

Men Chosen—Fallen Angels Rejected

A Sermon

(No. 90)

Delivered on Sabbath Evening, June 29, 1856, by the

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At Exeter Hall, Strand.

“Verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.”—[Hebrews 2:16](#).

The Almighty God, who dwelt alone, was pleased to manifest himself by created works, which should display his wisdom and his power. When he set about the mighty work of creation, he determined in his own mind that he would fashion a variety of works, and that all his creatures should not be of one form, nature, grandeur, or dignity; hence he made some grains of dust, and others mountains of stupendous magnitude; he created some drops and some oceans; some mighty hills and some valleys. Even in his inanimate works he preserved a wonderful variety; he gave not to all stars the same glory, neither to all worlds the same ponderous mass; he gave not to all rocks the same texture, nor unto all seas the same shape of fashion, but he was pleased, in the work of his hands, to observe an infinite variety. When he came to create living creatures, there, too, are distinctions that we must note. From the worm up to the eagle, from the eagle to the man, from the man to the angel; such are the steps of creating goodness in the fashion of things that are animate. He hath not made all creatures eagles, neither hath he fashioned all beings worms, but having a right to do what he wills with his own, he has exercised the right in making one creature—the majestic lion—king of the forest, and another, the harmless lamb, which shall be devoured, without power to resist its enemy, or defend itself. He has made his creatures just as it seemed him fit; he has given to one swiftness of foot, to another, speed of wing; to one, clearness of eye, to another, force of sinew. He hath not followed any fixed rule in his creation; but he hath done exactly as it pleased him in the arrangement of the forms which he hath animated. So, also, we must observe a great difference in the rational beings which he has created. He has not made all men alike; they differ mightily; from the man of the smallest intellect to the man of majestic mind, there are no few steps. And then there is the higher order of rational creatures, more superior to unrenowned man than man ever can be to his fellows; namely—the order of angels. And in the fashioning of angels and men, God, again, has exercised his own right to create as he pleases; to do just as he wills with his own. Thence, all angels may not be alike in dignity, and all men are not alike in intellect. He hath made them to differ.

But now we wish to draw your attention to two instances of God’s doing as he pleases in the fashioning of the works of his hands—the case of angels, and in the case of men. Angels were the elder born. God created them, and it pleased him to give unto them a free will to

do as they pleased; to choose the good or to prefer the evil, even as he did to man: he gave them this stipulation—that if they should prefer the good, then their station in heaven should be for ever fixed and firm; but if they sinned, they should be punished for their guilt, and cast out from the presence of his glory into flames of fire. In an evil hour, Satan, one of the chiefs of the angels, rebelled; he tempted others, and he led astray a part of the stars of heaven. God, in his divine vengeance, smote those rebel angels, drove them from their heavenly seats, banished them from their abodes of happiness and glory, and sent them down to dwell for ever in the abyss of hell; the rest he confirmed, calling them the elect angels; he made their thrones eternally secure, and gave them an entail of those crowns which, sustained by his grace, they had preserved by the rectitude of their holy conduct. After that it pleased him to make another race of beings, called men. He did not make them all at once; he made but two of them, Adam and Eve, and he committed to their keeping the safety of their entire progeny throughout all generations; he said to Adam, as he had said to the angels, “I give unto thee free-will; thou mayest obey or disobey, as thou pleasest. There is my law; thou art not to touch yon tree. The command is by no means irksome. To keep that command will not be difficult to thee, for I have given thee free-will to choose the good.” However, so it happened, much to the misery of man, that Adam broke the covenant of works; he touched the accursed fruit, and in that day he fell. Ah! what a fall was there! Then you, and I, and all of us fell down, while cursed sin did triumph over us; there were no men that stood; there were some angels that stood, but no men, for the fall of Adam was the fall of our entire race. After one portion of the angels had fallen, it pleased God to stamp their doom, and make it fast and firm; but when man had fallen, it did not so please God; he had threatened to punish him, but in his infinite mercy he selected the major portion of the human race, whom he made the objects of his special affection, for whom he provided a precious remedy, to whom he covenanted salvation, and secured it by the blood of his everlasting Son. These are the persons whom we call the elect; and those whom he has left to perish, perish on account of their own sins, most justly, to the praise of his glorious justice. Now, here you notice divine sovereignty; sovereignty, that God chose to put both men and angels on the footing of their free-will; sovereignty, in that he chose to punish all the fallen angels with utter destruction; sovereignty, in that he chose to reprieve the whole human race, and to grant an eternal pardon to a number, whom no man can number, selected out of men, who shall infallibly be found before his right hand above. My text mentions this great fact, for when properly translated it reads thus:—“He took not up angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham.” As this text has two translations, I shall give you the two meanings as briefly as I can.

