

BLESSING FOR BLESSING

NO. 2266

A SERMON

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, JULY 24, 1892,

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,

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“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.”

Ephesians 1:3, 4.

GOD blesses us—let us bless Him. I pray that every heart here may take its own part in this service of praise—

*“O you, my soul, bless God the Lord,
And all that in me is.
Be stirred up His holy name
To magnify and bless.”*

Sit in your seats and keep on blessing God from the first word of the sermon to the last. And then go on blessing God till the last hour of life and enter into heaven into the eternal glory, still blessing God. It should be our life to bless Him who gave us our life. It should be our delight to bless Him who gives us all our delights. So says the text and so let us do—“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

I. Our first occupation at this time will be that of BLESSING GOD.

But how can we bless God? Without doubt the less is blessed of the Greater. Can the Greater be blessed by the less? Yes, but it must be in a modified sense. God blesses us with all spiritual blessings, but we cannot give Him any blessings. He needs nothing at our hand and if He did, we could not give it. “If I were hungry,” says the Lord, “I would not tell you: for the world is Mine, and the fullness thereof.” God has an all-sufficiency within Himself and can never be thought of as dependent upon His creatures, or as receiving anything from His creatures which He needs to receive. He is infinitely blessed already—we cannot add to His blessedness. When He blesses us, He gives us a blessedness that we never had before—but when we bless Him—we cannot, by one iota, increase His absolutely infinite perfection. David said to the Lord, “My goodness extends not to You.” This was as if he had said, Let me be as holy, as devout and as earnest as I may, I can still do nothing for You. You are too high, too holy, too great for me to be really able to bless You in the sense which You bless me.

How, then, do we bless God? Well, I should say, first, that this language is *the expression of gratitude*. We say with David, “Bless the Lord, O my soul,” and we say with Paul, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” We can bless God by praising Him, extolling Him, desiring all honor for Him, ascribing all good to Him, magnifying and lauding His holy name. Well, we will do that. Sit still, if you will, and let your heart be silent unto God, for no language can ever express the gratitude that, I trust, we feel to Him who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. Praise Him also in your speech. Break the silence—speak of His glory. Invite others to cry with you, “Hallelujah!” or “Hallels unto Jah!” “Praise to Jehovah!” Ascribe greatness unto our God. Oh, that all flesh would magnify the Lord with us!

This language is also the *utterance of assent* to all the blessedness that is ascribed to the Lord. After hearing how great He is, how glorious He is, how happy He is, we bless Him by saying, “Amen. So let it be! So would we have it! He is none too great for us, none too blessed for us. Let Him be great, glorious,

and blessed beyond all conception.” I think that we bless God when we say, concerning the whole of His character, “Amen. This God is our God forever and ever.” Let Him be just what the Bible says He is—we accept Him as such. Sternly just, He will not spare the guilty. Amen, blessed be His name! Infinitely gracious, ready to forgive. Amen, so let it be! Everywhere present, always omniscient. Amen, so again do we wish Him to be! Everlastingly the same, unchanging in His truth, His promise, His nature. We again say that we are glad of it and we bless Him. He is just such a God as we love. He is indeed God to us, because He is really God and we can see that He is so. And every attribute ascribed to Him is a fresh proof to us that Jehovah is the Lord. Thus, we bless Him by adoration.

We also bless God in *the spreading of His kingdom*. We can win hearts to Him through His mighty grace blessing our service. We can fight against evil. We can set up a standard for the truth. We can be willing to suffer in repute and every way else, for His name’s sake. We can by His grace do all this and thus we are blessing God. Surely, dear friends, if it is well-pleasing in God’s sight that sinners should repent—if it makes heaven the gladder and makes joy in the presence of the angels that men should repent—we are in the best and most practical way blessing God when we labor to bring men to repentance through faith in Christ Jesus.

