

Sermon the Thirty-Second.

PAUL BEFORE AGRIPPA.*

"I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds."—Acts xxvi. 29.

If ever there were an instance in which God fulfilled the truth of His word, it was when Paul stood before Agrippa—"The righteous is bold as a lion." There, on the one side, sat in oriental régál pomp, clad in ermine and purple, the voluptuous Agrippa and his stately wife Bernice; there, too, was the noble Festus; there, also, were the men of honour, as they are termed—the chief captains of the Roman army and the men of wealth; the chief men of the city of Cæsarea,—filling the place of hearing with a crowd which, in the eyes of men, would appear an important assemblage indeed. On the other side stood alone—alone, as far as mortals could see—a single individual. One of that sect "made as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things," is placed at the bar, before these pompous judges of his case—a man whose "bodily presence was weak, and whose speech was contemptible;" yet, when told he had "license to speak for himself," God so fulfilled the promise of Jesus in his experience, "It shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you," that he filled, no doubt, that august assembly with amazement, and perhaps awe and terror, when he stretched forth his hand calmly, though his wrist was weighted with a chain, and exclaimed, "I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused;" and he went on pouring forth, in language inspired by the Holy Spirit, an account of the Lord's dealings with his soul, and a defence which he winds up with: "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those

* Taken down in shorthand when preached, on Wednesday evening, July 3, 1867.

which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles." And such was the power of his words, such the keenness of the edge of his speech upon the unwilling ear and heart of Festus, that even he recognized there was something superhuman about him, and thought him mad, if not possessed, and lifted up his voice, and said, "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad." Most calmly he could reply, "I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness." Then, turning calmly to the king, he said, "For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest." Agrippa was awed; his countenance, no doubt, changed crimson, and pale and crimson again, and at last he faltered out, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Paul, filled with the love of souls, lifted again his shackled hand, and cried, "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds."

Why should he have looked round upon that august assembly, upon that couple clad in royal robes, that noble Festus, those men in the iron armour of old Rome, the men of wealth and commerce of the city of Cæsarea, and vented his heart's wish, that they were both almost and altogether such as he was?

I. *We will inquire what Paul was that he should wish that crowd in the public hall at Cæsarea in his case.*

Did he wish they were what he was *naturally*? He knew he had no need to wish that. He knew they were naturally what he was; he knew that under that royal purple that covered the body of Agrippa, there was a "heart deceitful above all things and desperately wicked;" he knew that in that richly clad bosom of Bernice, there was a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. He knew there was a den of wild beasts, all sorts of abominable corruptions, under all their pompous exterior; he knew, however imposing was their appearance, they were morally, from the sole of the foot even unto the head, without soundness—"all wounds and bruises, and putre-

fyng sores;" he knew they were just what he was by nature—one festering mass of wickedness and sin.

Nor did he wish they were what he was *nationally*; he knew that now the middle wall of partition was broken down, and "that circumcision was nothing, and uncircumcision was nothing; but a new creature." He knew that to be of Israel outwardly was a very unimportant thing; the grand thing was to be an Israelite inwardly—he knew that circumcision was not in the letter, but in the Spirit; and that no circumcision was of importance, but that circumcision of the heart that all have who worship God in the Spirit, who rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. He did not stand up in Jewish pride and self-importance, and wish that his hearers were Jews; he knew they might be Jews, and sink to hell. They might belong to the most privileged nation and have thundering over their heads: "Woe unto thee! for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day." "Thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell."

He did not wish either that they were what he was, *merely doctrinally and professionally*; he knew that they might without salvation hold the same doctrines that he held. He would wish that they did that. I do not wish anybody should believe, even naturally, anything but the truth. James says, "Thou believest that there is one God; *thou doest well*." Some people seem so afraid that persons should know the truth naturally; indeed, I wish that all natural persons knew the truth. I would rather a person should go through this world knowing God's truths than believing the devil's lies; I would rather a person should credit than that he should deny the great truths of Revelation. But that was not what his heart was set upon. He knew they might have a devil's faith, and then have a devil's condemnation; he knew they might have the faith of a Baalam, the faith of a Judas, the faith of a Demas, and perish for ever. What he wanted, was not merely that they should hold the same doctrines that he held; that they should make the same profession that he made, for he knew that there was such a thing as a lamp without oil; there was such a thing as the sitting quietly at the Lord's table without the wedding garment; there was such a thing as tares being planted

side by side with the wheat; there were fruitless branches in the living vine that must be cut off and cast away, whose "end is to be burned."

