

## **The Infallibility of God's Purpose**

A Sermon

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Rev. C. H. SPURGEON,

At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington

“But he is in one minds, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth.—[Job 23:13](#).

IT is very advantageous to the Christian mind frequently to consider the deep and unsearchable attributes of God. The beneficial effect is palpable in two ways, exerting a sacred influence both on the judgment and the heart. In respect to the one, it tends to confirm us in those good old orthodox doctrines which lie at the basis of our faith. If we study man, and make him the only object of our research, there will be a strong tendency in our minds to exaggerate his importance. We shall think too much of the creature and too little of the Creator, preferring that knowledge which is to be found out by observation and reason to that divine truth which revelation alone could make known to us. The basis and groundwork of Arminian theology lies in attaching undue importance to man, and giving God rather the second place than the first. Let your mind dwell for a long time upon man as a free agent, upon man as a responsible being, upon man, not so much as being under God's claims as having claims upon God, and you will soon find upspringing in your thoughts a set of crude doctrines, to support which the letter of some few isolated texts in Scripture may be speciously quoted, but which really in spirit are contrary to the whole tenour of the Word of God. Thus your orthodoxy will be shaken to its very foundations, and your soul will be driven out to sea again without peace or joy. Brethren, I am not afraid that any man, who thinks worthily about the Creator, stands in awe of his adorable perfections and sees him sitting upon the throne, doing all things according to the counsel of his will, will go far wrong in his doctrinal sentiments. He may say, “My heart is fixed, O God;” and when the heart is fixed with a firm conviction of the greatness, the omnipotence, the divinity indeed of him whom we call God, the head will not wander far from truth. Another happy result of such meditation is the steady peace, the grateful calm it gives to the soul. Have you been a long time at sea, and has the continual motion of the ship sickened and disturbed you? Have you come to look upon everything as moving till you scarcely put one foot before the other without the fear of falling down because the floor rocks beneath your tread? With what delight do you put your feet at last upon the shore and say, “Ah! this does not move; this is solid ground. What though the tempest howl, this island is safely moored. She will not start from her bearings; when I tread on her she will not yield beneath my feet.” Just so is it with us when we turn from the ever-shifting, often boisterous tide of earthly things to take refuge in the Eternal

God who hath been “our dwelling-place in all generations.” The fleeting things of human life, and the fickle thoughts and showy deeds of men, are as moveable and changeable as the waters of the treacherous deep; but when we mount up, as it were, with eagles’ wings to him that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, before whom all its inhabitants are as grasshoppers, we nestle in the Rock of ages, which from its eternal socket never starts, and in its fixed immoveability never can be disturbed. Or to use another simile. You have seen little children running round, and round, and round till they get giddy, and they stand still and hold fast a moment and everything seems to be flying round about them, but by holding fast and still, and getting into the mind the fact that that to which they hold at least is firm, at last the braise grows still again, and the world ceases to whirl. So you and I have been these six days like little children running round in circles, and everything has been moving with us, till perhaps as we came, to this place this morning we felt as if the very promises of God had moved, as if Providence had shifted, our friends had died, our kindred passed away, and we came to look on everything as a floating mass—nothing firm, nothing fixed. Brethren, let us get a good grip to-day of the immutability of God. Let us stand still awhile, and know that the Lord is God. We shall see at length that things do not move as we dreamed they did: “to every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heavens.” There is still a fixedness in that which seems most fickle. That which appears to be most dreamy has a reality, inasmuch as it is a part of that divinely substantial scheme which God is working out, the end whereof shall be his eternal glory. ‘Twill cool your brain, ‘twill calm your heart, my brother, ‘twill make you go back to the world’s fight quiet and composed, ‘twill make you stand fast in the day of temptation if now through divine grace you can come near to God and offer him the tribute of our devotion, who is without variableness or shadow of a turning.

The text will be considered by us this morning—first, as enunciating a great general truth; and, secondly, out of that general truth, we shall fetch another upon which we shall enlarge, I trust, to our comfort.

