

TEXT JEREMIAH 31 19

We have named this amazing Scripture as setting forth through the prophet the great cardinal doctrine of grace, even adoption. I endeavoured this morning to make it clear as to why and how the term and truth of adoption occurs in the economy of salvation. Because of the fall of man the image of God was defaced in the human race, and alas, the solemn sombre fact that because of the fall and actual transgression as we are born into the world we are as aliens to God, and worse, foes, sworn enemies, vile rebels. Yet God of His infinite mercy and grace and in the outworking of divine love ordained, - and by the decree of salvation, - that there should be a chosen multitude brought by an act of adoption into filial relationship with Him as His own sons and daughters. I hope to continue from that point where we left off this morning.

The divine method we ended with declaring was partly hidden and partly

revealed. We began by naming the hidden part. He placed among His children, put among His children those who were rebels, foes, aliens, by a great act of God in electing love from all eternity. This is the hidden part. Let us demonstrate the miracle of it. Who would have thought ~~that~~ in the days of extreme suffering and turmoil and havoc created by Saul of Tarsus, - days of turmoil, pain, grief, travail, suffering, so the Church had no rest, when he was bent and determined to accomplish his one mission in life, as he thought, to arrest and exterminate the infant Church of God, and was on his way to Damascus to further his design when he was called by the personal ministry of Christ from heaven, - who would have thought that here was one by God's great act of electing love He had secretly adopted? How this will give heart to those who walk a path of extreme trial who fear God and have access to His Throne! "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?" (Jer. 32, 27) So when the Lord had called him and he had been led by the hand into the city, blinded by the light, the Lord gave a directive to Ananias. He had mildly suggested, almost protested, - "Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem. And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name." "Go thy way," says the Lord. "For he is a chosen vessel unto me. - I have adopted him by electing love. - He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." (Acts 9) So, hidden in the eternal mind and counsel and decree of God, the apostle as he afterwards was, adopted by God by His electing love. That is the hidden part.

I will refer to two other cases before I take a further step. Think of Christ crossing the sea, and as He landed on the shore a man infested with demons met Him. Why did the Lord come? Why cross the sea? Why land at that point on the shore? Because here was a menace and a terror to the whole neighbourhood, one He had secretly adopted by electing love. None knew it, - or did they? We could say concerning Saul of Tarsus and this man, none knew it, or did they? Did any know that the arch-persecutor was set apart by God and adopted by electing Love? I mean now the members of the human race, especially the Church of God. And the demon-infested

man,- did any know? Here was a man who terrorised the population. You can hardly imagine it,- he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying and cutting himself with stones, and breaking his bonds. Imagine one in Hellingly around this Chapel, living in the tombs, and no man could tame him or hind him. Did any know that, hidden in the eternal mind and decree of God here was an adopted son? If you knew what was hidden in the mind and decrees and secret counsel of God, it might be your soul would sing and your cup would overflow with joy. Did any know?

We must dwell on this specific point. We have been following our own apostle recently in the various Churches; the various facets of his life, ministry and spiritual experience. My mind has been arrested by this point. Did any know? did any entertain a hope that a man so cruel, extreme, violent, - you have men of violence to day, and you sympathise with the police force. What a man of violence was Saul! He showed no clemency, even to women. - Did anyone know that here was one secretly set apart, adopted by an act of electing love? My mind has followed this course. As obviously the Churches were under the influence of the anointing of the Spirit, - it was only a few years from Pentecost, - they must have been greatly blessed with virtue, grace and gifts of the Spirit. One of the holy virtues and graces is; "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you." (Matt.5.44) This is a divine ethic, and the blessed company were very active. The Holy Ghost was very active in holy grace and virtue in their souls. I would therefore anticipate that the praying Church of God would believe that God would respond to the prayer of Christ for those who crucified Him, and the prayer of Stephen for those who stoned him. It would be a wonderful mercy if God granted an extension of that virtue now.

So there was the wild man. I do not suppose many are able to enter into this, but I believe there are those God will put in your heart. You have had some in for a long time, it may be from before they were born. (I had an outstanding reason for saying this.) There was a particular event and from that moment they have been in your heart, so before they saw the ~~light~~ light of day they were in your heart, I will say this: you know in a certain phase of life what it is to look on one and love them in measure

and you have a hope of them that they will be called and made manifest as the Lord's adopted children. You look on and say; "Poor lad: poor girl: they are not their own. It is a demon." Do you understand? My friends, if ever you come into this you will walk a deep path. Some seem to go on smoothly for a while. If you are going to heaven you will not come to the end of your days in a smooth path. Some have the roughest part of the journey at the last. It will be your conviction: you say; Poor lad; poor lass. They are not their own."