I. In the first place, the translation of our authorised version runs thus:—“*He took not on him the nature of angels.*” Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, when he came from heaven to die, did not take upon himself the nature of angels. It would have been a stoop, more

immense than if a seraph should have changed himself into an emmet, for the Almighty Son of God to have been clothed in the garb of even the archangel Gabriel; but his condescension dictated to him, that if he did stoop, he would descend to the very lowest degree; that if he did become a creature, he would become, not the noblest creature, but one of the most ignoble of rational beings, that is to say, man; therefore, *he did not stoop to the intermediate step of angelship, but he stooped right down and became a man.* “He took not on him the nature of angels: but he took on him the seed of Abraham.” Let us notice the wisdom and the love of this, and I think there will be something to cause us to glorify God for so doing.

1. In the first place, if Christ had taken upon himself the nature of angels, *he could never have made an atonement for man.* Setting aside the thought that if he came to save man it would have seemed improper if he had come in the garb of angels, you must allow, that if he had done so, he could not have seen death. How could angels die? We can suppose that their spirit may become extinct, if God should will it; we can suppose the entire annihilation of that to which God alone supplies immortality; but since angels have no bodies, we cannot suppose them capable of death, for death is the separation of the body and the soul; therefore, it behooved Christ that he should take upon himself the form of a man, that he might become obedient to death, even the death of the cross. Had angels been standing by, they would have said, “Oh! mighty Master, take our radiant robes. Oh! take not the poor every-day garb of humanity, take our glittering garments all bedight with pearls.” And Gabriel would have said, “Come, take my wings, thou mighty Maker, and I shall count myself too honoured to have lost them for thy sake. There, take this crown and this mantle of azure, wherewith to clothe thyself, thou Son of God; put my silver sandals on thy feet; become not man, but an angel, if thou wilt stoop.” “But no,” he would have said, “Gabriel, if I were in thy dress I could not fight with death; I could not sleep in the tomb; I could not feel the pangs and agony of dissolution, therefore, I must, I will, become a man.” “He took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.”

2. Had our Saviour become an angel, we must note, in the next place, that *he would never have been a fitting example for us.* I cannot imitate an angelic example in all points, it may be very good, so far as I can imitate, but it cannot, in all points, be my pattern. If you would give me something to imitate, give me a man like myself; then I may attempt to follow him. An angel could not have set us the same holy and pious example that our Saviour did. Had he descended from on high in the garb of one of those bright spirits, he might have been a fine example for those brilliant cherubs who surround his throne; but we, poor mortal men, condemned to drag the chain of mortality along this earthly existence, would have turned aside and said, “Ah! such a thing is too high for us, we cannot attain unto it;” and we, therefore, should have stopped short. If I am to carve marble, give me a marble statue which I am to copy; and if this mortal clay is to be cut out into the very model of

perfection, as it is to be by God's Spirit, then give me man for my example; for a man I am, and as a man, I am to be made perfect. Not only could not Christ have been a Redeemer, but he could not have been our exemplar, if he had taken upon himself the nature of angels.