There is also another way of blessing God which, I trust, we shall all endeavor to practice, and that is by *the doing good to His children*. When they are sick, visit them. When they are downcast, comfort them. When they are poor, relieve them. When they are hard pressed by outward adversaries, stand at their side and help them. You cannot bless the Head, but you can bless the feet—and when you have refreshed the feet, you have refreshed the Head. He will say, “Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these, My brethren, you have done it unto Me.” If they are naked and you clothe them, if they are sick and you visit them, if they are hungry and you feed them—you do in this respect bless God. David not only said, “You are my Lord: my goodness extends not to You,” but added, “but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent in whom is all my delight.” You can be good to them and in that respect you may be blessing God. He has done so much for us that we would gladly do something for Him and when we have reached the limit of our possibilities, we long to do more. We wish that we had more money to give, more talent to use, more time that we could devote to His cause. We wish that we had more heart and more brain. Sometimes we wish that we had more tongue and we sing—

*“Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer’s praise!”*

This word “blessed” is an attempt to break the narrow circle of our capacity. It is an earnest endeavor of a burning heart to lay at God’s feet crowns of glory which it cannot find—“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

II. But now, secondly, we shall spend a little time in VIEWING GOD in the light in which Paul sets Him before us—“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

We bless the God of nature. What beauties He has strewn around us! We bless the God of providence. How bountifully does He send us harvests and fruitful seasons! We bless the God of grace who has redeemed us and adopted us as His children. But here is a peculiar aspect of God which should call forth our highest praises, for He is called “the God and Father or our Lord Jesus Christ.”

When we see God *in connection with Christ*, we see God through Christ. When we see God in Christ, then our hearts are all aflame and we burst out with, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” God apart from Christ—that is a great and glorious theme—but the human mind fails to grasp it. The infinite Jehovah, who can conceive Him? “Our God is a consuming fire.” Who can draw near to Him? But in the Mediator, in the Person of the God, the Man in whom we find blended human sympathy and divine glory, we can draw near to God. There it is that we get our hands upon the golden harp strings and resolve that every string shall be struck to the praise of God in Christ Jesus.

But note carefully that God is described here as *the God of our Lord Jesus Christ*. When Jesus knelt in prayer, He prayed to our God. When Jesus leaned in faith upon the promises, He trusted in God that He would deliver Him. When our Savior sang on the Passover night, the song was unto God. When He prayed in Gethsemane with bloody sweat, the prayer was unto our God. Jesus said to Mary at the sepulcher, “Go to My brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father; and to my God

and your God.” How we ought to bless God when we think that He is the God whom our Redeemer blesses! This is the God who said of Christ, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Delightful thought! When I approach Jehovah, I approach the God or our Lord Jesus Christ. Surely, when I see His blood-stained footprints there on the ground before me, though I take my shoes off from my feet, for the place is holy ground, yet I follow with confidence where my Friend, my Savior, my Husband, my Head has been before me—and I rejoice as I worship the God of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He is also called *the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*. This is a great mystery. Think not that we shall ever understand the high relationship between the first and second Persons of the blessed Trinity, the Father and the Son. We speak of eternal Sonship, which is a term that does not convey to us any great meaning—it simply covers up our ignorance. How God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as God, we do not know and perhaps to wish to gaze into this tremendous mystery were as great a folly as to look at the sun and blind ourselves with its brilliance. It is so—that ought to be enough for us. God the Father is the Father of Jesus Christ as to His divine Nature—“You are My Son; this day I have begotten You.” He is also His Father as to the human side of His nature. He was begotten of the Holy Spirit. That body of His, that human life, came of God—not of Joseph, not of man. Born of a woman, God sent forth His Son; but He was His Son then. It was God’s Son that was born at Bethlehem. Gabriel said to the Virgin Mary, “That holy thing which shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God.” Now take the two natures of their wondrous blending in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and you see how the great God is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, sweet thought, He is my Father, too. My Father is Christ’s Father. Jesus Christ’s Father is our Father and He teaches us all to call Him, “Our Father, which are in heaven.” Often in prayer, He said, “Father,” and He bids us say the same, putting the plural pronoun before it, “Our Father.” Now will you not bless the Lord, who is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? Do you not feel a glowing in your hearts, as you think of the near and dear relationship into which you are brought through Jesus Christ? The God of Jesus Christ, the Father of Jesus Christ, is my God, my Father, too. Blessed, blessed, blessed, forever blessed be that dear name!