Well, then, if he did not wish that those who heard him were what he was naturally, nor what he was nationally, nor what he was doctrinally, nor what he was professionally, what did he wish? What was Paul that he should wish that those who listened to him were what he was?

1. He was a *regenerated* man, and he wished they were regenerated men. All real religion begins in regeneration; up to the date when the Spirit of God quickens a person's soul, when a divine work of grace is begun in a sinner's heart, he is without a spark of anything in his bosom that God approves; he has not one ray of heavenly light, one spark of heavenly life—he is destitute of everything that is gracious. Inasmuch as he wished they had a saving religion, he wished they were born again. He was born again, he was regenerated, he was quickened; and that was what he desired for them. Oh, it is from divine life, it is from this heavenly quickening, it is from regeneration, that everything that is gracious springs: every sigh of godly sorrow, every tear of gracious contrition, every breathing of spiritual desire, every acting of living faith, every outgoing of spiritual love, every clinging of divine hope, every step after Christ, every aspiration of the soul heavenward is from new life in the soul. Everything that is precious in the heart, upon the lips, or in the life, springs from this heavenly principle; and where there is not this heavenly fountain, there are none of these heavenly streams. Oh, he knew that every one that listened to him that day was without any religion that God approved of, if they were without regeneration. Do not I know the same thing, that everybody that listens to my voice this evening that is unregenerated is without a vestige of anything in his bosom that God approves—without a spark of spiritual religion? He is "a natural man," and "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto Him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned"—he is "dead in trespasses and sins." It may be that he is embalmed, and kept by a mere profession from sinking down into the putridity, as it were, of open profanity; or it may be that he presents in the eyes of those who look at

him the appearance of life; or it may be that he is a reeking mass of manifest corruptions; still, whichever way, as long as he is without regeneration, he is "dead in trespasses and sins." Paul was a quickened, a regenerated man—one born again of the Spirit of God; and he wished that those who heard him were in the same blessed case.

2. Paul was a *penitent*; he was a man that had been brought to repentance. "By the law," he says, "is the knowledge of sin." "The commandment came, sin revived." His sins as he committed them had been laid in the grave: he lost sight of them, forgot them, or, if he did not utterly forget them, he buried them over with his natural piety. His own good doings and pharisaical ceremonies were the tombs of his sins; but when the Spirit of God began His work in his soul, He caused all these buried sins to come out of their tombs, armed with the curses of a broken law, and thus fixed the arrows of God's threats deep down in his heart, and killed him to his own righteousness and fleshly hopes. "The commandment came, sin revived, and I died." Oh, sin became a burden to him—sin became a source of sorrow to him—sin was confessed, and hated by him! All true penitents are confessors, forsakers, and haters of sin. And Paul wished not only that these people were regenerated, but that, as a result of regeneration, they were true penitents. Oh, he wished they knew what it was to get an answer to that verse of Watts', in substance—

"My faith would lay its hand
On that dear head of Thine,
While like a penitent I stand
And there confess my sin."

3. Paul was a *stripped man*. Paul was, in his natural state, an exceedingly religious man; he was what would perhaps have been called in this day "decidedly pious"—was covered over with a splendid garment of natural and pharisaical religion; but when God began to deal with him, Moses, as it were, approached him with an angry frown, and, laying hold of his wretched pharisaic robe, rent it from him, and dropped it, a heap of rags, dung, and abomination. Thus he was a stripped man, stripped of his own righteousness—

"Stripped of all his fancied meetness
To approach the dread T-AM!"

stripped of all his fancied goodness, power, wisdom, and strength; "through the law he became dead to the law." Truly, he could have said—

"Not the labour of my hands
Can fulfil Thy law's demands;
Could my tears for ever flow,
Could my zeal no respite know,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone."