2. Sweetly, also, let us remember that if Christ had been an angel, *he could not have sympathised with us*. In order to sympathise with our fellow-creatures we must be something like them. Suppose a man made of iron, or of brass; could be told of sickness or of illness: could he understand it? I would not have him for a nurse; I would not care to have such a being for my physician; he could not feel for me; he could not sympathise with me. No, even our own fellow-creatures cannot sympathise with us unless they have suffered as we have done. I have heard of a lady who never knew poverty in all her life, and consequently she could not sympathise with the poor. She heard the complaint that bread was extremely dear, when it was running up to fourteen-pence a loaf. "Oh!" she said, "I have no patience with the poor people, grumbling about the dearness of bread. If bread is so dear, let them live on penny buns; they are always cheap enough." She had not been in the position of the poor, and, therefore, she could not sympathise with them; and no man can sympathise with another, to any great extent, unless he has been in some measure in the same position, and endured the same trouble. "It behooved him, therefore, that he should be made in all points like unto his brethren, that he might be a faithful high priest;" "for we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, for he was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." But if he had been an angel, what sympathy could he have had for me? Suppose I should tell an angel that I could scarcely resist my corruptions: the angel would look at me, and wonder what I meant. If I should tell him that I find this world a vast howling wilderness: how could he believe me, for he has never heard howlings, his ears have only been saluted by golden harps and sweet choral symphonies of praise. If I should tell him that I found it hard work to hold on my way, and keep close to my Saviour, the angel could only say, "I cannot sympathise with you, for I am not tempted as you are; I have no clogging nature to abate my ardent zeal, but day without night, with unflagging wing, I circle his throne rejoicing; nor have I a wish nor will to depart from my great Maker." There you see the Saviour's wisdom. He would become a man and not an angel.

4. Once more, Christ became a man, and not an angel, *because he desired to be one with his dear church*. Christ was betrothed to his church ere time began; and when he came into the world he virtually said, "I will go with thee, my bride, and I will delight myself in thy company. Angels' garments were not a fitting wedding dress for me to wear, if I am to be bone of thy bone, and flesh of thy flesh. I am allied to thee by a union firm and strong. I have called thee Hephzibah, my delight is in thee; and I have said, thy land shall be called Beulah, that is, married. Well, if I am married to thee, I will live in the same condition with thee; it were not fit that husband should live in palace, and that wife would live in cottage; it were not meet that husband should be arrayed in gorgeous robes, and wife in meaner

garments.” “No,” said he to his church, “if thou dwellest upon earth, I will; if thou dwellest in a tabernacle of clay, I will do the same;

“Yea, said the Lord, with her I’ll go,
Through all the depths of care and woe,
And on the cross will even dare
The bitter pangs of death to bear.”

Christ cannot bear to be different from his church. You know, he would not be in heaven without her, therefore, did he make that long, long journey, to redeem her and visit her, and when he came on this good errand, he would not that she should be made of clay, and he should not be made of clay too; he was the head, and it would have been out of order that the head should have been of gold, and the body of clay; it would have been like Nebuchadnezzar’s image, that must be broken. “Since the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he must also take part in the same,” for he became “perfect through suffering,” since he was “the captain of our salvation.” Thus, again, you see his love and his wisdom, that he “took not on him the nature of angels, but took upon him the seed of Abraham.”