III. Our third occupation at this time is that of RECOUNTING HIS GREAT MERCIES. I will read the rest of the third verse—“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”

This recapitulation of mercies is written with *full assurance* and you will not bless God unless you have a touch of that same experience. Paul does not say, “Who has, we hope and trust, blessed us,” but he writes, “Who has blessed us.” Ah, beloved, if you have a full assurance that God has blessed you in Christ, and that now His smile rests upon you, and all the benisons of the covenant are stored there for you, I think that you cannot help saying, “Blessed, blessed be the name of the Most High!” That doubt, that trembling—this it is that empties out the marrow from the bone of our blessedness. If you have suspicions about the truth of this precious Book, if you have questions about the truth of the doctrines of grace, if you have doubts about your own interest in these things, I do not wonder that you do not praise God—for a blessing which is only mine by peradventure, well, peradventure I shall be grateful for it—but peradventure I shall not. But if I know whom I have believed, if I have a firm grip of spiritual mercies, if all heavenly things are mine in Christ my Lord I can sing, “Wake up, my glory; awake psaltery and harp; I myself will awake right early.” “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings.”

With this full assurance should come *intense delight*—“Who has blessed us.” God has blessed us. Come, brethren, He has not done some trifle for us which we can afford to ignore. He has not merely given us some absolutely necessary blessings which we must have, for we could not live without them. But He has in grace dealt still more abundantly with us. He has gone beyond workhouse fare and made us a feast with saints and princes. He has given us more than home-spun garments—He has put upon us robes of beauty and of glory—even His own spotless righteousness. He has blessed us—we are blessed—we feel that we are. Each believer can say—

*“I feel like singing all the time,
For my tears are wiped away.
For Jesus is a Friend of mine,
I’ll praise Him every day!”*

*I'll praise Him! Praise Him!
Praise Him all the time!"*

We are not sitting here groaning and crying—fretting and worrying—and questioning our own salvation. He has blessed us and therefore we will bless Him. If you think little of what God has done for you, you will do very little for Him. But if you have a great notion of His great mercy to you, you will be greatly grateful to your gracious God.

Let me also remark, next, that as assurance and delight lead to blessing God, so does a *right understanding* of His mercies. To help your understanding, notice what Paul says—“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings.” An enlightened man is grateful to God for temporal blessings, but he is much more grateful to God for spiritual blessings, for temporal blessings do not last long—they are soon gone. Temporal blessings are not definite marks of divine favor, since God gives them to the unworthy and to the wicked, as well as to the righteous. The corn, wine, and oil are for Dives—and Lazarus gets even less than his share. Our thanks are due to God for all temporal blessings—they are more than we deserve. But our thanks ought to go to God in thunders of hallelujahs for spiritual blessings. A new heart is better than a new coat. To feed on Christ is better than to have the best earthly food. To be an heir of God is better than being the heir of the greatest nobleman. To have God for our portion is blessed, infinitely more blessed than to own broad acres of land. God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings. These are the rarest, the richest, the most enduring of all blessings—they are priceless in value. Wherefore, let me beg you to join in blessing the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed you with spiritual blessings.

But did you notice the word “all”? I must bring that out clearly. I must turn the microscope on it. “Who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings.” Surely Paul means that we have not one spiritual blessing which God did not give. We have never earned one—we could never create one. All spiritual blessings come from the Father. He has really given us all spiritual blessings. “I have not received them,” says one. That is your own fault. He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ. A new heart, a tender conscience, a submissive will, faith, hope, love, patience—we have all these in Christ. Regeneration, justification, adoption, sanctification, perfection are all in Christ. If we do not take them out, it is the fault of our palsied hand that has not strength enough to grasp them. But He has given us all spiritual blessings in Christ. Whenever you read your Bible, and see a great promise, do not hesitate to claim it. He has given us all spiritual blessings in Christ. “I am afraid,” says one, “that I should be presuming if I took some of the promises.” He has given us all spiritual blessings in Christ. You are in your Father’s house—you cannot steal, for your Father says—“Help yourself to what you like.” He has made over His whole estate of spiritual wealth to every believing child of His, wherefore take freely and you will, by doing so, glorify God. He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ.

This He has done in the “heavenly places.” What does that mean, “Who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places”? Does it not mean that He is working upon us all spiritual blessings out of heaven where He dwells? Or does it mean much more, that He is sending us all these spiritual blessings to bring us to the heaven where He dwells and where He would have us dwell?