4. Paul was a man that had *betaken himself to Christ for refuge*. He puts himself amongst the refugees in the sixth of Hebrews; he says, that "*We* might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." If Paul could have seen hanging upon a wall a picture of one of the ancient cities of refuge, and a poor pursued man-slayer rushing towards that city from the glittering sword of the avenger of blood, and never resting until he found himself under the protection of those God-appointed walls of safety, he would have said, "There is Paul's portrait; that man is literally what I have been made spiritually." Oh, now if you saw a picture of a man conscious that the sword of the avenger of blood glittered behind him—conscious that nothing could protect him but the city of refuge, and flying to it, and never resting until he entered it, would that be your picture? Have you ever realized that as a guilty sinner the sword of God's justice is drawn against you? Have you ever realized that nothing can shelter you, nothing can screen you, nothing can protect you, from the wrath you have deserved—nothing but the blood and righteousness—nothing but the finished work of Him who died on Calvary. And oh, have you ever felt it good news to you that—

"A refuge for sinners the Gospel makes known,
'Tis found in the merits of Jesus alone.
The weary, the tempted, the burden'd with sin,
Were never exempted from entering therein?"

Have you ever, attracted by Jesus, the City of refuge, and chased before the sword of angry justice, fled as if for your life to Christ, exclaiming—

"Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Black, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die?"

5. Paul was a *confiding man*, and he wished that they were confiding men. Paul had been awakened to feel something of the value of his soul. Paul had felt that his soul was to him what a woman's only babe would be to her—his darling, as David's soul was to him: "Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling [the margin reads "my only one"] from the power of the dog." Only think, if a mother were carrying her only babe through a street, and a lion rushed upon her, or a party of bull-dogs. Oh, would not she long for a place of safety? would not her babe be her greatest concern, her grand anxiety? Now Paul had felt that his soul was exposed, through the fall and his own transgression, to the lions of God's wrath—"The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion,"—and to be a prey for the dogs of hell. And what had he done with his soul? Had he hugged it to his own bosom, and said, "I will take care of it?" had he taken it to priests or popes, ordinances or doctrines? had he wrapt it up in a mere profession, embalmed it with a name to live? No, no; he had been led by the Spirit of God to see and feel that there were no hands that could receive his soul and protect it but the hands that were nailed to the tree; that it was safe in no bosom but in the bosom out of which there had gushed a stream that quenched the ire of the sword of justice; that there was no robe under the folds of which it could be secure but the robe of Emmanuel's righteousness; and he, encouraged by the Gospel, and helped by the Spirit, had taken his poor exposed soul, his darling, his only one, and had committed it to the safe custody of a bleeding Christ. Oh, by the light and teaching of the Spirit of God, he had seen Christ as the Gospel represents Him—with His once nail-pierced, bleeding hands, outstretched in the Gospel, to receive the soul of any poor, wretched, hell-deserving sinner that brings his lost soul and casts it into His bleeding hands, and he had been helped by the Spirit of God to bring his exposed and lost soul, and commit it to the safe custody of Christ, and so to believe the promise of Christ, that it should "in no wise be cast out;" that He would give it rest; that it should "never perish;" that none should "pluck it out of His hands,"—that he exclaimed, "I know whom I have believed; and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that

day." And how Paul longed that all that heard him that day—every one of them, if it were God's heavenly will, might take his perishing soul and cast it into the same bleeding, loving, mighty hands!

6. Paul was a *grateful, love-constrained man*. "The love of Christ constraineth us." Oh, he who had had his eyes opened to see that a richly-deserved hell yawned at his feet, that a sword justly drawn against him glittered over his head; he who had seen in the light of the Spirit's teaching by the word of God, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners—that He invites the weary and the heavy-laden to come to Him, and promises that He will give them rest—that He promises to cast out none who come to him—had been led to come to Christ, and build his everlasting all upon that Foundation against which the gates of hell shall never prevail; and, eased of his load, delivered from his fetters, relieved of his fears, his wounds healed, his sorrows soothed, his heart in grateful love was going hither and thither, wherever the Lord might call him, serving and glorifying God because he had been "bought with a price." Love was constraining him to glorify God with his body and his spirit, which were the Lord's. He could have understood Cowper's hymn, speaking of his former pharisaic works:

"Then, all my servile works were done; (I could do no more)
A righteousness to raise me up, and render me more
Now, freely chosen in His Son, (I freely choose His ways.)

