

The Blessedness of the Man whom the Lord hath Chosen

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"Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts; we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thine holy temple." Psalm 65:4

There are many professors of religion who have the greatest horror possible of the doctrine of election. Awful indeed is the length to which the enmity of the carnal mind has carried some in their blasphemous speeches against this scriptural truth. There are those who have said, that if God has arbitrarily chosen some to salvation, and rejected others, he is no better than a tyrant or Moloch; and others have declared, that they would sooner be with Satan in hell than dwell with such a God in heaven. But I will not pollute my lips with the awful blasphemies that ungodly men, both professing and profane, have vented against this branch of divine sovereignty. In spite of all their indignation and enmity, it still stands as an immutable truth, that "the election hath obtained it, and the rest are blinded;" (Rom. 11:7,) and that "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." (9:16.)

Now, these very same persons who think it most unreasonable that God should exercise his election, think it very reasonable that they should exercise theirs. For instance; they think it highly reasonable that they should choose their own partners in life; yet they think it very unreasonable that Christ should choose his own Bride. What would they think if they were denied this right of election? or

if they were compelled to take in marriage any woman that chose to thrust herself upon them? And is it not equally unreasonable, in a divine sense, that Christ should be forced to take into union and communion with himself every proud pharisee or presumptuous professor that chooses to make a claim upon *him*?

Again; they think it highly reasonable that they should have the right of choosing their own abode, and selecting the house where they should dwell; yet they think it highly unreasonable that God should choose the persons whom he may make his temple, and in whom he may take up his abode for ever.

So also; they would think it highly unreasonable, if they were not allowed to choose that business or profession in life, which should most display their abilities, and open up the greatest avenue for profit or praise; yet they think it highly unreasonable that God should choose a people in whom he will be glorified.

"But," they might say, "the parallel does not hold good; there is no analogy in the case. You are speaking of the things of time, in which choice may be allowed; but election regards eternity, where we certainly cannot allow it at all." But **we do [perhaps this should be, do we?]** not find that, just in proportion to the length of time, they claim to themselves the right of choice? For instance; a person might put up with a very inconvenient apartment for a night, but he would not think of choosing such a place as a habitation for life; or you might stay with a person for an hour, whose company you would not like for a month. So that just in proportion to the length of time, we claim to have a right of choice. May we not carry this into divine things? Is not God perfectly at liberty to choose the persons who shall dwell with him for

ever in glory? And has he not, as a Sovereign, a clear right to select whom he will to be partakers of his happiness? Men may rebel at these doctrines, and kick at these mountains of brass; but "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker!" Sooner or later, all such contentions will end in the destruction of the contenders. It is our wisdom and mercy not to cavil, but to submit. And if God has given to us any testimony of our election in Christ, they will answer a hundred cavils better than any arguments, and satisfy our souls more than a thousand reasons.

We find, in the text, a blessing pronounced upon the man whom God hath chosen, "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest." We do not find David venting his gall and enmity against election; but rather pouring out his heart in thanksgiving that God had a people in whom he would be glorified, and especially pronouncing a blessing upon the happy individual on whom that eternal choice is fixed.

With God's blessing, we will take up the text in the same order as the Holy Ghost has revealed it; and consider its different branches and various clauses, as it lies before us in the word of truth.

I.—It begins, "*Blessed is the man whom thou choosest.*" Why should this man be blessed? Because election is the root of all blessings, the source and fountain of every spiritual mercy that the soul receives. This is the ever-flowing and overflowing fountain, from which all the streams of mercy and grace come into the heart, and in which the redeemed will bathe throughout the never-ending ages of eternity.

But let us look a little closer into the nature of this choice.

1. We observe at once, that it is a *personal and individual*

choice that the Holy Ghost here speaks of, "Blessed is *the man* whom thou chooseth." This makes election such a personal matter, that it is fixed, not upon nations and countries, and such loose generalities, but upon *individuals*. And in this way God always seals it upon the conscience, by bringing it home with power to the heart of each individual object of his favour.