I. The text may be regarded as TEACHING A GENERAL TRUTH. We will take the first clause of the sentence, “He is in one mind.” Now, the fact taught here is, that in all the acts of God in Providence, he has a fixed and a settled purpose. “He is in one mind.” It is eminently consolatory to us who are God’s creatures, to know that he did not make us without a purpose, and that now, in all his dealings with us he has the same wise and gracious end to be served. We suffer, the head aches, the heart leaps with palpitations, the blood creeps sluggishly along where its healthy flow should have been more rapid. We lose our limbs, crushed by accident, some sense fails us; the eye is eclipsed in perpetual night; our mind is racked and disturbed; our fortunes vary; our goods disappear before our eyes; our children, portions of ourselves, sicken and die. Our crosses are as continual as our lives, we are seldom long at ease; we are born to sorrow, and certainly it is an inheritance of which

we are never deprived; we suffer continually. Will it not reconcile us to our sorrows, that they serve some end? To be scourged needlessly we consider to be a disgrace, but to be scourged if our country were to be served we should consider an honor, because there is a purpose in it. To suffer the maiming of our bodies, because of some whim of a tyrant, would be a thing hard to bear, but if we administer thereby to the weal of our families, or to the glory of our God, we would be content not to be mutilated once but to be cut piece-meal away, that so his great purpose might be answered. O believer, ever look, then, on all thy sufferings as being parts of the divine plan, and say, as wave upon wave rolls over thee, "He is in one mind!" He is carrying out still his one great purpose; none of these cometh by chance, none of these happeneth to me out of order, but everything cometh to me according to the purpose of his own will, and answereth the purpose of his own great mind. We have to labor too. How hard do some men labor who have to toil for their daily bread! Their bread is saturated with their sweat; they wear no garment which they have not woven out of their own nerves and muscles. How sternly, too, do others labor, who have with their brain to serve their fellow-men or their God! How have some heroic missionaries spent themselves, and been spent in their fond enterprise! How have many ministers of Christ exhausted not simply the body, but the mind! Their hilarity so natural to them has given place to despondency, and the natural effervescence of their spirits has at last died out into oneness of soul, through the desperateness of their ardor. Well, and sometimes this labor for God is unrequited. We plough, but the furrow yields no harvest. We sow, but the field refuses the grain, and the devouring belies of the hungry birds alone are satisfied therewith. We build, but the storm casts down the stones which we had quarried with Herculean efforts piling one on another. We sweat, we toil, we moil, we fail. How often do we come back weeping because we have toiled, as we think, without success! Yet, Christian man, thou hast not been without success, for "He is still in one mind." All this was necessary to the fulfillment of his one purpose. Thou art not lost; thy labor has not rotted under the clods. All, though thou seest it not, has been working together towards the desired end. Stand upon the sea-beach for a moment. A wave has just come up careening in its pride. Its crown of froth is spent. As it leaps beyond its fellow, it dies, it dies. And now another, and it dies, and now another, and it dies. Oh! weep not, deep sea, be not thou sorrowful, for though each wave dieth, yet thou prevailest! O thou mighty ocean! onward does the flood advance, till it has covered all the sand and washed the feet of the white cliffs. So it is with God's purpose. You and I are only waves of his great sea; we wash up, we seem to retire, as if there had been no advance; another wave comes still each wave must retire as though there had been no progress; but the great divine sea of his purpose is still moving on. He is still of one mind and carrying out his plan. How sorrowful it often seems to think how good men die! They learn through the days of their youth, and often before they come to years to use their learning, they are gone. The blade is made and annealed in many a fire, but ere the foeman useth it, it snaps!

