, I tell her, "Sarah is my mother, Abraham is my father, and, Hagar, you are my servant, and I am not yours. You are a bondwoman, and I shall not be your bondsman, for you are mine." When the law comes to a Christian with all its terrible threats and horrible denunciations, the Christian says, "Law! why dost thou threaten me? I have nothing to do with thee; I follow thee as my rule, but I will not have thee to be my ruler; I take thee to be my pattern and mould, because I cannot find a better code of morality and of life, but I am not under thee as my condemning curse. Sit in thy judgment-seat, O law, and condemn me; I smile on thee, for thou art not my judge, I am not under thy jurisdiction; thou hast no right to condemn me." "If," as the old divines say, "the king of Spain were to condemn an inhabitant of Scotland, what would he say? He would say, 'Very well, condemn me, if you like, but I am not under thy jurisdiction.'" So, when the law condemns a saint, the saint says, "If my father condemns me, and chastens me, I bow to him with filial submission, for I have offended him; but, O law, I am not under thee any longer, I am delivered from thee, I will not hear thy sentence, nor care about thy thunders. All thou canst do against me, go and do it upon Christ; or, rather, thou hast done it. If thou demandest punishment for my sin, look, there stands my substitute; thou art not to seek it at my hands. Thou chargest me with guilt; it is true, I am guilty, but it is equally true, my guilt is put upon the scapegoat's head. I tell thee, I am not of thy family; I am not to be chastened by thee; I will not have a legal chastisement, a legal punishment. I am under the gospel dispensation now; I am not under thee. I am a child of God, not thy servant. We have a commandment to obey the Father that we now have; but as to the family with which we were connected, we have nothing to do with it any longer. That is no small privilege; oh that we could rightly understand it, and appreciate it, and walk in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free!

But now, as the *Confession* hath it, one of the great blessings which God gives us is, that we have his name put upon us. He will give unto us a new name, as is the promise in the book of the Revelation. We are to be called after the name of God. Oh! remember, brothers, we are men, but we are God's men now; we are no longer mere mortals; we are so in ourselves, but by divine grace we are chosen immortals—God's sons, taken to himself. Remember, Christian, thou hast the name of God upon thee.

Mark another thing. We have the spirit of children, as well as the name of children. Now, if one man adopts another child into his family, he cannot give it his own nature, as his own child would have had; and if that child that he shall adopt should have been a fool, it may still remain so; he cannot make it a child worthy of him. But our heavenly Father, when he comes to carry out adoption, gives us not only the name of children, but the nature of children too. He gives us a nature like his well-beloved Son Jesus Christ. We had once a nature like our father Adam after he had sinned; he takes that away, and gives us a nature like himself as it were "in the image of God;" he overcomes the old nature, and he puts in us the nature of children. "He sends forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, whereby we cry, Abba, Father;" and he gives us the nature and the character of children, so that we are as much by grace partakers of the spirit of children of God, as we should have been if we had been his legitimately born children, and had not been adopted into his family. Brethren, adoption secures to us regeneration, and regeneration secures to us the nature of children, whereby we are not only made children, but are made partakers of the grace of God, so

that we are in ourselves made unto God by our new nature as living children, actually and really like himself.

The next blessing is, that being adopted we have access to the throne. When we come to God's throne, one thing we ought always to plead is our adoption. The angel that keeps the mercy seat might stop us on the road with saying, "What is thy claim to come here? Dost thou come as a subject, or a servant? If thou dost, thou hast no right to come; but if thou comest as a son, come, and welcome." Canst thou say thou art a son in thy prayers, Christian? Then never be afraid to pray; so long as thou knowest thy sonship thou wilt be sure to get all thou wantest, for thou canst say, "Father, I ask not as a servant; if I were a servant I should expect thy wages, and knowing that as a servant I have been rebellious, I should expect wages of eternal wrath. But I am thy son. Though as a servant I have often violated thy rules and may expect thy rod, yet, O Father, sinner though I be in and of myself, I am thy son by adoption and grace. Spurn me not away; put me not from thy knee; I am thy own child; I plead it; 'the Spirit beareth witness with my Spirit that I am born of God.' Father, wilt thou deny thy son?" What! when he pleads for his elder brother's sake, by whom he is made God's child, being made an heir with Christ of all things? Wilt thou drive away thy son? No, beloved, he will not; he will turn again, he will hear our prayer, he will have mercy upon us. If we are his children, we may have access with boldness to the grace wherein we stand, and access with confidence unto the throne of the heavenly grace.