Look at it! a man, a chosen vessel, as Saul of Tarsus; set apart, adopted by electing love. It was hidden. Was it altogether? I must say to you a word that was spoken in the vestry this morning. "To him that is joined to all the living there is hope." (Eccles.9.4) That is a wonderful word. If you have got a vessel of mercy still in unregeneracy, or Satan the vile usurper still has them under his sway, it is certain that some saint somewhere has them. Some in glory have had them,- there is hope. This is a wonderful truth. A dear mother, a sister, a brother has had this; "there shall not an hoof be left behind." (Exod.10.26) and not a single member of that family will perish. God has joined them and they can never sink. "Can a part be sent to hell?" (626) Never! The day comes when adoption is revealed: the man meets Him. The devils are cast out, and presently, (I do not intend to cover the whole range of the narrative.) they come to see what has been done, and what did they see? They saw revealed, adoption. They saw the man out of whom the devils had departed, gone for ever. When God casts out devils they will never come back. When God casts out a foul spirit the devil will never come back; he has gone for ever. You will be attacked and bruised: that is different. The Lord has claimed you, "He's Mine; I bought him with My blood." (106) Do you see? "and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus." This is the posture of grace, the posture of a child. It is a filial posture; a loving, trusting posture. It is the climate of sonship, a wonderful climate, of liberty, oneness, unbounded love, implicit trust and confidence. "sitting at the feet of Jesus." Adoption revealed in all its glorious hues. You will know when you sit there

"May I sit for ever viewing
Mercy's streams in drops of blood." (158)

You could live and die there, at the feet of Jesus. I am standing physically, but I have known in the last few days to sit there.

"sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed." Clothed in a garment He spent His life to work. It was wrought, - the perfection of His holy incarnation: immaculate conception, virgin birth. Christ would never have accomplished the work of the robe of righteousness apart from the immaculate conception and virgin birth. The impeccability of His holy humanity is outstanding here. All He did was holy, perfect, beautiful. The man was clothed in a garment of God's own providing. You feel your religion and your experience and your state in your profession is almost threadbare; all the pile has worn off. Here is something that is never threadbare, a glorious garment, the holy, spotless righteousness of Christ. It fits you who wear it in the congregation. How many are we wearing a wedding garment?

"A sinner clothed in this rich vest, -if so you are ready when God's time comes.

And garments washed in blood,
Is rendered fit with Christ to feast,
And be the guest of God." (805)

"clothed, and in his right mind." How beautiful! Of course you know well the two stages. I believe I know something of them.

Presently the royal Visitor, the glorious Guest made as if to depart. He was going on: there were others to call, so the hidden part of adoption might be revealed. The dear man prayed to be with Him: he did not want Christ to go and leave him. Some of you in the Sanctuary go back a few years to the blessed time when the Lord delivered you. You wanted to go with Him: I did. The finale is wonderful. You thought, here is a candidate for the Church, and it is true; it is to be accomplished. "Do you think I do all this for you and you remain silent?" The Lord knew how the man wanted to go with Him, and he has, and so will you and I. Blessed be God, it is not so far away. "Go home." There is something to be accomplished. - Are you listening? I know you are. It is not the first time I have told you in the Name of God. You others listen if you like. There is one, or more souls listening. You go home and tell your friends. The bottle must have vent. You cannot keep the wine indefinitely; it must

have vent. "Go home to thy friends," Blessed be God for friends! "and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." There are two things here. One is, to tell his friends, and, he published it. The word 'publish' in the original means one thing; you preach it. He published throughout all that region His blessed Name. Now you see the two parts, the hidden part and the revealed. To take it right through, what a preacher! He knew how to preach deep things. I can say in the Lord's Name, the poor dear man walked deeper than most. See the depths and heights of his preaching on adoption. A foe received a favourite; an alien, a rebel made a child; and now he is preaching the gospel. What a gospel! what a preacher! You will know if you are on the blessed beam I am preaching. I use the ~~term~~ beam, or shaft of light, shining from God. Not all are on it: there is a soul I know is on it.

So this is adoption; hidden and revealed. You can go home and ponder, as Mary did. You have got something to observe. When we read of Joseph, "his father observed the saying." and you will ponder these things in your heart. "For this thing was not done in a corner." (Acts 26.26) If you want to know the meaning of this, I hope the Spirit of God will work it out in your experience. "All Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord." (1 Sam.3.20) It is not done in a corner. The time comes when you realise the blessed Spirit is a Revealer of secrets, and He is pleased to make it known. Not a word from your lips until the appointed time, yet God reveals it. I am thankful to have spoken to a soul. Amen.