THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT

NO. 1186

A SERMON
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"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,
that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,
make you perfect in every good work to do his will,
working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ;
to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."
Hebrews 13:20-21

WHAT we ask others to do we should be prepared to do ourselves. Precept fails unless it be followed up by example. The apostle had exhorted the Hebrew believers to pray for him in the words, "Pray for us." And then, as if to show that he did not ask of them what he was not himself willing to give, he utters this most wonderful prayer for them. He may confidently say to his congregation, "Pray for me" who does unfeignedly from his soul pray for them.

The prayer of the apostle, as you observe, is tinged with the subject upon which he had been writing. This epistle to the Hebrews is full of distinctions between the old covenant and the new, the gist of it being to show that the former covenant was only typical of that abiding dispensation which followed it. For it had only the shadow, and not the very image of heavenly things.

His subject had been the covenant, and when he prayed his garments were sweet with the myrrh and aloes and cassia among which his meditations had conducted him. According to the manner of his thoughts was the expression of his desires. He weaved into the texture of his prayer the meditations of his heart.

And this is a very right method, especially when the prayer is public, for it ensures variety, it assists others to unite with us, and it tends to edification. In fact, as the bee gathers honey from many flowers, and the honey is often flavored with wild thyme or some other special flower which abounds in the region from which it collects its sweets, so does our soul gather dainty stores of the honey of devotion from all sources, but that upon which she longest tarries in her meditations yields a paramount savor and flavor to the expression and the spirit of her prayer.

What was more natural than that a discourse upon the covenant should be followed by this covenant prayer, "The God of peace, that brought from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will"?

The subject of the epistle to the Hebrews is deep, for it passes on from the superficial rudiments to those underlying truths which are more mysterious and profound. It is a book for the higher classes in Christ's school, and hence this prayer is not for babes, but for men of understanding.

We could not say to all the saints, "after this manner pray ye," for they would not know what they were asking. They have need to begin with something simpler, such as that sweet "Our Father, which art in heaven," which suits alike all believers.

Full grown men feed on strong meat, think sublime thoughts, and offer mighty prayers. As we may admire in the prayer of the babe its simplicity, and in the prayer of the young man its vivacity, so in the prayer of one who has become a father in Christ, and feeds upon the covenant, we rejoice in its depth, compass, and sublimity. All these we find here.

I invite those who would understand the deep things of God to ask the Holy Spirit's assistance while we follow the apostle in this his covenant prayer, a prayer of which the covenant is the thread, the substance, and the plea.

I. The subject of our discourse this morning, therefore, is the covenant of grace, as it is here spoken of. And I shall begin by noticing, first, THE COVENANT NAMES which the apostle uses.

He calls the ever-blessed Father "*the God of peac*e." And to the Redeemer who has taken the other side of the covenant, he gives the title, "*Our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep*." Dear friends, as many of us as have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ are in Christ, and He is our Head and Representative, our Shepherd and Sponsor. On our behalf He made a covenant with the Father upon this tenor, that we having sinned, a full recompense should be made to injured justice and the law of God should be fully honored. The Father on His part stipulating to grant full pardon, acceptance, adoption, and eternal life to us.

Now, the covenant has been kept on Christ's side. The text assures us of that, for Jesus has according to His promise shed His blood, and now the covenant stands only to be fulfilled on the side of the eternal Father and under that aspect of the covenant the apostle calls the Father "the God of peace." What a precious name! Under the covenant of works He is the God of vengeance. To sinners He is the thrice Holy God, terrible out of His holy places. Even our God is a consuming fire. And yet to us, seeing that the covenant has been fulfilled on our side by our great Head and Representative, He is only "the God of peace."

All is peace between you and God, Christian. There is no past ground of quarrel remaining, nor any fear that a new one can arise. The everlasting covenant secures everlasting peace. He is not the God of a hollow truce, not the God of a patched-up forgetfulness of unforgiven injuries, but the God of peace in the very deepest sense. He is Himself at peace, for there is a peace of God that passeth all understanding. And moreover, by reason of His mercy His people are made to enjoy peace of conscience within themselves, for you feel that God is reconciled to you, your hearts rest in Him, your sins which separated you have been removed and perfect love has cast out the fear which was torment.