How many laborers, too, in the Master's vineyard, who when by their experience they were getting more useful than ever, have been taken away just when the Church wanteth them most! He that stood upright in the chariot, guiding the steeds, suddenly falls back, and we cry, "My father, my father, the horsemen of Israel and the chariot thereof!" Still notwithstanding all, we may console ourselves in the midst of our grief with the blessed reflection that everything is a part of God's plan. He is still of one mind: nothing happeneth which is not a part of the divine scheme. To enlarge our thoughts a monument, have you never noticed, in reading history, how nationals suddenly decay? When their civilization has advanced so far that we thought it would produce men of the highest mould, suddenly old age begins to wrinkle its brow, its arm grows weak, the scepter falls, and the crown droops from the head, and we have said, "Is not the world gone back again?" The barbarian fall has sacked the city, and where once everything was beauty, now there is nothing but ruthless bloodshed and destruction. Ah! but, my brethren, all those things were but the carrying out of the divine plan. Just so you may have seen sometimes upon the hard rock the lichen spring. Soon as the lichen race grows grand, it dies. But wherefore? It is because its death prepares the moss, and the moss which is feebler compared with the lichen growth, at last increases till you see before you the finest specimens of that genus. But the moss decays. Yet weep not for its decaying, its ashes shall prepare a soil for some plants of a little higher growth, and as these decay, one after another, race after race, they at last prepare the soil upon which even the goodly cedar itself might stretch out its roots. So has it been with the race of men—Egypt, and Assyria, Babylon, Greece, and Rome, have crumbled, each and all, when their hour had come, to be succeeded by a better. And if this race of ours should ever be eclipsed, if the Anglo Saxons' boasted pride should yet be stained, even then it will prove to be a link in the divine purpose. Still, in the end his one mind shall be carried out, his one great result shall be thereby achieved. Not only the decay of nations, but the apparent degeneration of some races of men, and even the total extinction of others, forms a part of the like fixed purpose. In all those cases there may be reasons of sorrow, but faith sees grounds of rejoicing. To gather up all in one, the calamities of earthquake, the devastations of storm, the extirpations of war, and all the terrible catastrophes of plague, have only been co-workers with God—slaves compelled to tug the galley of the divine purpose across the sea of time. From every evil good has come, and the more the evil has accumulated the more hath God glorified himself in bringing out at last his grand, his everlasting design. This, I take it, is the first general lesson of the text—in every event of Providence, God has a purpose. "He is in one mind." Mark, not only a purpose, but only one purpose, for all history is but one. There are many scenes, but it is one drama; there are many pages, but it is one book; there are many leaves, but it is one tree, there are many provinces, yea, and there be lords many and rulers many, yet is there but one empire, and God the only Potentate. "O come let us worship and bow down before him: for the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods!"

2. "Who can turn him?" This is the second clause of the sentence, and here I think we are taught the doctrine that *the purpose of God is unchanged*. The first sentence shows that he has a purpose, the second shows that it is incapable of change. "Who can turn him?" There are some shallow thinkers who dream that the great plan and design of God was thrown out of order by the fall of man. The fall they consider all accidental circumstances, not intended in the divine plan, and so, God being placed in a delicate predicament of requiring to sacrifice his justice or his mercy, used the plan of the atonement of Christ as a divine expedient Brethren, it may be lawful to use such terms, it may be lawful to you, it would not be to me, for well am I persuaded that the very fall of man was a part of the divine purpose—that even the sin of Adam, though he did it freely, was nevertheless contemplated in the divine scheme, and was by no means such a thing as to involve a digression from his primary plan. Then came the delude, and the race of man was swept away, but God's purpose was not affected by the destruction of the race. In after years his people Israel forsook him and worshipped Baal and Ashtoreth, but his purpose, was not changed any more by the defection of his chosen nation than by the destruction of his creatures. And when in after years the gospel was sent to the Jews and they resisted it, and Paul and Peter turned to the Gentiles, do not suppose that God had to take down his book and make an erasure or an amendment. No, the whole was written there from the beginning, he knew everything of it, he has never altered a single sentence nor changed a single line of the divine purpose. What he intended the great picture to be, that it shall be at the end, and where you see some black strokes which seem not in keeping, these shall yet be toned down; and where there are some brighter dashes, too bright for the sombre picture, these shall yet be brought into harmony; and when in the end God shall exhibit the whole, he shall elicit both from men and angels tremendous shouts of praise, while they say, "Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints! Thou only art holy. All nations shall come and worship before Thee, for thy judgments are made manifest." Where we have thought his government wrong, there shall it prove most right, and where we dreamed he had forgotten to be good, there shall his goodness be most clear. It is a sweet consolation to the mind of one who muses much upon these deep matters, that God never has changed in any degree from his purpose; and the result will be, notwithstanding everything to the contrary, just precisely in every jot and tittle what he foreknow and fore-ordained it should be. Now then, wars, ye may rise, and other Alexanders and Caesars may spring up, but he will not change. Now, nations and peoples, lift up yourselves and let your parliaments pass your decrees but he changeth not. Now, rebels, foam at the mouth and let your fury boil, but he changeth not for you. Oh! nations, and peoples, and tongues, and thou round earth, thou speedest on thy orbit still, and all the fury of thine inhabitants cannot make thee move from thy predestinated pathway. Creation is an arrow from the bow of God and that arrow goes on, straight on, without deviation, to the center of that target which God ordained that