The cross was to the apostle the starting-point in the path of obedience. It was his motive to serve and glorify God. He was not working that he might be saved; he was working because he was saved. He was not working that he might be delivered out of the hands of his enemies; but he was working because he was delivered from his enemies. He knew that text for himself: "That we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, may serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life." He, Isaiah-like, had stood before the Lord, and cried; "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips." His eyes had seen the King, the Lord of hosts. He had had his unclean lips touched with altar-fire, and his iniquity removed; his guilt taken away, and he therefore, love con-

strained, stood, Isaiah-like, with his ears open to the call of heaven—"Who will go for us?" "Here am I, send me." Thus he was a love-constrained servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

7. Paul was also a *wrestler*. He knew what it was to seize by the collar, as it were, Satan, the world, and the flesh, sin, and self; he knew what it was for Satan, the world, flesh, sin, and self to seize him; and between him and his foes there was a constant wrestling—a struggle for victory. Through the whole of his life, after he was blessed with grace, he found that sin, Satan, the flesh, and the world were seeking to throw him down; and, on the other hand, he, with his regenerated soul—his new-born soul—was seeking to throw down Satan, the world, and sin, and all his spiritual foes. He was a soldier—a soldier of the cross; he had been enlisted in the Lord's spiritual army; he had been equipped with the whole armour of God, and was going forth, strengthened with the Lord's strength—"strengthened with might, by the Spirit, in the inner man"—wrestling against Satan, and all that is in the world, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." He was a living fish struggling up the stream, mighty as the current might be, and, at times, too mighty for him, so that he was pushed back, and exclaimed, with a sigh, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And yet being one of those clean fishes that have fins and scales, though his fins sometimes seemed pushed back by the might of the current, they yet struck out again; as his spiritual oars; and on he struggled against the tide of sin, until he closed his eyes in death—until he left the stream of strife for the still waters of bliss. He wished that those that heard him that day were also strugglers. He saw they were dead fish floating with the stream; he saw that the world, with its pomp, and glory, and profits, and false honours—he saw that the flesh, with its lusts—had got them in the power of their current, and were sweeping them on to the gulf of eternal woe; but he, the poor prisoner at the bar—the only one in that hall that men of sympathy would pity—was indeed the only one to be envied. He felt that he was a living fish struggling up the current. He was a Christian soldier, fighting not at uncertainty, as one who beats the air; he knew that

his Captain would bring him off more than a victor. That hand of his that now grasped the sword would soon take the palm; that head of his that often ached under the helmet would soon be graced with a laurel; those feet of his that, though shod with "the preparation of the Gospel of peace," had to tread a flinty way, would soon tread the gold-paved streets of the celestial city; so that he was one who was "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ," which in His time He shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. Oh, he might well wish they were what he was! If he looked downward, the Rock, that hell could never shake, was beneath him.

"On the Rock of Ages founded,
Nought could shake his sure repose."

If he looked around him, he had bulwarks and towers mightier than earth and hell, so that he could rejoicingly exclaim, "Nothing shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Looking back, he could see

"His name in life's fair book set down;"

looking upward, he could see he had "an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous;" looking onward, he could see there was in reserve for him "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." Oh, he might well look round, and pity the bosom that was bedecked with gold, and pearls, and ermine, and purple! He might well look round, and pity the poor Roman captains, who were men of renown, because they could use so adroitly the weapons that are carnal, and are used against flesh and blood. He might well look round, and feel that, so far from his being the only one in the court that was an object of sympathy, he was the only one whose position was desirable; for it was most likely that he was the only one there who had the grace of God. He might well, therefore, answer King Agrippa's "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," with, "Would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." But

II. We will inquire *why he wished that they were what he was.* He wished they were what he was,

1. *Because he knew they would be damned if they were not.*

He knew it, he believed it. Oh, what a mighty thing is faith! "I believed: therefore have I spoken." Oh, what a solemn view he took of the moral and legal state of that assembly! No doubt he saw that hell's mouth was open to receive them. He saw, as it were, destruction with one jaw under that august, that grand, assembly, and the other jaw over that gorgeous scene, which would soon shut its mouth upon them all, if grace did not pluck them from its jaws. What a solemn sight! Now God knows every one of you—those of you who are not regenerated, who have never been brought to repentance, who have never known anything of flying for refuge to the cross of Jesus, who have never known anything of committing your souls into the hands of Christ—living and dying in that condition, the pit will shut its mouth upon you. He saw they would soon be in hell if they did not know what he knew, and possess what he possessed—the grace of God; and, though he is the man that wrote the eighth and ninth of Romans, though he bowed in most entire subjection to the sovereignty of the great Potter that "maketh one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour," yet his heart boiled over with tender love for immortal souls. If you cannot see the harmony between these two things, I pity your eyesight; I think I can not only see, but in some little measure feel, a harmony between those things; for, while I would bow down in adoring awe before the throne of the great Potter, who has a right to make of the same lump one vessel to honour and another to dishonour—who has a right to love Jacob and hate Esau before they were born—who has chosen a people in Christ before the foundation of the world,—yet I hope I know what it is to long and yearn for the salvation of immortal souls. That same Jesus who said, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes," was the same Jesus who wept over Jerusalem. I could not put that harmony into words. I can feel it in my bosom, and wish to manifest it in the full proclamation of the doctrines of sovereign grace, and the zealous, earnest use of means for the salvation of souls. Paul's heart was not hardened towards his fellow-men by his knowledge of the doctrines of grace. His heart was not narrowed up into unconcernedness, or frozen into in-