2. It is also a choice *in Christ*; as we read, "According as he hath chosen us in him" (that is, Christ), "before the foundation of the world." (Eph. 1:4.) The election of the people of God is in the Son of his love. He is their covenant Head, in whom they have their eternal standing. They are chosen not for any works, goodness, or worthiness in them; but they are elected in Christ, "to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he has made us accepted in the Beloved."

3. But this choice is *unto eternal life*; as we read (Acts 13:48), "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." And how much is summed up in this expression, "*eternal life!*" that when time shall be no more, when the wicked shall be turned into hell, and this changeable scene shall have closed, then the happiness of the redeemed shall be but commencing, a happiness that will know no termination, but continue through never-ending ages.

4. But in choosing his people, the Lord has made ample provision by the way, that *they shall not*, as men say, "*live as they list*;" that they shall not abuse this doctrine unto licentiousness, or give free scope to their base lusts and passions. We, therefore, read, that they are "elect unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:2); and that they are "God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2:10.) So that

when this precious truth of election is sealed upon the conscience, so far from relaxing the obligations to holiness, it binds a man more closely to obedience, and causes him to bring forth those fruits of righteousness which are to the praise and glory of God. Where the doctrine of election does not do this for a man, it does nothing for him. If it do not constrain him by every sweet and holy tie to yield his body, soul, and spirit, to the service of God; if it bring him not out of the world, and separate him as a vessel of honour made meet for the Master's use; if it do not bind him with cords of love, to the throne of God, it is but a doctrine floating in the head, but a speculation in the natural understanding. It is not a truth sealed upon the heart, and received into the conscience under the teachings of God the Spirit.

II.—But we pass on to consider what flows out of this eternal choice of God. "Blessed is the man whom thou chooseth, and *causest to approach unto thee.*" The original choice is the root; the approach unto God is the fruit. The one precedes and is the cause of the other; for every one whom God chooses he causes to approach unto him.

Now, what and where are we by nature? We should never forget our base original. The Lord tells us to "look unto the rock whence we are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence we are digged." (Isa. 51:1.) We must never forget our fallen condition; as the Lord bade his people confess, "A Syrian ready to perish was my father." (Deut. 26:5.) Thus he bids us consider our fallen state by nature, that by looking into that horrible pit and miry clay, we may see how the hand of the Lord has mercifully brought us out.

What and where are we, then, by nature. At a distance from God, alienated from him, carnal, callous, reckless, dead in sin, without one spiritual feeling or heavenly desire, without

one holy breathing or panting to know God, and to have his mercy revealed to our conscience. An impenetrable barrier closing up all spiritual access, exists between God and our soul. The Lord in choosing his people, has not chosen them to die as they were born; he has not elected them to live in ignorance, enmity, and sin, and then, when death comes, to take them to heaven without a change. That is not God's election. But God having "chosen them that they should be holy and without blame before him in love," brings them to the spiritual knowledge of himself, that they may thus be made new creatures, and made meet by a divine work upon their consciences for the inheritance of the saints in light. He therefore breaks down the barriers between himself and their souls. But he makes us feel there is a barrier before he breaks it down. What are these barriers?

1. The first barrier that stands between a just God and a guilty soul, is *the holy law*. Did you ever notice the place where the altar is first spoken of under the law, and the spot which it also occupied in the tabernacle? Where do we find an altar of burnt-offering first commanded? In Exod. 20:24, the very chapter where the law was given. No sooner had God revealed the law with thunderings and lightnings from Mount Sinai, than he speaks of the altar which they were to build for him; typically showing, that no sooner is the sinner condemned by the law, than there is the altar of Christ's atoning blood to flee to. Did you ever also notice the situation which the brazen altar occupied in the tabernacle? It was not in the "holy of holies," where none but the High Priest entered once a year; nor "in the holy place," to which the Priests alone had access; but it was in the court, in the entrance before the holy place, in order that all Israel might see it. "And he put the altar of burnt-offering, by the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation." (Ex. 40:29.) The altar of burnt-offering, with its ever burning fire, was