While the Lord is at peace with Himself, and you are made to enjoy inward peace through Him, He is also at peace with you, for He loves you with a love unsearchable. He sees nothing in you but that which He delights in, for in the covenant He does not look at you as you are in yourself, but in your Head, Christ Jesus, and to the eye of God there is no sight in the universe so lovely as His own dear Son, and His people in His Son.

There is beauty enough in Jesus to make Him forget our deformities, merits enough in Jesus to swallow up our demerits and efficacy sufficient in the atoning blood of our great High Priest to wash away all our transgressions.

As for us, our soul recognizing that blood and perceiving the love of God towards us, feels now no war with God. We did rebel once, for we hated Him, and even now, when the old nature champs the bit, and the Lord's will runs cross to our desires, we do not find it easy to bow before Him and say, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because it seemed good in Thy sight." But yet the new nature which comes to the front does rule and govern, and all heart-contest between our soul and God is at an end.

To us the Lord is in the widest and most perfect sense, the God of peace. Oh, how I love that name. Himself the peaceful, happy God, unruffled, undisturbed. Ourselves within ourselves made to enjoy a peace that passeth all understanding, which keeps our hearts and minds. God at peace with us, declaring that He will never be wroth with us nor rebuke us, and ourselves rejoicing in Him, delighting in His law, and living for His glory. Henceforth be it ours in every troubled hour to look to the Lord under this cheering name, "the God of peace," for as such the covenant reveals Him.

The apostle had a view of the other great party to the covenant, and he names Him, "Our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep." We must view our Redeemer in the covenant first as *Jesus* the Savior who leads us into the Canaan which has been given to us by a covenant of salt, even the rest which

remaineth to the people of God. He is also *the Lord* Jesus in all the dignity of His nature, exalted far above all principalities and powers, to be obeyed and worshipped by us. And *our* Lord Jesus—ours because He has given Himself to us, and we have accepted and received Him with holy delight to be the Lord whom we cheerfully serve.

Our Lord *Jesus* because He saves us. Our *Lord* Jesus because by bringing us under His kingdom He rescues us. And *our* Lord Jesus because we have a special relation both to His sovereignty and His salvation.

We are not generally observant of the appropriateness of our Lord's names, we do not notice the instruction which is intended by the writers who use them, nor do we exercise discretion enough ourselves in the employment of them. Yet there is great force in these titles when appropriately employed. Other names may have small significance, but in the titles of Jesus there is a wealth of meaning.

Further, our Lord is called, "that great shepherd of the sheep." In the covenant we are the sheep, the Lord Jesus is the Shepherd. You cannot make a covenant with sheep, they have not the ability to covenant. But you can make a covenant with the Shepherd for them, and so, glory be to God, though we had gone astray like lost sheep, we belong to Jesus and He made a covenant on our behalf, and stood for us before the living God.

Now, I have aforetime explained to you that our Lord Jesus in His death is the *good* Shepherd—the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep, and so shows His goodness. That in His rising again He is the *great* Shepherd, as we have it in the text, for His resurrection and return to glory display His greatness. But in His second advent He is the *chief* Shepherd—"when the chief Shepherd shall appear ye also shall appear with him in glory"—there He shows His superior sovereignty. Our Lord was *good* in laying down His life for the sheep, and there are other shepherds whom He makes good, who in His name feed His lambs and sheep.

When He comes again the second time He will appear with others, the *chief* among them all. But in His resurrection for our justification, in connection with the covenant, He is alone, and bears the name of *the* or "*that* great Shepherd"—that great Shepherd of whom all prophecy has spoken, in whom all the divine decrees are fulfilled, before whom all others shrink away, who stands alone, as in that covenant capacity, the sole and only Shepherd of the sheep.

It is very beautiful to trace the shepherds through the Old Testament, and to see Christ as Abel, the *witnessing* shepherd, pouring out that blood which cries from the ground. As Abraham, the separating shepherd, leading out his flock into the strange country where they dwelt alone. As Isaac, the quiet shepherd, digging wells for his flock, and feeding them in peace in the midst of the enemies. As Jacob, the shepherd who is surety for the sheep, who earns them all by long toils and weariness, separates them and walks in the midst of them to Canaan, preserving them by his own lone midnight prayers.