I want to stir up your heart by reminding you that all the spiritual blessings we receive are the richer and rarer because they are given to us “in Christ.” Here are the blessings and Christ is the golden case that holds them all. When the City of London makes a man a freeman of the city, the document giving him his liberty is usually presented to him enclosed in a golden case. Christ is that golden case in which we find the charter of our eternal liberty. He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ. If they came to us any other way, we might lose them—or we might not be sure that they were genuine. But when they come to us in Christ, they come to stay, and we know that they are real. If Christ is mine, all blessings in heavenly places are mine.

I seem, to myself, to be talking very dryly of things that ought to be swimming in a sea of joy and delight. Beloved, do not let my faint words rob my Lord of any of His glory. He has done such great things for you—bless His name. We cannot stand up and ask for instruments of music with which to sound His praise, but we can sit still and each one say, “Blessed be His name! It is all true. He has blessed me—I know that He has. He has blessed me with a liberal hand with all spiritual blessings. He

has blessed me just where I needed blessing, where I was poorest in spiritual things. I could make my way in business, but I could not make my own way in grace, so He has blessed me with all spiritual blessings, and He has made the garments all the dearer because of the wardrobe in which He has hung them. He has given me these royal things in Christ and as I look to my dear Lord and see what there is for me stored up in Him, I prize each thing the more because it is in Him. Come, Holy Spirit, set our hearts on fire with blessing and praise to God for all the great things that He has done for us!"

IV. I shall close with this fourth remark—Let us bless God, **BEHOLDING THE MANNER OF HIS GIFTS.** That is described in the fourth verse—"According as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love."

Now, brothers and sisters, we are to praise God because all spiritual blessings have come to us in the same way as our election came, "according as He has chosen us in Him." How did that come? Well, it came of *His free, sovereign grace.* He loved us because He would love us. He chose us because He chose us. "You have not chosen Me; but I have chosen you." If there is any virtue, if there is any praise in us now—He put it there. To the bottomless abyss of His own infinite goodness, we must trace the election of His grace. Well, now, every blessing comes to us in the same way. God has not blessed you, my brothers and sisters, with usefulness because you deserved it, but because of His grace. He did not redeem you, or regenerate you, or sanctify you, or uphold you because of anything in you. Again and again, by the prophet Ezekiel did the Lord remind His ancient people that the blessings He bestowed upon them were all gifts of His grace, "Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God, I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake." And again, "Not for your sakes do I this, says the Lord God, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel." Every blessing comes to us with the hallmark of sovereign grace upon it. As the Lord distributed the gifts of His grace, He said, "May I not do as I will with My own?" He does so and we bless and praise, and adore the sovereign grace of God which, having chosen us, continues to bless us according as He has chosen us in Christ.

Next, we have to bless God that all His gifts come to us *in Christ.* Notice Paul's words, "according as He has chosen us in Him." God called us in Christ. He justified us in Christ. He sanctified us in Christ. He will perfect us in Christ. He will glorify us in Christ. We have everything in Christ and we have nothing apart from Christ. Let us praise and bless the name of the Lord that this sacred channel of His grace is as glorious as the grace itself. There is as much grace in the gift of Christ to save us as there is in the salvation which Christ has worked out for us. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Again, all our blessings come from *the divine purpose.* Listen—"Who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He has chosen us in Him." No spiritual blessing comes to any man by chance. No man gets a blessing from God through his "good luck"—it all comes according to the eternal purpose of God which He purposed ever before the earth was—

*"Long before the sun's refulgent ray
Primeval shades of darkness drove,
They on His sacred bosom lay,
Loved with an everlasting love."*

"Before the foundation of the world," says the text—there was a purpose in the heart of God—and in that purpose we were chosen. And by that same purpose God continues to bless us. Look, beloved, God never gives His people either a gift or a grace without His purpose. Has God given you a clear brain, quick, capacious? Think for Him. Has God given you a tongue fluent, eloquent? Speak for Him. He does not give you these gifts without purpose. Has God given you influence among your fellow men? Use it for Him. Your election came according to His purpose and so have all your gifts, and much more, all your graces. Have you a strong, bright-eyed faith? Have you burning zeal? Have you vehement love? Have you any of these gifts of the covenant? Use them for a purpose. God has given them for a purpose—find out what that purpose is and glorify God thereby.