typical of the offering of the Lord Jesus, and it was so placed, that its smoke and flame was the first sight that presented itself to the eye of the worshipper. Thus, when we first see and feel the guilt of sin under a broken law, we cannot advance till there is a sight of the altar. "We have an altar," says the Apostle. (Heb. 13:10.) But when this altar (that is, the sacrifice and propitiation for sin which Jesus made), is made known in the soul, it breaks down the partition wall, and enables the soul to draw near unto God.

2. But besides this barrier of guilt from a broken law, there is also another, which arises from the soul being penetrated with *shame*. When God the Spirit touches the conscience with his finger, and charges the sin home upon it, it not merely produces a feeling of guilt, but also confusion of face. Our first parents, till they had broken God's command knew no shame; nor do we till we know we are sinners in his sight. Now we cannot draw near with confidence unto the Lord, so long as we feel shame before him. He has, then, provided means to remove this sense of inward shame; he has appointed "the blood of sprinkling" to purge the conscience from filth, and dead works, to serve the living God. Through the one propitiation, spiritually made known, the conscience becomes cleansed, and the soul finds access to God through the blood of the Lamb; therefore we read, "For your shame ye shall have double." (Isa. 61:7); and again, "Fear not, for thou shalt not be ashamed; neither be thou confounded, for thou shalt not be put to shame; for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more." (Isa. 54:4.)

3. But we want something more than this. The soul convinced of sin, and deeply penetrated with shame and confusion of face, needs something more than the sight of that atoning blood that cleanseth from all sin. It wants with it

the secret drawings of the Spirit, as the Bride says, "Draw me, we will run after thee." (Sol. Song 1:4); and as the Lord speaks to the church, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." (Jer. 31:3.) We find this sweetly set forth in the Canticles, "My beloved put in his hand by the hole in the door, and my bowels were moved for him." (5:4.) The Lord is here represented as putting forth his hand into the soul, and thus secretly drawing up the heart and affections for himself.

Under these inward drawings and secret movements of the Spirit upon the heart, the Lord causes us to approach unto him. We cannot approach him in faith and affection until he draws us with the cords of love, and the bands of a man; but when he puts forth his hand and touches the heart, he secretly yet irresistibly draws the soul near to himself.

4. But we must feel something more still to be caused to approach, for we are very backward to draw near to God. Guilt, sin, and shame darken the mind, harden the heart, and numerous things, springing from the world and the flesh together, keep us back from the Lord. So that to cause us to approach unto him, he gives some glimpses of his reconciled countenance, some intimations of his favour, some droppings-in of a gracious promise just suited to our state, or some heart melting testimony that meets every want. Under these the heart becomes broken, softened, and humbled, and is enabled to approach unto the Lord.

But *how* do we approach him? If we approach him aright, it is with confession. We cannot, if God has touched our conscience with his finger, rush recklessly and heedlessly into his presence; for there will be in the heart, under divine teachings, a reverence of his great name, a godly fear, a prostration of spirit before him, with confession and