There, too, we see our Lord as Joseph, the shepherd who is head over Egypt for the sake of Israel, of whom his dying father said, "From thence is the Shepherd, the stone of Israel." Head over all things for His church, the King who governs all the world for the sake of His elect, the great Shepherd of the sheep, who for their sakes has all power committed unto His hands.

Then follows Moses, the chosen shepherd, who led his people through the wilderness up to the promised land, feeding them with manna and giving them drink from the smitten rock—what a wide theme for meditation here! And then there is David, the type of Jesus, as reigning in the covenanted inheritance over his own people, as a glorious king in the midst of them all. All these together enable us to see the varied glories of "that great Shepherd of the sheep."

Beloved, this is a great subject and I can only hint at it. Let us rejoice that our Shepherd is *great*, because He with His great flock will be able to preserve them all from the great dangers into which they are brought, and to perform for them the great transactions with the great God which are demanded of a Shepherd of such a flock as that which Jesus calls His own.

Under the covenant, Jesus is Prophet, Priest, and King—a shepherd should be all this to his flock. And He is great in each of these offices. While we rest in the covenant of grace we should view our Lord as our Shepherd, and find solace in the fact that sheep have nothing to do with their own feeding, guidance, or protection. They have only to follow their Shepherd unto the pastures which He prepares, and all will be well with them. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, He leadeth me beside the still waters."

II. Secondly, the apostle mentions THE COVENANT SEAL.

"The God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, *through the blood of the everlasting covenant*." The seal of the covenant is the blood of Jesus. In olden times when men made covenants with each other, they generally used some ceremony to bind the bargain, as it were. Now, under the old dispensation covenants with God were always confirmed with blood. As soon as ever blood was shed and the victim died, the agreement made was established.

Now, when our heavenly Father made a covenant with Jesus Christ on our behalf, that covenant was true and firm, "according to the sure mercies of David," but to make it stand fast there must be blood. Now, the blood ordained to seal the covenant was not the blood of bulls or of goats, but the blood of the Son of God Himself, and this has made the covenant so binding that sooner may heaven and earth pass away than one tittle of it fail. God must keep His own promises. He is a free God, but He binds Himself, by two immutable things wherein it is impossible for Him to lie, He has bound Himself to bestow covenant blessings upon the flock which the great Shepherd represented.

Brethren, you and I, as honest men, are bound by our word. If we took an oath, which I trust we would not, we should certainly feel doubly bound by it. And if we had lived in the old times, and blood had been sprinkled on an agreement which we had made, we should regard the solemn sign and never dream of running back from it.

Think, for a moment, how impossible it is that the Lord should ever break that covenant of grace which He spontaneously made with His own Son, and with us in Him, now that it has been sprinkled with blood from the veins of His own well-beloved Son. No, the covenant is everlasting. It stands fast forever, because it is confirmed by blood which is none other than the blood of the Son of God.

Remember too, that in our case that blood not only confirmed the covenant, but actually fulfilled it. Because the covenant stipulation was on this wise—Christ must suffer for our sins and honor the divine law. He had kept the law in His life, but it was necessary to the complete fulfilling of the covenant on His part that He should also be obedient to death, even the death of the cross. The shedding of His blood therefore was the carrying out of His promised obedience to its extremity.

It was the actual fulfillment of Christ's side of the covenant on our behalf, so that now the whole covenant must stand firm, for that upon which it depended is finished forever. It is not only ratified with that bloody signature, but by that blood it is actually carried out on Christ's part, and it cannot be that the eternal Father should start back from His side of the compact since our side of it has been carried out to the letter by that great Shepherd of the sheep who laid down His life for us.

By the shedding of the blood the covenant is turned into a testament. In some Bibles, the margin puts it "testament," and often in other cases we scarcely know how to translate the word, whether to say the new testament or the new covenant. Certainly it is now a testament, for since Christ has kept His part of the covenant, He wills to us what is due to Him from God, and He makes over to us by His death all that comes to Him as His reward, making us His heirs by a testament which is rendered valid by His death.

So you may say "testament" if you please, or "covenant" if you will, only never forget that the blood has made both testament and covenant sure to all the sheep of whom Jesus is the shepherd.