Lastly, the text tells us that God blesses us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world—"that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." God's choice of us was not because we were holy, but *to make us*

holy—and God’s purpose will not be fulfilled unless we are made holy. Some people, when they talk about salvation, mean escaping from hell and getting into heaven by the skin of their teeth. We never mean any such thing. We mean deliverance from evil, deliverance from sin. I often wonder why some people grumble because God has chosen to deliver others from sin when they themselves do not want to be delivered from sin. Like a dog in the manger, they cannot eat the hay themselves and they growl at those who can. If you wish to be safe from sin, ask God for that great blessing and He will give it to you. But if you do not want it, do not complain if God says, “I shall give it to such and such a person, and you that do not even ask for it shall be left without it.” If you do not care to be holy, you shall not be holy. If you did care for it and wished for it, you might have it, for God denies it to none who seek it at His hands. But if you neither wish for it nor value it, why do you lift your puny fist against the God of heaven because He has chosen others, that they should be holy and without blame before Him in love?

The objective of our election is our holiness and the object of every spiritual blessing is our holiness. God is aiming at making us holy. Are you not glad of that? May I not say, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, because His aim in every gift is to make us holy”? Brothers and sisters, would we not sacrifice everything we have and count it no sacrifice if we might be perfectly holy? I said to a young girl who came to join the church, “Mary, are you perfect?” She looked at me and said, “No, sir.” I said, “Would you like to be?” “Oh, that I would! I long for it. I cry for it.” Surely, the God who makes us long to be perfect has already worked a great work in us. And if we can say that to be perfect would be heaven to us, then we are already on the road to heaven—and God is working out in us His eternal purpose, which is “that we should be holy.”

There is one thing more—“That we should be holy and *without blame before Him in love.*” Does that mean that we are to be loving, full of love, and without blame in that matter? Well, I am afraid that there are not very many Christians who are without blame on the score of love. I know a man, a noble man intellectually and in some respects spiritually. I believe that he would die at the stake for the grand old Calvinistic faith, but he is as hard as iron. You cannot feel any kind of love to him, for he does not feel any kind of love to anybody else. That man is not without blame before God in love. I have known others—wonderful Christians they appear to be—they could pray for a week. But if you are poor and ask them for a little help, your asking will all be in vain. I do not think that they are without blame before God in love. O brothers and sisters, God has chosen us to be loving. He has ordained us to be loving and all the innumerable blessings which He has given us, He sends to win us to a loving spirit that we may be without blame in that matter. Our dear friend, Mr. William Olney, whom we still remember here and never can forget, was, I think, without blame in that matter of love. I sometimes thought that he used to shed his love on some who might have been the better for a hard word—for they were deceivers—but he could not bring his mind to think that anybody could be a deceiver. And if anybody was in need of help, no matter though their own misconduct had brought them into poverty, his hand was in his pocket and out again very quickly with help for them. He never failed in love and I pray that you and I, with prudence and wisdom mixed with it, may be without blame before God in the matter of love. Love your fellow Christians. Love poor sinners to Christ. Love those that despitefully use you. Love those round about you who are strangers to the love of God. It may be that they will see in your love some little image of the love of God, as in a drop of water you may sometimes see the sun and the heavens reflected. God make us to be reflections of the love of God! His purpose is that we may be holy and without blame before Him in love.

Now, I have set before you a rare treasury. Does this treasury belong to you? My dear hearers, is Christ yours? Are you trusting Him? If not, there is nothing yours. Without Christ you can do nothing and you are nothing—and you have nothing. Come to Jesus as you are and put your trust in Him, and then all things are yours. If Christ is yours, beloved, then I charge you, bless the Lord, yes, bless the Lord again and again, for you will never bless Him as much as He deserves to be blessed. Let us finish this service as we closed our worship this morning, by singing the doxology—

“Praise God from whom all blessings flow.”

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

EPHESIANS 1.

The Epistle to the Ephesians is a complete Body of Divinity. In the first chapter, you have the doctrines of the gospel. In the next, you have the experience of the Christians and before the Epistle is finished, you have the precepts of the Christian faith—whosoever would see Christianity in one treatise, let him, “read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest” the Epistle to the Ephesians.

1, 2. *Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus; grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.* All down through the ages this benediction comes to us, even to as many of us as are “the faithful in Christ Jesus.” “Grace be to you,” brothers and sisters—grace in every form of it, the free favor of God—all that active force of grace which comes of His unmerited love. May you have a fresh draught of it at this time! “And peace.” May you feel a deep peace with God, with your own conscience, and with all the world! Oh, that you might find an atmosphere of quiet calm about your mind at this very moment! The double blessing of “grace” and “peace” comes “from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.”