it should strike. Never varied is his plan; he is without variableness or shadow of a turning. Albert Barnes very justly says, "It is, when properly understood, a matter of unspeakable consolation that God has a plan—for who could honor a God who had *no* plan, but who did everything by haphazard? It is matter of rejoicing that he has *one* great purpose which extends through all ages, and embraces all things; for then everything falls into its proper place, and has its appropriate bearing on other events. It is a matter of joy that God *does* execute all his purposes for as they were all good and wise, it is *desirable* that they should be executed. It could be a calamity if a good plan were *not* executed. Why, then, should men murmur at the purposes or the decrees of God?"

3. The text also teaches a third general truth. While God had a purpose, and that purpose has never changed, the third clause teaches us that *this purpose is sure to be effected*. "What his soul desireth, that he doeth." He made the world out of nothing, there was no resistance there. "Light be," said he, and light was, there was no resistance there. "Providence be," said he, and Providence shall be, and when you shall come to see the end as well as the beginning, you shall find that there was no resistance there. It is a wonderful thing how God effects his purpose while still the creature is free. They who think that predestination and the fulfillment of the divine purpose is contrary to the free-agency of man, know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm. It were no miracle for God to effect his own purpose, if he were dealing with stocks and stones, with granite and with trees but this is the miracle of miracles, that the creatures are free, absolutely free, and joy the divine purpose stands! Herein is wisdom! This is a deep unsearchable. Man walks without a fetter, yet treads in the very steps which God ordained him to tread in, as certainly as though manacles had bound him to the spot. Man chooses his own seat, selects his own position, guided by his will he chooses sin, or guided by diving grace he chooses the right, and yet in his choice sits as sovereign, on the throne: not disturbing, but still over-ruling, and proving himself to be able to deal as with free creatures as with creatures without freedom, as wall able to effect his purpose when he has endowed men with thought, and reason, and judgment, as when he had only to deal with the solid rocks and with the imbedded sea. O Christians! you shall never be able to fathom this, but you may wonder at it. I know there is an easy way of getting out of this great deep, either by denying predestination altogether or by denying free-agency altogether, but if you can hold the two, if you can say, "Yes, my consciousness teaches me that man does as he wills, but my faith teaches me that God does as he wills, and these two are not contrary the one to the other; and yet I cannot tell how it is, I cannot tell how God effects his end, I can only wonder and admire, and say, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out." Every creature free and doing as it wills yet God more free still and doing as he wills, not only in heaven but among the inhabitants of this lower earth. I have thus given you a general subject upon which I would invite you to spend your meditations in your quiet hours, for

I am persuaded that sometimes to think of these deep doctrines will be found very profitable it will be to you like the advice of Christ to Simon Peter:—"Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught." You shall have a draught of exceeding great thoughts and exceeding great graces if you dare to launch out into this exceeding deep sea, and let out the nets of your contemplation at the command of Christ. "Behold God is great." "O Lord! how great are thy works, and thy thoughts are very deep! A brutish man knoweth not, neither doth a fool understand this."

II. I now come to the second part of my subject, which will be, I trust, cheering to the people of God. From the general doctrine that God has a plan, that this plan is invariable, and that this plan is certain to be carried out, I drew the most precious doctrine that IN SALVATION GOD IS OF ONE MIND,—and who can turn him?—and what his heart desireth, that he doeth. Now, mark, I address myself at this hour only to you who as the people of God. Dost thou believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with all thine heart? Is the spirit of adoption given to thee whereby thou canst say, "Abba, Father?" If so draw nigh, for this truth is for thee.