acknowledgment of sin. But this is humbling work. We find it so naturally. If we have done that which is wrong, how hard and humbling it is to make acknowledgment! How it goes against the pride of our heart! What a humbling place it is to take, to have to confess we have acted wrongly or foolishly! So spiritually, it is a very humbling place to take, to come with confession, and acknowledge and bewail our manifold backslidings, our heart idolatries, the base and aggravated sins that our consciences at times feel and groan under. Yet after all it is sweet to confess. Humility is far sweeter than pride; confession is far sweeter than self-justification. It is so naturally. When the wife has offended the husband, or when the husband has offended the wife; when the child has offended the parent, or the servant the master; whatever secret gratification there may be in self-justification and obstinate stubbornness, it is really much sweeter to confess. Much more so spiritually. When we can confess our sins, when the tears roll down our cheeks, when the bosom heaves with sobs of genuine contrition, there is a pleasure and sweetness in this honest confession far greater than in the devilish gratification of standing out proudly and presumptuously against God and conscience. But the Lord himself must touch the heart; and when he touches it, confession will flow out. Like the rock that Moses struck, our hearts naturally are hard and impenetrable; but no sooner was it smitten by the wonder-working rod than the waters gushed out. So no sooner are our hearts struck by the word of God than brokenness, contrition, and confession flow forth. With these, there will be prayer also and supplication; as we read, "They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them." (Jer. 31:9.) This is the way in which the soul approaches the Lord; not with hardened presumption, but with supplication, earnest breathings, filial pantings, and desires after the manifestations of himself; so that the soul pours itself, so to speak, into the bosom of God.

5. But we cannot approach unto the Lord without some measure of divine faith, as the Apostle says, "He that cometh to God must believe that he is." (Heb. 11:6.) So that when the Lord would cause us to approach unto him, he kindles and draws out into exercise a measure of faith in our hearts; and by this faith we take hold of God's strength, as we read, "Let him take hold of my strength that he may make peace with me." (Isa. 27:5.) By faith we embrace the promises; by faith we eye the Saviour at God's right hand, on his throne of grace and glory; by faith we view the blood of sprinkling; by faith we look into the compassionate and sympathizing bosom of Jesus; by faith we believe the truth as it is revealed in him; and by faith these things are laid hold of, brought in, embraced, and in a measure enjoyed in the heart. What a mercy it is to be enabled thus to approach unto God in Christ! He is the source of light and life; every blessing for time and eternity comes from him; and by approaching unto him, we get a measure of these blessings. If we are in darkness, when the Lord causes the soul to approach unto him, light comes and dispels it. If we are in heaviness, and the Lord causes us to approach unto him, he disperses it; for though "Weeping may endure for a night, yet joy cometh in the morning." (Psa. 30:8.) If trials—family, bodily, or providential—if heavy weights and burdens press down, when the Lord causes us to approach unto him, and we get near that eternal and inexhaustible Source of bliss and blessedness, these afflictions become lightened, at least for a time are removed off the shoulders, crooked things become straight; and rough places are made plain. Have you not found it so? And if you know what it is to approach unto the Lord, however hard you may feel, whatever darkness covers the mind, whatever iciness may seem to freeze up every breathing of our soul, yet when the Lord gives us power to come near unto him (for we have no power to do it ourselves) a measure of relief and ease generally follow.

Now, if I am parching for thirst, where must I go to alleviate it? Must I not go to the Fountain of living waters? If I am cold, shall I revive myself by dipping my hand into ice? I must go near the source of warmth and heat; I must get near the sun. And so spiritually, if I am cold, torpid, frozen, so as to have no spiritual feeling in exercise, how am I to get warmth to revive my icy and benumbed soul? By approaching the Sun of Righteousness. If I am hungry naturally, how is that hunger to be removed? Not by talking or thinking about food, but by partaking of the bread put into my hand. So if I hunger spiritually, my hunger can only be satisfied by feeding upon the bread of life. What a libel then upon the doctrine of election it is, to say, "Because a man is elected he may live as he pleases; that he may be a quickened vessel of mercy, and yet be a vile monster of iniquity." O what a libel! The Psalmist says, "Blessed is the man whom thou chooseth, and causeth to approach unto thee." If, then, the Lord chooses a man, he causes that man to approach unto him. Now is it not a libel upon the character of God, to say, that a man can approach unto a holy God, and yet live in unholiness; that he can draw near to an all-pure and blessed Jehovah, and yet wallow in sin and filth; that he can be brought nigh to a God hating and abhorring sin with perfect hatred, and yet indulge in every vile gratification. Why if I approach unto God I must get some resemblance unto him. It is so in all cases. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but the companion of fools shall be destroyed." (Prov. 13:20.) Does not worldly intercourse make us worldly; and does not spiritual intercourse tend to make us spiritual? As we draw near to gracious, well-taught people, do we not often find some measure of spirituality communicated through them to our hearts? And can we draw near unto the Fountain of light and life, as a holy sin-hating God, and then say, "we may live in sin and do the things which that holy God abhors?" I will tell you when it is we can