Dwell with pleasure upon that word, "*everlasting covenant*." Certain men in these days declare that "everlasting" does not mean everlasting, but indicates a period to which an end will come sooner or later. I have no sympathy with them, and feel no inclination to renounce the everlastingness of heaven and other divine blessings in order to gratify the tastes of wicked men by denying the eternity of future punishments.

Human nature leans in that direction, but the Word of God does not. And following its unerring track we rejoice in the *everlasting covenant*, which will abide forever and ever. The covenant of works is gone. It was based on human strength, and it dissolved as a dream. In the nature of things it could not be everlasting. Man could not keep the condition of it and it fell to the ground.

But the covenant of grace depended only upon the power and love and faithfulness of Christ, who has kept His part of the covenant, and therefore the covenant now rests only upon God, the faithful and true, whose word cannot fail.

"As well might He His being quit,
As break His promise, or forget."

"His mercy endures for ever, and his truth throughout all generations." He has said, "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good," and therefore do them good He must, for He is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent. So, then, the covenant seal makes all things sure.

III. We have now to notice THE COVENANT FULFILLMENT, for the Lord has commenced to fulfill it.

"The God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant." See, then, Jesus Christ has been brought back from the dead through the blood of the covenant. Here is the story. He was the covenantor on our behalf. He took our sin upon Himself, and undertook to suffer for it. Having been crucified He yielded up His life, and from the cross He was taken to the grave, and there He lay in durance vile.

Now, it was a part of the covenant on God the Father's part that He would not leave Christ's soul in Hades, nor suffer His Holy One to see corruption. This agreement has been faithfully kept. Christ on the cross represented all of us who believe in Him—we were crucified in Him. Jesus in the tomb also represented us, for we are buried with Him. Whatever happened to Him happened also to the flock.

Now, then, what will occur to the body of Jesus? Will God keep His covenant? Will the worm devour that lovely frame, or will it defy corruption? Will it come to pass that He who has descended into the earth shall never return? Wait. It is the third morning! The promised time has come. As yet no worm has dared to feed upon that God-like form, yet it lies among the dead. But on the third morning the slumberer awakes like one that has been refreshed with sleep. He rises. The stone is rolled away.

Angels escort Him to liberty. He comes into the open air of the garden and speaks to His disciples. Jesus who bled has left the dead, no more to die. He waits for forty days that He may let His friends see that He is really risen, but He has to rise higher yet to be fully brought back to His former honors.

Will God be faithful to Him and bring Him back from the dead all the way He once descended? Yes, for on the Mount of Olives, when the time is come, He begins to ascend. Cleaving the ambient air He mounts from amidst His worshipping disciples, till a cloud receives Him.

But will He rise fully to the point from which He came? Will He in His own person gain for His church a full recovery from all the ruin of the fall? Ah, see Him as He enters the gates of pearl! How He is welcomed by the Father! See how He climbs aloft, and sits upon the Father's throne, for God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.

Now note by what means our Lord returned from the dead to all this glory. It was because He had presented the blood of the everlasting covenant. When the Father saw that Jesus had kept all His part of the covenant even to death, then He began to fulfill His portion of the contract by bringing back His Son from the grave to life, from shame to honor, from humiliation to glory, from death to immortality. See where He now sits expecting till His enemies are made His footstool.

Now, what has been done to Jesus has been virtually done to all His people, because, you observe, the Lord, "brought again from the dead," not the Lord Jesus as a private person only, but "Our Lord

Jesus," as "that great Shepherd of the sheep." The sheep are with the Shepherd. Shepherd of the sheep, where is Thy flock? We know that Thou hast loved them even to the end. But Thou art gone. Hast Thou left them in the wilderness? It cannot be, for it is written, "Who can separate us from the love of Christ?" Hear the Shepherd say, "I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am." "Because I live, ye shall live also." "Where I am there also shall my servant be."

Beloved, the sheep never are away from that great Shepherd of the sheep, they are always in His hand, and none can pluck them thence. They were on earth with Him, and they are risen with Him. If Jesus had remained in the grave there must all His sheep have perished. But when the Father brought Him back by the blood, He brought us back by the blood, and gave us for our souls a lively hope that they shall never die, and for our bodies the expectation of resurrection.