5. Again, if Christ had not taken upon him the nature of man, *then manhood would not have been so honorable or so comfortable as it is*. I consider that to be a Christian man is to be the greatest thing that God has made. Little as I am, I can say of myself, if I am a child of God, I am next to my Maker. There is an infinite, an awful, an immeasurable distance; but, save Jesus Christ himself, there is no being between man and God. As for an angel, he is less than redeemed man. “Are they not ministering spirits, sent forth to be ministers unto us who are heirs of salvation?” Without controversy, the less is minister unto the greater, and the greater shall not attend the less; therefore, the angels are less than men, for they minister to us. Manhood is a noble thing, for God wore manhood once; manhood is a glorious thing, for it was the robe of the eternal; “God was made flesh and dwelt among us;” therefore, flesh is dignified and glorified. As I said, it would not be so comfortable to be a man, if Christ had not been a man. For I know that I must die; now, my comfort is, that I shall rise again; but I should not have had that comfort if Christ had not been a man, and if he had not died and risen again. Oh! death, I have often seen thy dungeon, and I have thought, how can it be that any should escape therefrom; the walls thereof are thick, and against the door is a ponderous stone; it is sealed fast, and watchers guard it. Oh! death, where is the man that can rend thy sepulchre, or open thy door? Thine iron bars, O death, cannot be filed by mortal, and thy chains are too heavy to be snapped by the finite; but I take comfort, for there was *a man* who broke the bonds of death; there was one who snapped the fetter, cut the bars of brass, unlocked the gates, and made his way triumphant through the sky; in that man I see an instance of what I, too, shall do; when the loud trump of the archangel shall startle my sleeping atoms, I, too, shall find it easy to rise, for as the Lord my Saviour rose, so all his followers must; and therefore, death, I look upon thy dungeon as one that must

be opened again, for it has been opened once; I look upon thy worm as but a little thing that must yield up its prey, and give back the flesh whereon it fed; I look upon the stone of thy sepulchre as but some pebble of oceans' shingly beach, which I shall cast away with eager hand, when I shall burst the cerements of the grave, and mount to immortality. It is a comfortable thing to be a man, because Christ died and rose again; but had he been an angel, the resurrection would not have had that great and glorious proof, nor should we have been so content to be human, seeing there would be death, but no immortality and life.

II. Thus I have tried to explain the first part of the subject; and now for the second. The literal translation, according to the marginal reading, is, "*He took not up angels, but he took up the seed of Abraham,*" by which is meant, that Christ did not die to save angels, though many of them needed salvation, but he died to save fallen man. Now, I like every now and then to give the opponents of the great doctrines of grace something hard to put between their teeth. I have often been told, that election is a most dreadful doctrine and to teach that God saves some, and lets other perish, is to make God unjust. Sometimes I have asked how that was; and the usual answer I have got is this: Suppose a father should have a certain number of children, and he were to put some of his children into a terrible dungeon, and make the rest of them happy, would you think that father was just? Well, I reply, you have supposed a case, and I will answer you. Of course I should not: the child has a claim upon his father, and the father is bound to give him his claim; but I want to know what you mean by asking that question. How does that apply to the case of God? I did not know that all men were God's children; I knew that they were God's rebellious subjects, but I did not know that they were his children. I thought they did not become his children till they were born again, and that when they were his children, he did treat them all alike, and did carry them all to heaven, and give them all a mansion; and I never did hear that he sent any of his children to hell; true, I have heard *you* say so; I have heard *you* say that some of his children fall from grace, and he therefore sends them to hell, and I leave you to solve the problem how that is just; but, sir, I do not allow that all God's creatures are his children, and I have got a small question for you. How do you explain this—that the devils and fallen angels are all lost, and yet, according to your own showing, fallen men have all a chance of being saved? How do you make that out? "Oh!" say you, "that is a different matter; I was not calculating about fallen angels." But if you were to ask the devil about it, he would not tell you it was a different matter; he would say, "Sir, if all men are God's children, all devils are quite as much so. I am sure they ought to stand on the same footing as men, and a fallen angel has as much right to call himself one of God's children as a fallen man." And I should like you to answer that devil on that subject on your own hypothesis. Let Satan, for once, ask you a question, "You say it is unfair of God to send one of his children to hell, and take another to heaven. Now, you have said all creatures are his children. Well, I am a creature, and, therefore, I am his child. I want to know, my friend," says Satan, "how you make it just that my Father