do things which God hates. It is when we live at a distance from him, when there is no approach unto that Fountain of light and life, when the world has a firm possession of us, when we are unable to draw near through darkness of mind, and the soul is gone out after its idols. It is not by approaching near unto the Lord that we commit sin; that purifies, cleanses, and spiritualizes the heart, that destroys the power of sin; and the more we approach unto him, the more power and grace we receive out of him to mortify sin, and crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts.

III.—Our next point is to consider, *why* the Lord causes the man of his choice to approach unto him; "*that he may dwell in thy courts.*" What are these courts? The courts of the temple. The temple was a figure of Jesus, which shadowed forth his holy human nature. And as God dwelt visibly in the temple, by the Shekinah on the mercy-seat, so does the Godhead dwell in the Lord Jesus Christ; "for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." (Col. 2:9.) That, then, is the reason why the temple is so much spoken of in God's word, and why so many blessings are connected with it. And thus in the text, when it is said, "that he may dwell in thy courts," it is not meant merely the courts of the earthly temple, but to dwell in those courts which the earthly temple shadowed forth. This is why we are caused to approach unto God. It is to dwell near unto Jesus; it is to have a sense of mercy, pardon, and peace received into the conscience out of his glorious fulness.

But let us look a little at the word *dwell*—"that he may *dwell* in thy courts." It signifies a fixed habitation; so that the man whom God chooses, and causes to approach unto himself, has a fixed abode in the courts of the Lord's house. This implies, that he is brought out of the world, no more to go back; that he is cut off from a dead form of religion, to be

wrapped up in it no more; that he is brought out of every thing earthly, sensual, and devilish, so as to be transformed by the renewing of his mind; that he is brought into a spiritual, holy, and experimental relationship with God, and knows something of living under the shadow of the Almighty. The courts were connected with the temple, were a part of the temple, and the sanctity of the temple were communicated to them. These courts were built after a divine pattern, as we read, "Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit, of the courts of the house of the Lord." (1 Chr. 27:11, 12.) None but the priests could enter into the temple, and none but the High Priest could enter into the most holy place; but the courts of the temple, which were part of the temple, were open to all the children of Israel. There is a sweet figure in this, that those who dwelt in the courts of the temple were sanctified so to speak, by the temple. It was in the court of the temple that the sacrifices were offered; in the holy place that the altar of incense and the table of shew-bread stood; and in the most holy place the ark of the covenant, with the mercy-seat, on which the Shekinah, or divine glory rested; whence God is said to "dwell between the cherubims;" (Psa. 81:1) and there too the Spirit of prophecy resided. The holy human nature of Jesus, and his mediatorial work, grace, and glory, were all shadowed forth by the temple, (it being built after the pattern of the tabernacle in the wilderness;) and this was the reason why the believing Israelites of old so loved and looked to it. Thus Jonah, in the very belly of hell, said, "I will look unto thy holy temple" (Jonah 2:4), and Daniel, when in captivity in Babylon, though death was the penalty, opened his window three times a day towards Jerusalem, his eyes looking towards the place where the temple stood, though then in ruins. In the temple then every thing dwelt to meet the wants and necessities of spiritual worshippers. It is so in him whom the temple feebly