Another blessing is, that we are pitied by God. Think of that, children, in all your sufferings and sorrows. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." Dost thou lie sick? The Lord standeth by thy bedside, pitying thee. Art thou tempted of Satan? Christ is looking down upon thee, feeling in his heart thy sighs and thy groans. Hast thou come here this morning with a heavy heart, a desponding spirit? Remember, the loving heart of God sympathises with thee. In his measure Christ feels afresh what every member bears. He pities thee, and that pity of God is one of the comforts that flow into thine heart by thine adoption.

In the next place, he protects thee. Just as a hen protects her brood under her feathers from birds of prey that seek their life, so the Lord makes his own loving arms encircle his children. No father will allow his son to die, without making some attempt to resist the adversary who would slay him; and God will never allow his children to perish while his omnipotence is able to guard them. If once that everlasting arm can be palsied, if once that everlasting hand can become less than Almighty, then thou mayest die; but while thy Father lives, thy Father's buckler shall be thy preserver, and his strong arm shall be thine effectual protection.

Once again, there is provision, as well as protection. Every father will take care to the utmost of his ability to provide for his children. So will God. If ye are adopted, being predestinated thereunto, most surely will he provide for you.

"All needful grace will God bestow,
And crown that grace with glory too;
He gives us all things, and withholds
No real good from us right souls."

Mercies temporal, mercies spiritual thou shalt have, and all because you are God's son, his redeemed child, made so by the blood of Jesus Christ.

And then you shall likewise have education. God will educate all his children, till he makes them perfect men in Christ Jesus. He will teach you doctrine after doctrine; he will lead you into all truth, until at last, perfected in all heavenly wisdom, you shall be made fit to join with your fellow-commoners of the great heaven above.

There is one thing perhaps you sometimes forget, which you are sure to have in the course of discipline, if you are God's sons, and that is, God's rod. That is one fruit of adoption. Unless we have the rod we may tremble, fearing that we are not the children of God. God is no foolish father: if he adopts a child, he adopts it that he may be a kind and wise father. And though he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men for nought—though when his strokes are felt, his strokes are fewer than our crimes, and lighter than our guilt,—yet at the same time he never spares the rod; he knows he would ruin his children if he

did, and therefore sometimes he lays it on with no very sparing hand, and makes them cry out and groan, while they think that he is turned to be their enemy.

But as the *Confession* beautifully has it, exactly in keeping with Scripture, "Though chastened by God as by a father, yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption, they inherit the promises, as heirs of salvation." It is one great doctrine of Scripture, that God cannot, as well as will not, cast off his children. I have often wondered how any persons could see any consistency in Scripture phraseology, when they talk about God's people being children of God one day and children of Satan the next. Now, it would startle me not a little if I should step into a lecture-room, and hear the lecturer asserting that my children might be my children to-day, and his children the next. I should look at him, and say, "I don't see that; if they are really mine they are mine; if they are not mine they are not mine; but I do not see how they can be mine to-day and yours to-morrow." The fact is, that those who preach thus *do* believe in salvation by works, mask and cover it with specious qualifications as much as they may. There is as much need for a Luther to come out against them as there was for him to come out against the Romanists. Ah! beloved, it is well to know that our standing is not of that character, but that if we be children of God, nothing can unchild us—though we be beaten and smitten as children, we ne'er shall be punished by being cast out of the family, and ceasing to be children. God knows how to keep his own children from sin. He will never give them liberty to do as they please; he will say to them, "I will not kill you—that were an act I could not do,—but this rod shall smite you; and you shall be made to groan and cry under the rod;" so that you will hate sin, and you will cleave to him, and walk in holiness even to the end. It is not a licentious doctrine, because there is the rod. If there were no rod of chastisement, then it were a daring thing to say that God's children shall go unpunished. They shall, so far as legal penalty is concerned; no judge shall condemn them; but as far as paternal chastisement is concerned, they shall not escape; "I have loved you above all the nations of the earth," says God, "and therefore I will punish you for your iniquities."

Lastly, so sure as we are the children of God by adoption, we must inherit the promise that pertains to it; "if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ." "If we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified together."