should send me to hell, and let you go to heaven?” Now, you must settle that question with the devil; I will not answer for you. I never supposed such a case; my views never bring me into such a dilemma, but you are in for the trouble, and you may get out of it the best way you can. On my principle, the deed is just enough; men and devils have both sinned and have both deserved to be damned for their sins; God, if he shall so resolve, can justly destroy them all, or he may save them all, if he can do it with justice; or, he may save one of them if he pleases, and let the others perish; and if as he has done, he chooses to save a remnant, and that remnant shall be men, and if he allows all the fallen angels to sink to hell, all that we can answer is, that God is just, and he has a right to do as he pleases with his creatures. You know, you give to the queen the right to pardon a rebel when she sees fit, and will you not give that right to God? “No,” say you, “not unless he pardons all.” Well, sir, then there were no right at all in that; the queen would not thank you if you gave her liberty to pardon all; she would say, “No, there are instances where it is to my honor and to the honor of my laws not to pardon, and, therefore, I will not do it; there are other instances where it is to the honor of my clemency, and not hurtful to my laws, and, therefore, these I pardon, and I uphold my right to do it.” Now, what you will give to a king or an emperor you will deny to God; but I stand here to claim this right for him, and deny it, if you please; you will have to deny it in the teeth of the Scriptures, for they do authoritatively declare, that God is a Sovereign; that he “hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardens.”

Now, come, if our friend will let us, we will, for a moment, just consider this case: how it is that devils are lost, and some men are saved.

1. In the first place, *I do not think it is because of any difference in the sin.* When two criminals are brought before a judge, if one of them is to be saved, and the other punished, very likely the judge will say, “Who is the greatest offender? Let the greatest offender die, and let the less offender be saved.” Now, I do not know that Satan was a greater offender than man; I am not sure that the fallen angels sinned more than man did. “Why, sir,” you say, “man’s sin was a very little one; he only stole some of his Master’s fruit.” Ay, but if it was such a thing to do, what a little thing it would have been not to do it! If it were so little a thing, how easily he might have avoided it! and, therefore, because he did it, it became all the greater sin. “Oh!” you say, “but Satan was proud, and the fallen angels were proud.” And are not *you* pretty tolerably in the same direction my friend? at any rate, Adam was. “But,” you say, “Satan was rebellious.” Well if *you* were not a rebel, you would not talk so; if you had not rebelled against God, you would not set yourself up to deny his sovereignty. “But,” you say, “the devil was a liar from the beginning.” I wonder how long it is since *you* have spoken the truth, sir; you know how to lie as well as he, and though you may not have developed your sin as much as the fallen angels have done, if God were to let you alone, and take the curb off, I wonder that would be the difference between you and the devil. I believe, that if men were allowed to do just as they liked, and there were no government over them,

they would almost go beyond Satan. Look at Robespierre, in France; look at the doings of the Reign of Terror; turn to heathen countries; I dare not tell you what abominable vices, what lascivious sins are committed there in public; I point you to Sodom and Gomorrah, and I ask you what man may become; and I say that I do not know but that a man might become as vile as a devil, if God's restraining mercy were taken from him; at any rate I do not say but that Adam's sin was as great as Satan's. "Ah!" you say, "but Adam was tempted to do it." Yes, that was some excuse; but so were the greater part of the devils. It is true, Satan was not tempted; he did it of his own free will; but he tempted the other spirits, and therefore, the excuse which will do for man will do for the great mass of fallen spirits; and why did not God, therefore, select a portion of the fallen spirits to be saved? I answer, that you can never find any reason except this, "Shall I not do what I will with mine own;" and we must fall down, and breathlessly admire the infinite sovereignty that passed by angels, and saved man.

2. But suppose there is not much difference in their sin, the next question is, *which of those two beings is the most worth saving?* Which is the most valuable creature? Which would serve his Maker most, if his Maker should spare him? And I defy any of you to hold, that a sinful man is a more valuable creature than an angel. Why, if God had looked at profit, speaking after the manner of men, it would be more profitable to him to save the angel. Could not the restored angel serve him better than restored man? If I serve God, day after day, yet at night I must rest; but the angels serve day without night in his temple. If my zeal be ever so intense, yet my body must flag; but angels know not weariness; and if saved, I shall make but a poor courtier to stand around his throne, but yon bright fallen seraph would, if he had been delivered, have made a very peer to grace the halls of the Almighty. If I shall ever be carried to heaven, I have no bright angelic honors, and my nature when ennobled, will not surpass what an angel might have been if God has so decreed; but if Satan had been saved, oh! how loudly would he have sung, and with what glory would he have marched through heaven, to the praise and glory of the grace which rescued him from hell! Therefore, if God had in that thought of his own profit, he would sooner have saved angels than have saved men.