difference to his fellow-creatures by his knowledge of the great truths of sovereign favour. No. The moment he heard anything in the shape of an anxious word coming out of the lips of the royal Agrippa, the spring of his longing for the salvation of sinners was set flowing over, and he exclaimed, "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." Oh, he was sure they would soon be in hell if they were not "born again;" and I am sure that you who hear me now who are not born again, will soon be in everlasting misery, if no change takes place in you. "Ye must be born again." "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." "He that believeth not shall be damned." Regeneration here, or hell hereafter; repentance here, or wrath hereafter; Christ here, or the vengeance of heaven hereafter; salvation here, or damnation hereafter, must be the portion of every one of you.

2. But there was another thing that would make Paul long for his hearers to be what he was; he felt if they were what he was, *what great things in their favour would be proved.* If they were regenerated, he knew it would prove they were God's elect. We have often heard the text quoted, "Secret things belong unto God, and things that are revealed belong to us and our children," as a reason why nothing should be said about election. "You know that election is one of God's secrets." True, it is a secret hidden in God's eternal mind; whom He has chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. But when any one is made through grace what Paul was, it is no longer a secret; it is no longer one of the secret things that belong unto God: the secret is out; it then becomes a thing revealed that belongs to us. Oh, if ever you were quickened into spiritual life, convinced of sin, stripped of your own righteousness, led to the Lord Jesus; if your soul has taken refuge (though it be with the most feeble faith) in the finished work of a dear Redeemer, what does it prove? It proves that you are one of God's elect. "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." You are "loved with an everlasting love," if "loving-kindness" has "drawn" you to the Saviour. Do not be frightened at the great doctrine of God's electing

love if you are brought to Christ. And I am sure a sinner has reason to be frightened at everything until he comes to Christ. Out of Christ you have just the same reason for alarm spiritually as those men had literally who were not in the ark; but if you have been brought to Christ—if you have fled for refuge to the Lord Jesus—why then it proves that the hand of everlasting love wrote your name with letters of endless favour in the Lamb's book of life before the foundation of the world. Calvary's tree is the spot to learn your election. How many long to know before they come to Christ whether they are God's elect! You cannot know it before you come to the cross. It is not to be proved without coming to Christ. If you heard a voice saying to you as loud as thunder to-night, and if we heard it too, "Mary So-and-so, John So-and-so, you are one of God's elect," I would not believe it if you were not fleeing to Christ. And if you have truly fled to Jesus, I believe, and you have ground to believe, your election without such a voice.

"Free election, known by calling; a privilege divine."

If you want to know whether you are one of God's elect, ask, "Have I fled as a guilty sinner to the Saviour?" If you have thus fled to the Saviour, and sheltered confidently under the cross, and are seeking grace to serve the Lord Christ, battling with sin, and seeking to do the Lord's will, then you may

"Look back and see your name
In life's fair book set down;
Look onward and behold
Eternal joys your own."

Besides, Paul knew if they were such as he was, it would prove them *sheep of Christ.* Paul knew that if Agrippa, and Festus, and Bernice, and those captains and mighty men, were ever made what he was—if they were regenerated, if they were stripped of their own righteousness, and brought to Christ, and led to take Christ's yoke upon them—it would prove they were the ransomed of the Lord. The *brought sheep* are the *bought sheep*: "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring." If power has brought you to Christ, blood bought you on the tree. If a preached Christ has effectually attracted you, a bleeding Christ

has purchased you. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." And if you have returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of souls—are going to Him that died on the cross, to the blood of sprinkling, the feast of fat things—then you are the ransomed of the Lord; for it is "the ransomed of the Lord, that shall return, and come to Zion." If you have really fled for refuge to the Saviour, though you may be the weakest believer that ever hung upon Him, yet you may sing—

"Dearly I'm bought, highly esteemed,
Redeemed, with Jesus' blood, redeemed."