Come then, my brethren, in the first place let us consider that *God is of one mind*. Of old, my soul, he determined to save thee. Thy calling proves thine election, and thine election teaches thee that God ordained to save thee. He is not a man that he should lie, nor the Son of Man that he should repent. He is of one mind. He saw thee ruined in the fall of thy father Adam, but his mind never changed from his purpose to save thee. He saw thee in thy nativity. Thou well test astray from the woman speaking lies, 'thy youthful follies and disobedience he saw, but never did that gracious mind alter in its designs of love to thee. Then in thy manhood thou didst plunge into vice and sin. Cover, O darkness, all on guilt, and let the night conceal it from our eyes for ever! Though he added sin to sin, and our pride waxed exceeding high and hot, yet he has of one mind.

"Determined to save, he watched o'er my path  
When Satan's blind slave, I spotted with death."

At last, when the happy hour arrived, he came to our door and knocked, and he said, "Open to me." And do you remember, O my brethren, how we said, "Get thee gone, O Jesu, we want thee not?" We scorned his grace, defied his love, but he was of one mind, and no hardness of heart could turn him. He had determined to have us for his spouse, and he would not take "No" for an answer. He said he would have us, and he persevered. He knocked again, and do you remember how we half opened the door? But then some strong temptation came and we shut it in his very face, and he said, "Open to me, my dove, my head is wet with the dew, and my locks with the drops of the night"—yet we bolted and barred the door, and would not let him in. But he was of one mind and none could turn him. Oh! my soul weeps now when I think of the many convictions that I stifled, of the many movings of his Spirit that I rejected, and those many times when conscience bade me repent, and urged

me to flee to him, but I would not; of those seasons when a mother's tears united with all the intercession of the Saviour, yet the heart harder than adamant, and less apt to be melted than the granite itself, refused to move and would not yield. But he was of one mind. He had no fickleness in him. He said he would have us, and have us he would. He had written our names in his book, and he would not cross them out. It was his solemn purpose that yield we should. And O that hour when we yielded at the last! Then did he prove that in all our wanderings he had been of one mind. And O since then, how sorrowful the reflection! Since then, how often have you and I turned! We have backslidden, and if we had the Arminian's God to deal with, we should either have been in hell, or out of the covenant at this hour. I know I should be in the covenant and out of the covenant a hundred times a day if I had a God who put me out every time I sinned and then restored it when I repented. But no, despite our sin, our unbelief, our backslidings, our forgetfulness of him, he was of one mind. And brethren, I know this, that though we shall wander still, though in dark hours you and I may slip, and often fall, yet his lovingkindness changes not. Thy strong arm, O God shall bear us on; thy loving heart will never fail; thou wilt not turn thy love away from us, or make it cease or pour upon us thy fierce anger, but having begun, thou wilt complete the triumphs of thy grace. Nothing shall make thee change thy mind. What joy is this to you, believers? for your mind changes every day, your experience varies like the wind, and if salvation were to be the result of any purpose on your part, certainly it never would be effected. But since it is God's work to save, and we have proved hitherto that he is of one mind, our faith shall revel in the thought that he will be of one thought even to the end, till all on glory's summit we shall sing of that fixed purpose and that immutable love which never turned aside until the deed of grace was triumphantly achieved.

Now, believer, listen to the second lesson: "*Who can turn him?*" While he is immutable from within, he is immovable from without. "*Who can turn him?*" That is a splendid picture presented to us by Moses in the Book of Numbers. The children of Israel were encamped in the plains of Moab. As the trees of lign aloes which the Lord had planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters, were their tents. Quietly and calmly they were resting in the valley—the tabernacle of the Lord in their midst, and the pillar of cloud spread over them as a shield. But on the mountain range there were two men—Balak, the son of Zippor, king of the Moabites, and Balaam the prophet of Pethor. They had builded seven altars and offered seven bullocks, and Balak said unto Balaam, "Come, curse me Jacob, come, defy Israel." Four times did the prophet take up his parable. Four times did he use his enchantments, offering the sacrifices of God on the altars of Baal. Four times did he vainly attempt a false divination. But I would have you mark that in each succeeding vision the mind of God is brought out in deeper characters. First, he confesses his own impotence, "How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed, how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied?" Then the second oracle brings out more distinctly the divine blessing. "Behold, I have received com-