3. Another thought. Sometimes the government will say, "Well, here are two persons to be executed; we desire to save one; *which of the two would be the most dangerous character to allow to continue an enemy?*" Now, which could hurt God the most, speaking as man would speak, a fallen angel, or a man? I answer, that fallen man can do but little injury to divine government, compared to a fallen angel; a fallen angel is so subtle, so powerful, so swift, so able to fly on the lightning's wings, that he can do ten times more injury to his Maker, if indeed, his Maker can be injured, than ever man could do; so that if there had been any consideration of this kind in the divine mind, God would have selected the devils to save them, since they could, if saved, do him the most glory, and if not saved, do him the most injury.

4. And yet one more consideration here, to show you still further how sovereign is the divine will in this matter. Perhaps it would be said, if one is to be saved, let that one be saved who would take the least trouble to saved. Now, which could be saved with the greatest ease, should you suppose a fallen angel, or a fallen man? For my part, I can see no difference; but if there be any, it strikes me that a restoration does not put things one-half so much out of order as a revolution; and to have restored the angels to the place from which they had fallen, speaking as a man must speak, would not have been so hard as to have taken fallen man out of the place from which he had fallen, and placed him where fallen angels had once stood.

If Satan had entered heaven, it would have been like a restoration—an old king come back to his ancient throne; but when man goes there, it is like a king going to a new dynasty—a new kingdom; it is man entering into the angel's place; and for that you know, there must be sanctifying grace and purchasing love. That might have been needed for fallen angels, but certainly not more for them than for fallen man. Here, then, we are brought back to the one only answer, that God saves men, and not angels, just because he chooses to do it; and he says to angels who have perished, "nay, but O! Satan, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?"

5. But, you may say, *God saved man because he pitied him*. But then why did not he pity the devils? I know two men living on three or four shillings a week. I pity one of them very much, indeed; but the other, who is no better off, I pity him the most, for he once knew better times. Man, it is true, fell out of Eden; but Satan fell out of heaven, and is the more to be pitied on account of the greatness of his fall; and, therefore, if pity had ruled the day, God would have decided for the fallen angels, and not for fallen man.

But I think I hear some one whispering again, "Ay, but I do not see that first part: you said, that you did not know but the sin of man was as great as the sin of Satan." Well, I beg to repeat it; and I say another thing, that, mighty wise as you may be, you do not know any difference either; for do you think, if the sins were different, the punishment would be the same? Certainly not, you say; the same punishment for the same sin. Well, now, devils and men are to be in the same hell; the lake of fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels is the place into which men are cast; and therefore I defy you to prove that their sin is not the same. I believe, if it be not the same in degree, it is the same in quality, and the same in nature. And, therefore, a fallen angel and a fallen man stand on a par; so that if God makes a difference, he makes it only because he will make it, and gives no account of his dealings. This is a knife which cuts up root and branch everything like merit; it takes away from the free-willer any chance of charging God with injustice; for how can he prove God unjust in saving one man and not another, when he dares not hint that he is unjust in saving some men, and letting devils perish?