shadowed forth. I am guilty, filthy, defiled; where shall I go, but to the temple? for there is the brazen laver, typifying the fountain open for sin and uncleanness. I am a poor guilty criminal in myself; I need mercy; where must I go for it, but to the mercy-seat sprinkled with atoning blood; I am often in great darkness of mind; I need light; where must I go for it but to the Shekinah, where the light shines, the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ? I have continually enigmas to unravel, dark mysteries to be solved; where shall I go but to the temple, that the all-wise Prophet may untie those intricate knots, clear up these dark experiences, unwind the mysterious providence, and bring relief under my various exercises? In the temple too all the love of God is concentrated, for it is in Christ alone that the love of God is displayed. "Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 4:10.) In the temple of Christ's human nature the love of God is manifested. There is no love out of that temple. No; nothing but wrath, and indignation, and consuming fire; nothing but righteous vengeance of God against sin and unholiness out of the Person, blood and righteousness of God's dear Son. Do I want love, then, in my heart? It is to be enjoyed in the courts of the temple where alone this love is manifested. Do I want reconciliation, pardon, peace, and every gospel blessing? It is in the temple, in the courts of the temple, where God's honour dwelleth, that all these blessings are bestowed upon spiritual worshippers.

Thus it was that David could bless the man so highly favoured. He saw how favoured he was whom God had chosen to inherit these mercies; he felt what a blessing arose from this eternal choice, in God causing the poor sinner to approach near the footstool of his mercy; he knew too what a blessing there was wrapped up in the act of coming to the

courts of God's temple, and dwelling therein as a spiritual worshipper; and under these feelings he cried, in another place, "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." (Psalm 84:10.) And so says every spiritual worshipper, who has seen the glory of God in the temple; who has tasted peace, pardon, mercy, love, blood and salvation through a crucified Jesus, and felt glory dropping into his conscience under the unction of the Holy Ghost. He would rather have the meanest place in the Lord's house, and say, "A day in these courts, the courts of the Lord's house, is better than a thousand spent in vanity and sin;" he would rather occupy the meanest position in the church of God, so as to live under the anointings of the Holy Ghost in his soul, than fill the most distinguished station in the world.

IV.—And this leads David on to speak in behalf of himself and of the spiritual Israel. He says, "We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple." Have we not tried the world? For how many years did we labour to glut our fleshly appetites with the dust and dirt that the world offered us; but did we ever reap any solid satisfaction from it? Have we not endeavoured to satisfy ourselves with the pleasures, so called, of sin? and did they ever leave anything but pain and sorrow behind them? Have we not attempted to satisfy ourselves with works, with a form of godliness, a name to live, a self-righteous religion? but was there not always something wanting? Have we not tried to satisfy ourselves with doctrines floating in the judgment, and yet reaped no satisfaction; for there was always an aching void? Guilt was not purged away, sin was not pardoned, Christ not revealed, the love of God not shed abroad, salvation not known; so that there was no satisfaction in anything; all was a blank, (and all is a blank except that,) all

is vanity and vexation of spirit, except the goodness of God's house to our souls. But when the Lord has fixed his choice upon a vessel of mercy, and when, in pursuance of that choice, cutting him off from the world, he causes him, by the internal teachings and drawing of his Spirit, to approach unto himself, brings him to dwell in the courts of his temple, and shews him something of the beauty and glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ—*that* satisfies him, and there is no satisfaction until that is made known. And what are we to be satisfied with? With a mere apprehension of Gospel truth? There is no satisfaction there. With our experience? Why, if we look at it, there are so many flaws and failings, so many ins and outs, so many things that stagger us, that we cannot be fully satisfied with all of that. Can we take the opinions of men concerning us? O, we think, they may all be deceived. Can we take our own opinion of ourselves? That is worse than the opinion of others; for "he that trusteth his own heart is a fool."

With what, then, are we to be satisfied? "The goodness in God's house," that is, the goodness manifested in the Person of Christ. It is strange how spiritual persons should take such expressions as "the house of God," and apply them to a building like this in which we are assembled. You commonly hear it said in prayer, "coming up to the house of God." But what warrant is there in Scripture to call any church or chapel a house of God? I know the temple was the house of God, because God dwelt there; but "God does not now dwell in temples made with hands." The houses of God in the New Testament has but two significations—the Person of Christ, for "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily:" and the other, God's saints. "But Christ as a Son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." (Heb. 4:6.) "Having a high Priest over the house of God."