"For though our inbred sins require
Our flesh to see the dust,
Yet as the Lord our Shepherd rose,
So all His followers must."

Jesus in heaven is only there as our representative, and His flock is following Him. I wish you could get a picture in your eye of the hills of heaven rising up from these lowlands. We are feeding here awhile under His watchful eye, and yonder is a river which runs at the foot of the celestial hills and parts us from heavenly pasturage. One by one our beloved ones are being called across the flood by the Good Shepherd's voice, and they cross the river pleasantly at His bidding, so that a long line of His sheep may be seen going over the stream and up the hillside to where the Shepherd stands and receives them.

This line joins the upper flock to the lower, and makes them all one company. Do you not see them continually streaming up to Him, and passing again under the hand of Him that telleth them, to be fed by the Lamb and made to lie down forever where wolves can never come? Thus the one flock is even now with the Shepherd, for it is all one pasture to Him, though to us it seems divided by Jordan's torrent.

Every one of the sheep is marked with the blood of the everlasting covenant. Every one of them has been preserved because Jesus lived. And as He was brought again from the dead by the blood, even so must they be, for so the covenant stands.

Remember, then, dear friends, that the punishment of the flock was borne by the Shepherd, that the flock died in the Shepherd, and that the flock now live because the Shepherd lives.

That their life is consequently a new life. That He will bring all His sheep that as yet are not called, out of their death in sin, even as He has been brought out of His own death. That He will lead onward and upward those that are called, even as He went onward and upward from the grave to the throne. That He will preserve them all their journey through, even as He was preserved by the blood of the everlasting covenant. And that He will perfect them even as He is perfect. Even as the God of peace has glorified His Son, so also will He bring all His chosen to eternal glory with Him.

IV. Fourthly, we will view THE COVENANT BLESSING.

What is one of the greatest of all the covenant blessings? The writer of this epistle here pleads for it. "Now," saith he, "the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, *make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight*." Notice that one of the chief blessings of the covenant is power and will to serve God.

The old covenant said, "There are the tables of stone, mind that you obey every word that is written thereon. If you do you shall live, and if you do not you shall die." Man never did obey, and consequently no one ever entered heaven or found peace by the law. The new covenant speaketh on this wise, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. I will write my law in their hearts, and on their minds will I write them. I will put my fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from me."

The prophets enlarge most instructively upon this new covenant. It is not a covenant of "if you will I will," but it runs thus, "I will and you shall." As a covenant this exactly suits me. If there were something to be performed by me I could never be sure, but as it is finished I am at rest. God sets us working and we work. But the covenant itself dependeth wholly upon that great promise, "I will not turn away from them to do them good."

So that it was right of Paul to pray that God would make us meet in every good work to do His will, because of old this was the master promise, that those for whom Jesus died should be sanctified, purified, and made meet to serve their God. Great as the prayer is, it is only asking what the covenant itself guarantees.

Taking the text word by word, I perceive that the first blessing asked for by the apostle is *meetness for the divine service*, for the Greek word is not, "Make you *perfect*," but *meet*, "fit," "prepared," "able for." I have no reference to the discussion upon the doctrine of perfection in this observation. No one text would decide that controversy, I simply make the observation because it is matter of fact. The expression should be rendered, "Make you fully complete," or "fully fitted" to do His will.

We ought to request earnestly that we may be qualified, adapted, and suited, to be used of God for the performance of His will. After the man once dead in sin is made alive again, the question arises, Who shall be his master? We, having died in our great Shepherd, and having been brought again from the dead, to whom shall we yield ourselves? Certainly unto God alone. Our prayer is that we may be made meet to do His will. Our Shepherd did His Father's will, for He cried, "I delight to do thy will, O God," "by the which will we are sanctified," and sanctified to the doing of that will each one of us thenceforth.

It is a grand desire, but it burns in every Christian heart, that now he may be meet to serve his God, may be a vessel such as God can use, an instrument fit for the divine hand. Weak and feeble, but not impure, unsuitable by reason of want of native strength, but suitable through having been cleansed by the blood of the covenant. Dear brothers and sisters, ask for meetness for service. Pray day and night that you may be fully fitted for every good work.