And now I have closed this subject; and I must just make a practical reflection or so, and then I shall have done. Some may rail at this doctrinal preaching, and they will go out and call me an Antinomian. I will not be at all particular about that, so long as I can make them angry; for if a man hates the truth, I shall never be backward in stirring up his wrath; and if any man offends my God then let him be offended. Far better for him to show his opposition; for then, perhaps, he may know that it is in him, and repent of it before God. But I will show you that this is a practical subject. It is practical in this way: that if any man does not submit to God's right to do with him as he pleases, he has very grave reason to doubt his own piety. "Ay," you say, "too cutting by half." Now, I do not mean to say anything harsh or bigoted; but I do mean to say that again. I do not assert that if you doctrinally deny it, but if you in your hearts hate the doctrine, that God has a right to save or to destroy you, you give me very grave cause to suspect whether you ever knew your own position in the sight of God; for I am quite sure that no humble sinner will doubt God's right to destroy him, and I believe that no man who has any love to his fellow-creatures, believing that God has a right to destroy him will ever quarrel with God, if he chose to save another who is only as bad as himself. I tell you, it is your unhumbled pride that kicks against these doctrines; it is your infernal self-conceit, born of hell, that makes you hate this truth. Men have always kicked at it, and they always will. When Christ preached it once, they would have dragged him out to the brow of the hill, and cast him down headlong; and I expect always to meet with opposition, if I speak out broadly and plainly; but let me tell you solemnly, if you do not believe God's right over you, I am afraid your heart has never been right before God.

But another practical conclusion. If you do feel this to be true, that God has a right to send you soul to hell, and that if he saves another, and not you, he will be just, but if he save you it will be an act of free distinguishing love, you show a spirit which is very near to the kingdom of heaven. I do not think a man will admit this truth unless he has a change of heart: he may admit it in his mind, but he will not feel it to be true, unless he has got a new heart and a right spirit. I will not go so far as to say that a man who believes divine sovereignty must be a Christian; that were to stretch the truth; but I do say, that if a man is humble enough, meek enough, contrite enough, to lay himself down at the Saviour's feet with this, "Nothing in my hands I bring;"

"I have no righteousness, no claims; if thou shouldst damn me, thou wouldst be just; if thou savest me I will thank thee for ever;" such a man must have had a work of grace in his heart to bring him to such a conclusion. If thou canst say that, then, poor sinner, come to Jesus, come to Jesus; for he will never cast you out. Let me tell you a story about the prodigal, and then I have done. The prodigal set out one morning, and he had a long, long journey to go; he had a high hill to climb, called the hill of his own sins and follies. He had scarcely got to the top of it, and was getting near the tower, called the tower of true repentance, when his father, who was sitting on the top of the house, saw him; and when he saw him, he ran

out immediately, and ere his son had got to the door, he had fallen on his neck and kissed him. He took his son into his house, and a feast was prepared, and they sat down to it; but after the son had sat down, the farther turned his eye to him, and he was not eating, but the tears were rolling down his cheeks. “My son,” said the father, “why don’t you eat? Why dost thou weep, my son? The feast is all prepared for thee.” Bursting into tears, the son said, “Father, dost thou forgive me all?” “Yes,” says the father, “I do. Eat my son. Do not weep.” The prodigal went on. The father turned his eye to the other guests, and by-and-bye, looking on his son, he saw that he was weeping again, and not eating. Said the father, “Son, why don’t you eat? The feast is all for you. Why do you weep, my son?” “Father,” said he, with the tears rolling down his cheeks again, “will you let me stay here?” “Oh, yes, my son,” said the father, “eat; do not weep; you shall stay here; you are my beloved son.” Well, the prodigal went on, and the father looked at the other guests; but by-and-bye he turned his eyes again, and there was his son weeping once more. “My dear son,” he asks, “why do you weep?” “Oh, father,” said he, “will you *keep* me here? for if you do not, I know I shall run away. Father, will you *make* me stop here?” “yes, my son,” said he, “that I will.”

“My grace shall like a fetter bind
That wandering heart to me.”

The son wiped his eyes, went on with his meal, and never wept again. There, poor prodigal, there is something for thee; if thou wilt come to Christ, thou shalt always stay there; and over and above that, he will keep thee there. Therefore rejoice; for though he has a right to destroy thee, recollect, he will not; for his heart is full of love and pity towards thee. Only come to him, and thou shalt be saved.