3, 4. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world.* One of the first doctrines of our holy faith is that of the union of all believing souls with Christ. We are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ. Apart from Christ we are nothing. In Christ we have “all spiritual blessings.” We are rich as Christ is rich when we are united to Him by the living bond of faith. Another great doctrine of Holy Scripture is that of election. We are blessed in Christ according as the Father “has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world.” Why did God choose any unto eternal life? Was it because of any holiness in them then existing or foreseen to exist? No, by no means, for we read that—“according as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world,”

4. *That we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.* We are chosen, not because we are holy, but that we may be made holy. The election precedes the character and is indeed the moving cause in producing the character. Before the foundation of the world, God chose us in Christ, “that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.” You see, then, beloved brothers and sisters, the end for which the Lord chose you by his grace.

5. *Having predestinated us.* Having destined us before we were born,

5. *Unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.* The chosen ones are adopted—they become the children of God. The universal Fatherhood of God, except in a very special sense, is a doctrine tally unknown to Scripture. God is the Father of those whom He adopts into His family, who are born again into His family, and no man has any right to believe God to be his Father except through the new birth and through adoption. And why God thus elects or adopts is declared here—“According to the good pleasure of His will.” He does as He pleases. That old word of God is still true—“I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” Men do not like that doctrine of God—it galls them terribly—but it is the truth of God for all that. He is Master and King and He will sit on the throne and none shall drag Him from there.

6. *To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved.* There is another precious doctrine of God, the acceptance of those who are adopted. We are beloved of God—He has a pleasure toward us. He takes a delight in us. We are acceptable in His sight. Oh, what a blessing this is! But remember that it is all in Christ—“Accepted in the Beloved.” Because Christ is accepted, therefore those who are in Him are accepted.

7, 8. *In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace; wherein He has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence.* In the working out of the economy of grace, God has been lavish with His love, but yet there have been wisdom and prudence in it. He did not suffer the full light of the gospel to break in upon our eyes at first, lest we should have been blinded by it. Jesus had many things to say unto His disciples, but they could not bear them all at once, so, little by little, He has led us on and led us up, abounding always in His grace and only limiting the display of it by our capacity to receive it.

9, 10. *Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He has purposed in Himself; that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him.* Everything that is in Christ shall be gathered in. All His chosen, all that the Father gave Him, all that He has redeemed by blood, all that He has effectually brought into union with Himself shall be gathered together in one. There shall be one flock under one Shepherd.

11. *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance.* Not only shall we have it, but we have it now. We have heaven in the price of it, in the principles of it, in the promise of it, in the foretaste of it.

11, 12. *Being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will: that we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ.* The enmity of men's hearts to this doctrine of predestination was seen in the House of Commons but a fortnight ago, when one who ought to have known better talked about "the gloomy tenets of Calvin." I know nothing of Calvin's gloomy tenets, but I do know that I read here of *predestination* and I read here that God has His own way and His own will—and that He reigns and rules—and so He will until the world's end, and all who are loyal subjects wish God to rule. He is a traitor who would not have God to be King, for who is infinitely good and kind as God is? Let Him have His divine will. Who wishes to restrain Him? Whether we wish it or not, however, the Lord reigns. Let the earth rejoice and let His adversaries tremble. Our predestination is "according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will."

13, 14. *In whom you also trusted, after that you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.* Those who believe in Christ have the Holy Spirit dwelling in them—the Holy Spirit is a part of heaven—"the earnest of our inheritance." And wherever He dwells, it is not possible that the heart should lose the inheritance. It is entailed upon those in whom the Spirit dwells. Judge then, dear brethren, whether the Spirit of God dwells in you or not.

15-23. *Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward, who believe; according to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and has put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things in the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that fills all in all.* How Paul glows as He writes on this great theme! He waxes warm and rises to an enthusiasm of eloquence. We could not stop to explain his words—that were to spoil their mystic poetry. Oh, to have a heart that can glorify Christ as Paul did! Truly, if we know ourselves to be one with Christ and know the privileges which come to us through that blessed gate, we may indeed extol Him with all our heart and soul.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—232; Psalm 103, Version 1; 219 and the Doxology.

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