mandment to bless: and he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it.” A third audacious attempt is not with a heavier repulse, for the stifled curse recoils on themselves—“Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee.” Once again in the vision that closes the picture, the eyes of Balaam are opened till he gets a glimpse of the Star that should come out of Jacob, and the Scepter that shall rise out of Israel, with the dawning glory of the latter days. Well might Balaam say, “There is no enchantment against Jacob, no divination against Israel. And now transfer that picture in your mind to all your enemies, and specially to that arch-fiend of hell. He comes before God to-day with the remembrance of your sins, and he desires that he may curse Israel, but he has found a hundred times that there is no enchantment against Jacob nor divination against Israel. He took David into the sin of lust, and he found that God would not curse him there, but bless him with a sorrowful chastisement and with a deep repentance. He took Peter into the sin of denying his Master, and he denied him with oaths and curses. But the Lord would not curse him even there, but turned and looked on Peter, not with a lightning glance that might have shivered him, but with a look of love that made him weep bitterly. He had taken you and me at divers times into positions of unbelief, and we have doubted God. Satan said—“Surely, surely God will curse him there,” but never once has he done it. He has smitten, but the blow was full of love. He has chastised, but the chastisement was fraught with mercy. He has not cursed us, nor will he. Thou canst not turn God’s mind, then, fiend of hell, thine enchantments cannot prosper, thine accusations shall not prevail. “He is in one mind, who can turn him? “And brethren, you know when men are turned, they are sometimes turned by advice. Now who can advise with God. Who shall counsel the Most High to cast off the darlings of his bosom, or persuade the Saviour to reject his spouse? Such counsel offered were blasphemy, and it would be not pugnacious to his soul. Or else men are turned by entreaties. But how shall God listen to the entreaties of the evil one? Are not the prayers of the wicked an abomination to thee? Lord? Let them pray against us, let them entreat the Lord to curse us. But he is of one mind and no revengeful prayer should change the purpose of his love. Sometimes as men are changed by the ties of relationship: a another interposes and lose yields, but in our case, who can interpose? God’s only begotten Son is as much concerned in our salvation as his Father, and instead of interposing to change, he would—if such a thing were needed—still continue to plead that the love and mercy of God might never be withdrawn. Oh, let us rejoice in this,—

“Midst all our sin, and care, and woe,  
His Spirit will not let us go.”

The Lord will not forsake his people for his great name’s sake; because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people. “He is in one mind, and who can turn him?”

I know not how it is, but I feel that I cannot preach from this text as I should like. But oh! the text itself is music to my ears. It seems to sound like the martial trumpet of the battle, and my soul is ready for the fray. It seems now that if trials and troubles should come, if I

could but hold my hand upon this precious text, I would laugh at them all. "Who can turn him?"—I would shout—"Who can turn him?" Come on, earth and hell, come on, for "who can turn him?" Come on, ye boisterous troubles, come on, ye innumerable temptations, come on, slanderer and liar, "who can turn him?" And since he cannot be changed, my soul must and will rejoice "with joy unspeakable and full of glory." I wish I could throw the text like a bombshell into the midst of the army of doubters, that that army might be routed at once, for when we get a text like this, it must be the text which takes effect, and not our explanation. This surely is a most marvellous death-blow to our doubts and fears.

"He is in one mind, and who can turn him?"

And now with a few words upon the last sentence I shall conclude:—*God's purpose must be effected*—"What his soul desireth, that he doeth." Beloved, what God's soul desireth is your salvation and mine, if we be his chosen. Well, that he doeth. Part of that salvation consists in our perfect sanctification. We have had a long struggle with inbred sin, and as far as we can judge, we have not made much progress, for still is the Philistine in the land, and still doth the Canaanite invade us. We sin still, and our hearts still have in shewn unbelief and proneness to depart from the living God. Can you think it possible that you will ever be without any tendency to sin? Does it not seem a dream that you should ever be without fault before the throne of God—without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing? But yet you shall be; his heart desireth it, and that he doeth. He would have his spouse without any defilement he would have his chosen generation without anything to mar their perfection. Now, inasmuch as he spake and it was done, he has but to speak and it shall be done with you. You cannot rout your foes but he can. You cannot overcome your besetting sins, but he can do it. You cannot drive out your corruptions, for they have chariots of iron, but he will drive out the last of them, till the whole land shall be without one enemy to disturb its perpetual peace. O what a joy to know that it will be ere long! Oh! it will be so soon with some of us—such a few weeks, though we perhaps are reckoning on years of life! A few weeks, or a few days, and we shall have passed through Jordan's flood and stand complete in him, accepted in the Beloved! And should it be many years—should we be spared till the snows of a century shall have fallen upon our frosted hair—yet even then we must not doubt that his purpose shall at last be fulfilled. We shall be spotless and faultless and unblameable in his sight ere long.