III. And now the final point is, THERE ARE SOME DUTIES WHICH ARE CONNECTED WITH ADOPTION.

When the believer is adopted into the Lord's family, there are many relationships which are broken off. The relationship with old Adam and the law ceases at once; but then he is under a new law, the law of grace—under new rules, and under a new covenant. And now I beg to admonish you of duties, children of God. Because you are God's children, it has then become your duty to obey God. A servile spirit you have nothing to do with; you are a child; but inasmuch as you are a child, you are bound to obey your Father's faintest wish, the least intimation of his will. What does he say to you? Does he bid you fulfil such and such an ordinance? It is at your peril if you neglect it; for you are disobeying your Father, who tells you so to do. Does he command you to seek the image of Jesus? Seek it. Does he tell you, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect?" Then not because the law says so, but because your Father says so, seek after it; seek to be perfect in love and in holiness. Does he tell you to love one another? Do love one another; not because the law says, "Love your God," but because Christ says, "If ye love me keep my commandments; and this is the commandment that I give unto you, that ye love one another." Are you told to distribute to the poor, and minister unto the necessity of saints? Do it not because you think you are bound by the law to do it, but do it because Christ says so—because he is your Elder Brother, he is the Master of the household, and you think yourself most sweetly bound to obey. Does it say, "Love God with all your heart?" Look at the commandment, and say, "Ah! commandment, I will seek to fulfil thee; Christ hath fulfilled thee already—I have no need, therefore, to fulfil thee for my salvation, but I will strive to do it, because he is my Father now, and he has a new claim upon me. Does he say, "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy?" I shall remember what Jesus said—"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath," and therefore I shall not be the Sabbath's slave; but as inasmuch as my Father rested on the seventh day, so also will I from all my works, and I will have no works of legality to defile his *Rest*; I will do as many acts of mercy as ever

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I can; I will seek and strive to serve him with filial homage. Because my Father rested, so will I in the finished work of Christ. Because "my Father worketh hitherto," and my Saviour says, "and I work," therefore I count not that the Sabbath is broken in ought that repairs the breach. And so with each of the ten commandments. Take them out of the law, put them in the gospel, and then obey them. Do not obey them simply as being the law graven on tables of stone; obey them as gospel written on fleshy tables of the heart; "for ye are not under the law, but under grace."

There is another duty, believer. It is this: if God be thy Father, and thou art his son, thou art bound to trust him. Oh! if he were only thy Master, and thou ever so poor a servant, thou wouldst be bound to trust him. But, when thou knowest that he is thy Father, wilt thou ever doubt him? I may doubt any man in this world; but I do not doubt my father. If he says a thing, if he promises a thing, I know if it be in his power, he will do it; and if he states a fact to me, I cannot doubt his word. And yet, O child of God, how often dost thou distrust thy heavenly Father? Now, do so no more. Let him be true; let every man be a liar; still doubt not thy Father. What! could he tell thee an untruth? Would he cheat thee? No, thy Father when he speaks, means what he says. Canst thou not trust his love? What! will he let thee sink, while he is able to keep thee afloat? Will he let thee starve, while his granaries are full, will he let thee die with thirst, when his presses burst with new wine? Are the cattle upon a thousand hills his, and will he let thee lack a meal? Is the earth the Lord's, and the fulness thereof, and will he let thee go away empty, and poor, and miserable? Oh! surely not. Is all grace his, and will he keep it back from thee? No, he saith to thee to-day, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine;" take what thou wilt, it is all thine own; but trust to thy Father.

"Leave to his sovereign will,
To choose, and to command,
With wonder filled, thou then shalt own,
How wise, how strong his hand."

Now go away, heirs of heaven, with light feet, and with joy in your countenances, saying, you know that you are his children, and that he loves you, and will not cast you away. Believe that to his bosom he now presses you—that his heart is full of love to you; believe that he will provide for you, protect you, sustain you, and that he will at last bring you to a glad inheritance, when you shall have perfected the years of your pilgrimage, and shall be ripe for bliss, "As he hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will."

I need not, this morning, delay you any longer in personally addressing unconverted persons. Their welfare I always seek; I have sought, while speaking to the saints this morning, so to speak, that every sinner may learn at least this one fact, that salvation is of God alone, and that he may be brought into this state of mind, to feel that if he is saved God must save him, or else he cannot be saved at all. If any of you acknowledge that truth, then in God's name I now bid you believe in Jesus; for as surely as ever you can feel that God has a right to save or to destroy you, grace must have made you feel that, and therefore, you have a right now to come and believe in Jesus; if you know that, you know all that will make you feel empty, and therefore, you know enough to make you cast your entire hope upon that fulness which is in Jesus Christ.

The Lord bless you, and save you! Amen.