(10:21) But no mere collection of bricks and mortar, consecrated or unconsecrated, adorned with a steeple, or without that appendage, is worthy of the name of "the house of God." Christ is the house of God, for in him the Godhead dwells; and the saints are the house of God; for God dwells in them and walks in them. (2 Cor. 6:16.) If then, any elect vessel of mercy is to be "satisfied with the goodness of God's house," it does not mean that he is to be satisfied with the goodness of a chapel. All of some people's religion consists in the chapel where they attend; they have a beautiful chapel, nicely fitted up, with a flourishing cause, a respectable congregation, and a talented minister. All their religion is in their chapel; and if you take that away, you take away all their religion. But a chapel, however well fitted up, however comfortable and convenient, will never satisfy the Lord's people without the presence and power of God being felt and made known, and the inward dew and savour of the Spirit resting upon the minister and the heart of the hearers. I have felt more of the presence of the Lord in some stifled-up room, where I could scarcely breathe, than in some handsome chapels. And I would sooner in my right mind speak in a little room with the presence of God, than in the most splendid chapel and to the largest congregation without it.

To be satisfied with the goodness of God's house is to be satisfied with God's goodness in the Person and work of Jesus. There all the goodness of God is seen and displayed; and O what a good God he is in Christ! What grace and mercy, what favour and love are manifested in the Person of Jesus! And when we see the goodness of God's house, and feel how good and kind, how gracious, favourable, and merciful he can be and is in the Person of Jesus, that brings satisfaction. There is in him a righteousness and atoning blood to satisfy all the demands of the law, and all the

cravings of a guilty conscience; there is a power that satisfies, a love that satisfies, a salvation that satisfies; and nothing else but these will satisfy. Now, when the soul is brought near unto the Lord, so as to dwell in his courts, it begins to taste a little of the goodness of God's house; and as it tastes the goodness of God's house, that is, the goodness of God in the face of Jesus Christ, it binds the soul to this house. You know, goodness has a sweet attractive power; and as we feel goodness, mercy, grace, and favour, it binds the soul to those courts; it is satisfied with the goodness of God's house, even of his holy temple; and with it can live and die, if God is pleased to favour it with a sweet enjoyment of it.

Let us, with God's blessing, gather up the fragments of the loaf that I have been endeavouring to break. We will look, first of all, at the point we opened with—*the original election of God*. There may be some here who kick at that doctrine; and perhaps may have gone to such awful lengths as to speak against it unbecomingly, and revile it as a doctrine horrible and hateful. Now I will ask you one question, and appeal to your natural conscience, for spiritual I fear you have none. Did not the Holy Ghost by the pen of David declare, "*Blessed* is the man that thou choosest?" Now, if you say, there is no such thing, is it not in a moment sweeping away the blessing which the Holy Ghost has pronounced? Rather look into your heart, and see why you speak against what God has so plainly revealed. But God's people know it to be the truth, that a man is blessed whom God has chosen. Many of God's dear people, who are much tried about their own election, whether God has chosen them, are perfectly satisfied that God has an elect people; their trials and exercises do not arise from doubts and fears about the truth of the doctrine; but this is the point upon which they are tried, whether they are of the elect. They are certain that

God has a peculiar people; but the question is, "Am I one of them?" for they are sure that none but this people will go to glory. They say, "Has God put me among them?" And it is good to have these exercises; they establish the soul; they open the way for some sweet encouragement, because sooner or later after these exercises God's manifested mercy comes.