Another part of our salvation is, that we should at last be without pain, without sorrow, gathered with the Church of the first-born before the Father's face. Does it not seem, when you sit down to think of yourself as being in heaven, as a pretty dream that never will be true? What! shall these fingers one day smite the strings of a golden harp? O aching head! shalt thou one day wear a crown of glory that fadeth not away? O toil-worn body! shalt thou bathe thyself in seas of heavenly rest? Is not heaven too good for us, brothers and sisters? Can it be that we, poor we, shall ever get inside those pearly gates, or tread the golden streets?

Oh shall we ever see his face? Will he ever kiss us with the kisses of his lips? Will the King immortal, invisible, the only wise God, our Saviour, take us to his bosom, and call us all his own? Oh! shall we ever drink out of the rivers of pleasure that are at the right hand of the Most High? Shall we be among that happy company who shall be led to the living fountains of waters and kill tears be wiped away from our eyes? Ah! that we shall be! for “he is in one mind and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, that he doeth.” “Father, I will that they whom thou hath given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.” That is an immortal omnipotent desire. We shall be with him where he is; his purpose shall be effected, and we shall partake of his bliss. Now rise, ye who love the Saviour, and put your trust in him—rise like men who have God within you, and sit no longer down upon your dunghills. Come, ye desponding ones; if salvation were to be your own work, ye might despair, but since it is his, and he changes not, you must not even doubt.

“Now let the feeble all be strong,  
And make Jehovah’s power their song;  
His shield is spread o’er every saint.  
And thus supported, who can faint?”

If you perish—even the weakest of you—God’s purpose cannot be effected. If you fall, his honor will be stained. If you perish, heaven itself will be dishonored; Christ will have lost one of his members; the Divine Husband will be disappointed in part of his well-beloved spouse; he will be a king whose regalia has been stolen; nay, he will not be complete himself, for the Church is his fullness, and how can he be full if a part of his fullness shall be cast away? Putting these things together, let us take courage, and in the name of God let us set up our banners. He that has been with us hitherto will preserve us to the end, and we shall soon sing in the fruition of glory as we now recite in the confidence of faith, that his purpose is completed, and his love immutable.

This I say by way of close such a subject ought to inspire every man with awe. I speak to some here who are unconverted. It is an awful thought; God’s purpose will be subverted in you. You may hate him, but as he get him honor upon Pharaoh and all his hosts, so will he upon you. You may think that you will spoil his designs: that shall be your idea, but your very acts, though guided with that intent, shall only tend to sum serve his glory. Think of that! To rebel against God is useless, for you cannot prevail. To resist him is not only impertinence but folly. He will be as much glorified by you, whichever way you go. You shall either yield him willing honor or unwilling honor, but either way his purpose in you shall most certainly be subverted. O that this thought might make you bow your heads and say, “Great God, glorify thy mercy in me, for I have revolted; show that thou canst forgive. I have sinned, deeply sinned. Prove the depths of thy mercy by pardoning me. I know that Jesus died, and that he is set forth as a propitiator; I believe on him as such. O God! I trust him: I pray thee, glorify thyself in me by showing what thy grace can do in casting sin behind

thy back, and blotting out iniquity, transgression, and sin.” Sinner, he will do it, he will do it, if thus you plead and thus you pray, he will do it, for there was never a sinner rejected yet, that came to God with humble prayer and faith. Going to God to-day, confessing your sin, and taking hold of Christ, as upon the horns of the altar of mercy, and of sacrifice, you shall find that it was a part of the divine plan to bring you here to-day, to strike your mind with awe, to lead you humbly to the cross, to lead you afterwards joyfully to your God, and to bring you perfect at last before his throne.

God add his blessing for Christ’s sake! Amen.