But the apostle asked for *an inward work of grace*, not merely meetness for service, but an operation felt—"Working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight." I long above everything to possess in myself the inworking of the Holy Ghost more and more clearly. There is so much superficial religion, and we are so apt to be contented with it that it becomes us to pray for deep heart-work. We need to have our affections elevated, our will subdued, our understanding enlightened, and our whole nature deeply spiritualized by the presence of the Holy Ghost. Now this is the promise of the covenant, "I will dwell in them and walk in them."

Remember, God worked in Christ in the grave by quickening His body into life, and He must work in us according to the working of that mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead. Ask the Lord to do it. Do not be satisfied with a little, weak, almost imperceptible, pulse of religion, of which you can hardly judge whether it is there or not. But ask to feel the divine energies working within you, the eternal omnipotence of God, struggling and striving mightily in your spirit until sin shall be conquered, and grace shall gloriously triumph. This is a covenant blessing. Seek ye for it.

But we need *outward* as well as inward work. Working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight—no small matter when you remember that nothing but perfect holiness can please God. Paul would have us made fit for every good work, wanted us to be many-sided men who could do every good work, just as Jesus did. He wished us to be qualified for any station and every position.

When Jesus Christ rose from the dead He was seen. There was not merely a secret quickening in Him, but a visible life, He was seen of angels and of men, and here below He lived for a period of time the observed of all observers. So, dear brethren, there ought to be in us not only an inner resurrection which we feel, but such a quickening that we shall be manifestly alive to newness of life. We must know the power of our Lord's resurrection, and exhibit it in every action of our lives. May God grant us this.

There is much upon this point which time does not permit me to enlarge upon. May you know it all by experience.

Observe, once more, the *completeness* of this covenant blessing. Just as Jesus is fully restored to the place from which He came, and has lost no dignity nor power by having shed His blood, but rather is exalted higher than ever, so God's design is to make us pure and holy as Adam was at the first, and to add to our characters a force of love which never would have been there if we had not sinned and been forgiven, an energy of intense devotion, an enthusiasm of perfect self-sacrifice, which we never could have learned if it had not been for Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

God means to make us the princes of the blood royal of the universe, or if you will, the bodyguards of the Lord of hosts. He desires to fashion an order of creatures who will come very near to Him, and yet will feel the lowliest reverence for Him. He will have them akin to Himself, partakers of the divine nature, and yet the most obedient of servants. Perfectly free agents, and yet bound to Him by bonds which will never let them disobey in thought, or word, or deed.

And this is how He is fashioning this central battalion who shall wait upon His eternal marchings forever—He is forgiving us great sins, He is bestowing upon us great blessings, He is making us one with His dear Son, and when He has entirely freed us from the cerements of our spiritual death He will call us up to where Jesus is, and we shall serve Him with an adoration superior to all the rest of His creatures. Angels cannot love so much as we shall, for they have never tasted redeeming grace and dying love.

This high devotion is the Lord's aim. He did not bring up the Lord Jesus from the dead that He might live a common life. He lifted Him up that He might be Head over all things to His church and that all things might be under His feet. Even so the destiny of Christians is mysteriously sublime. They are not lifted up from their native death to a mere morality. They are destined to be something more than philanthropists and men esteemed by their fellows, they are to exhibit to angels and principalities, and powers, the wonderful grace of God, showing in their own persons what God can do with His creatures through the death of His Son. I do but touch, like a swallow with my wing where it were delightful to dive.

IV. We conclude with THE COVENANT DOXOLOGY, "*To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*"

If anything in the world can make a man praise his God it is the covenant, and the knowledge that he is in it. I will leave off preaching and ask you to think over the love of God in the covenant. It does not belong to all of you. Christ is not the Shepherd of the whole herd of men. He is only the Shepherd of the sheep, and He has not entered into any covenant for all mankind, but for His sheep alone. The covenant is for His own people. If you believe in Him it is a covenant for you, but if you reject Him you can have no participation in this covenant. For you are under the covenant of works, which condemns you.