This, then is the root—the choice of God. The fruit is, being caused to approach unto God. There may be some here, (doubtless there are), who are saying, "O that the Lord would tell me that I am one of his chosen!" Let me ask you a few questions. Has God caused you to approach unto him? Have you felt the barrier of a broken law, the guilt and shame of sin upon your conscience; and yet at times have found all these hindrances removed out of your way? Have you ever been enabled to pour out your heart before the Lord, and vented your breathings into his bosom, confessed your sins, and bewailed them with godly sorrow? And do you ever feel any exercise of faith in your soul, whereby, though perhaps with a trembling hand, you take hold of God's promises? Remember her who touched the hem of Jesus' garment; it was with a trembling hand; she did not rush boldly forward, and seize the hem with a firm and vigorous grasp; but she trembled as she touched, though she knew if she could but touch it she should be made perfectly whole. Perhaps some of you trembling ones have some of this faith; you could not come presumptuously forward, but trembled as you took hold of some promise lest that promise did not belong to you; and yet you longed in your soul to embrace it. You have felt and found some workings of love toward Jesus, though you could not say you were sure that he loved you; yet there were some times and seasons when you felt sure that you loved him. You could not have loved him, if he had not drawn you near to himself. Have you not found a secret strength

breathed into your heart, whereby you have wrestled with God at the mercy-seat, and said, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me?" (Gen. 32:26.) Have you not felt some secret power, whereby you were enabled to pour out your soul before him, and plead his promises? Then you were a wrestling Jacob; and you will come off some day, and that soon perhaps, a prevailing Israel. I would ask a little more, these questions sometimes bring out the life of God. Have you not found sometimes a little satisfaction in the things of the Spirit? When you have read God's word, have you not sometimes had a sweet light cast upon it, and felt a sweetness distilled out of some branch of heavenly truth? When you have heard the ministers of the Lord opening up and tracing out the experience of God's people, have you not felt a responsive echo to the things taught by the Spirit to the living family? And though perhaps it has only lasted for a short time, yet there are times and seasons when you have felt some inward happiness in the things of God, more than you ever dreamt of in the world, or have since thought it possible to enjoy, except by those who have the full assurance of faith?

Well now, if the Lord has caused you to approach unto him, caused you to dwell in his courts, and if he is satisfying your conscience that there is no real happiness but in himself, notwithstanding the darts of Satan and the workings of your base hearts, you are elected unto eternal life; God has chosen you, though you cannot be certain that he has fixed his eternal love upon you. Do we see the root of a tree? It is hidden in the ground. We see the stem and branches, and sometimes pluck the fruit. So election is the fruit of all the blessings that the soul ever enjoys; and its approaching unto the Lord is the fruit of it.

Now, doubtless, there are some here, who cannot see the

root, but yet there is the fruit which they bear to God's glory; and the Lord the Spirit has brought forth in their hearts and lives his gracious fruits, though perhaps their minds are often fearing, desponding, sinking, and fainting; and they cannot boldly say, that God has chosen them unto eternal life. We see sometimes the stream, but who can tell where the fountain rises? The noble river Thames that flows through the metropolis, we see its streams; but who here has seen the fountain whence those streams gush forth? So the streams of mercy, grace, and truth, may flow into a man's conscience, and yet he may be unable to see the fountain and source whence these streams take their eternal rise. But if there were no fountain there would be no streams; the very streams show us the reality and existence of the fountain. And thus because all here whose hearts God has touched cannot see they are chosen, it does not from thence follow they are not of the elect. It is a mercy to have the enmity of the human heart against the doctrine slain. It is a mercy to be brought to this spot, to feel that unless we are chosen we cannot be saved. It is a mercy to know guilt, shame, and confusion of face before God. It is a mercy to feel darkness of mind, and at times to have it removed by the light of God shining into the soul. It is a mercy to know one's own unbelief, infidelity, and helplessness; for by knowing those things by divine teaching a way is opened up for God to appear as removing all these obstacles, and causing these mountains to flow down at his presence. And in thus opening up a way for his grace and glory to be manifested, he secures to himself all the praise and glory, while the soul realizes its sweetness and enjoyment.