Paul knew, too, that if they were made what he was, *it would prove that a good work was begun in them, that would be carried out and performed until the day of the Lord Jesus.* He knew they would have an indestructible religion if they had a religion like what he possessed. He knew that if they had a spark kindled up in their hearts like the spark that was kindled up in his heart, though hell should do its worst to put it out, it would never be quenched. You remember Bunyan's beautiful figure of a flame burning against a wall, and there stood the enemy pouring a continual stream of water upon the burning flame; but the more he tried to quench it, the more it burned. "Christian" could not understand it; but he went round behind the wall, and there he saw a hidden-unseen friend to the flame pouring in oil, and keeping it burning in spite of the enemy. Paul knew that if they ever had that flame kindled up in their souls, that he had, they would have a flame which though sin, and earth, and hell, should seek to quench, they would never succeed in putting out; for they would have that good work begun in them that should be carried on and performed unto the day of the Lord Jesus." He knew, too, that if they were made what he was, it would prove that Jesus had gone to glory and taken possession of a mansion for them, and would certainly secure their occupying it.

"For whom He stretched His bleeding hands,
In heaven a vacant mansion stands,
Which they must surely fill."

He knew that if they were but made what he was, it would prove that the hand of Christ had taken hold of them, and none should pluck them from His grasp; that the Lord would guide them with His counsel

down to death, sustain them through the flood, and put them as gems in the crown of Christ; that Jesus would present them to the Father without "spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." Oh, if your knowledge of the doctrines of grace does not make you long that people should be delivered from going down to hell, I am sure you do not know the doctrines as Paul knew them. You may know the *same doctrines*, but you do not know them in *the same way*. If you have hold of the right end of the truth—if you have hold of the truth with a gracious hand—it will not freeze your hearts into indifference about people's souls. I am sure any one that feels the truth aright sometimes as he meets a crowd in the street, feels his heart is ready to bleed with the thought that, perhaps, the greater part of those people are hurrying on to hell. Or, if he be a minister, and looks at an assembly gathered before him, his heart is ready to bleed at the thought that many, and perhaps a large majority, of those who are listening to him are on their way to everlasting misery; and his heart yearns for the salvation of their souls; he knows the terrors of the Lord, and he persuades men; and I am sure Paul would feel moved by all the horrors of an everlasting hell, by all the joys of a blissful heaven; by all that could glorify God in the life of a believer on earth, when he exclaimed, "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." Does not this show what is the right feeling of a minister of the Gospel of God's grace? and may not I say, although I confess to having only a quarter of a spark of what the Apostle had a full flame of—yet must not even I say—that I have just the feeling, in its measure, that Paul had? I would to God that all of you who hear me this evening were regenerated souls; for if never new-born, you will perish for ever. "Ye must be born again." I would to God that you were true penitents; "For except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish,"—that you were of those who have fled for refuge to Christ; for if not, you will have no hiding-place from the wrath of God. Jesus is the only Hiding-place from the storm—the only Covert from the tempest. I would that you were all God's servants; for if not, you must be serving divers lusts and vanities; and "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die," whereas

"If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live." In one word, Paul longed for the salvation of those people's souls, and the glory of God in their lives, and deaths, and everlasting happiness. Is not that what I long for? Oh, what a mercy if each one of you could say, "I can gratify your wishes: I can tell you that already through God's grace I am quickened; I am led to confess and forsake sin, am stripped of my own righteousness, and led to see beauty in Christ, that I should desire Him: I have fled for refuge to the Saviour; His yoke is on my neck, His are the efforts of my life, His the affections of my heart. I am seeking to serve Him; I am battling with the world, Satan, self, and sin; and looking forward to that blissful period when, free from the mischief sin has wrought, I shall see Him as I want to see Him, and be what I want to be, and serve Him as I want to serve Him?" Oh, I would give you from my heart the right-hand of Christian fellowship. I say, brethren and sisters, if sin is made to you a burden, and if your own righteousness has been stripped from your souls—if Christ has been made "the one thing needful to you?"—if you hang alone on His finished work— if you wear His yoke upon your necks,—then I say you are children of God; you are God's elect; you are bought with the blood of the Lamb; you are born again; you are in the narrow path; you are Christian soldiers; you are true pilgrims; heaven is your home; you are both almost and altogether what Paul was; and then in the world of bliss, you will be what Paul is, and sing, as Paul does, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain."

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