But now, believer, just sit down for a moment and think over this exceeding mercy. Your God, the everlasting Father, has entered into a solemn compact with Christ on your behalf, that He will save you, keep you, and make you perfect. He has saved you. He has performed a large part of the covenant in you already, for He has placed you in the way of life and kept you to this day. And if, indeed, you are His, He will keep you to the end.

The Lord is not as the foolish man who began to build and was not able to finish. He does not commence to carry out a design, and then turn from it. He will push on His work till He completes it in you. Can you really believe it? With you, a poor puny mortal, who will soon sleep in the grave—with you He has made an everlasting covenant! Will you not say with our text, "To whom be glory"? Like dying David you can say, "Though my house be not so with God, yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure." I am sure you will joyfully add, "Glory be to his name."

Our God deserves *exclusive* glory! Covenant theology glorifies God alone. There are other theologies abroad which magnify men. They give him a finger in his own salvation, and so leave him a reason for throwing up his cap and saying, "Well done I!"

But covenant theology puts man aside and makes him a debtor and a receiver. It does, as it were, plunge him into the sea of infinite grace and unmerited favor, and it makes him give up all boasting, stopping the mouth that could have boasted by filling it with floods of love, so that it cannot utter a vainglorious word. A man saved by the covenant must give all the glory to God's holy name, for to God all the glory belongs. In salvation wrought by the covenant the Lord has exclusive glory.

He also has *endless* glory. "To whom be glory for ever and ever."

Have you glorified God a little, dear brethren, because of His covenant mercy? Go on glorifying Him. Did you serve Him well when you were young? Ah, not so well as you wish you had. Then serve Him better now in these riper days. Throw yourself into the glorifying of God. The task of saving yourself is not yours, Jesus has done it all. You may sing,

"A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify;"

But you will not need to add—

"A never-dying soul to save,
And fit it for the sky."

For that soul of yours *is* saved, "He hath saved us and called us with a holy calling," and you are fitted for the sky by the blood of the everlasting covenant, for Paul says, "Thanks be unto the Father who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." All you have to do is to glorify the Lord who has saved you and set your feet upon a rock, and established your goings. Now, go at it with all your might.

Are you getting grey, dear brother? With all your experience you ought now to glorify the Lord more than ever. You will soon be up yonder in the land of the living. Do not praise the Redeemer any longer at a poor dying rate, for you have but a short time to tarry here. And oh, when we ascend above these clouds, how we will magnify our covenant God! I am sure I shall not feel my powers capacious enough, even in heaven, to express my gratitude for His amazing love. I do not wonder that the poet says—

"Eternity's too short
To utter half His praise."

People find fault with that expression, and say it is an exaggeration. How would you have the poets talk? Is not hyperbole allowable to them? I might even plead that it is not an hyperbole, for neither time nor eternity can utter all the praises of the infinite JEHOVAH.

"Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing
Our great Redeemer's praise."

This shall be the sweetest note of all our music—*the covenant*, "the covenant made with David's Lord, in all things ordered well," the covenant with that great Shepherd of the sheep by which every sheep was preserved and kept, and brought into the rich pastures of eternal glory. We will sing of covenant love in heaven. This shall be our last song on earth and the first in Paradise—"The covenant, the covenant sealed with blood."

How I wish Christ's ministers would spread more and more of this covenant doctrine throughout England. He who understands the two covenants has found the marrow of all theology, but he who does not know the covenants knows next to nothing of the Gospel of Christ.

You would think, to hear some ministers preach, that salvation was all of works, that it was still uncertain who would be saved, that it was all a matter of "ifs," and "buts," and "peradventures." And if you begin to give them "shalls," and "wills," and purposes, and decrees, and pledges, and oaths, and blood, they call you Calvinistic. Why, this doctrine was true before Calvin was born or thought of! Calvin loved it as we do, but it did not come from him! Paul had taught it long before, nay, the Holy Ghost taught it to us in the Word, and therefore we hold it.

The bringing back of this truth to the front will be a grand thing for the church. From the mouth of this cannon the Lord will blow the Pope and all his myrmidons into a thousand shivers, but no other doctrine will do it.

By God's good grace, we must live this doctrine as well as preach it, and may He that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will. Then will He have glory through the covenant and through you, both now and forever. Amen and amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—HEBREWS 13

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—412, 1054, 317

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.