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LITERATURE.

THE LOVE OF GOD.

ABOUNDING, COMPLAINING, AND ABIDING.

MR. SPURGEON ON THREE PHASES OF
THE FATHER'S LOVE — GOD'S
PLEASURE IN MAN'S REDEMPTION—
HIS PERSONAL AFFECTION FOR US—
HIS GRIEF WHEN WE FORGET HIM—
HIS FORGIVENESS AND LOVE WHEN
WE RETURN TO HIM.

"But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not; for I have redeemed thee. I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy one of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life."—Isaiah xlii, 1-4.

"But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel. Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt offerings; neither hast thou honored me with thy sacrifices. I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incense. Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices; but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities."—Verses 22-24.

"Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant; I have formed thee; thou art my servant; O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee. Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it; shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel."—Isaiah xli, 21-23.

Notice concerning these three texts, that they are very much alike in this respect—that they are each addressed to God's people under the name of Jacob and Israel. The first text begins: 'The Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel.' And the second is like unto it: 'Thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.' And so is the third: 'Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant.' The Lord mentions both the natural and the spiritual names of his servants; and this he does out of love to them. As tender parents will lovingly repeat all their children's names sometimes calling them by one and sometimes by another, as different memories arise in their minds, so the Lord remembers Jacob, the names of his chosen, given him at birth, by which he was known as 'supplanter'; and then he repeats that higher name of Israel, the prevailing prince, which he won in great spiritual struggle, when he

wrestled with the angel of the Lord, and would not let him go.

You that are the people of God may at 'tis hour be smarting, and crying, and sighing. But, oh the love of God to you! He hears your cries, and his compassions are moved towards you. Nothing touches him like the groans of his children. Perhaps you have brought this evil upon yourself by your own fault, and you know it; but the Lord is ready to put away your sin, and make the bones which he has broken to rejoice. The consolations of God are small with you because there is some secret wickedness with you; but having revealed to you this wrong, and having subdued your heart by his Spirit, he now speaks to you as to one whom his mother comforteth, and

HE SAYS, 'FEAR NOT.'

When we love some favored one, we like to think of all our passages in years gone by; and the Lord so loves his people that, even when they are under his chastening hand, he still delights to remember his former loving-kindnesses. We may forget the wonders of his grace, but he doth not forget. He says, 'I remember thee, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness.' If he remembers our poor love, you may be sure that he does not forget his own. In his heart he storeth up the memory of all his works of grace toward his chosen. He regards his people as the work of his own hands. He claims not only to have created the materials of the nation, but to have formed them into a people. The great potter created our clay, and then fashioned it with infinite skill. Both as to body and soul, we are fearfully and wonderfully made by the Lord our God. The Lord thinks upon you as his dear people, and remembers how he created you, and how he new created you: how by his infinite grace he made you new creatures in Christ Jesus, and how he has gone on by his Spirit to fashion you, and mold you to his will, so that you are becoming more and more like his dear Son.

Oh, the fullness of divine love which led the Lord to redeem his people, and then to speak of that deed with pleasure! He brought them out of Egypt, redeemed by the blood of the Paschal Lamb; and in our case he has brought us out of sin and death, by the blood of the Only Begotten. The Lord doth not repent that he paid such a price for such poor worthless things, but he glories in it. 'I have redeemed thee.' Our Lord Jesus remembers the pangs we cost him. He cannot leave those to perish in their sins whom he hath ransomed with his own life. O poor backslider! the broad arrow of the King is on thee, he cannot let his enemy rob him of his purchase. Shall the prey be taken from the night? Shall Jesus fail to see of the travail of his son? Picture to your mind the Christ of God looking at the print of the nails in his own hands and feet, viewing those marks with satisfaction, and then with equal satisfaction looking upon us who are his ransomed ones, a heritage purchased unto himself. He cannot be weary of us, for he dwells upon what he has done for our redemption. He chose us for his love, and then loved us for his choice; he redeemed us because he loved us, and now he loves us because he redeemed us.

There was a day, and we can never forget it, when the gospel of God came to us with a pointed and personal power such as we never felt before. Like as Mary Magdalene did not know how the Saviour until he said unto her, 'Mary,' so we did not know the Lord until

HE CALLED US BY OUR NAME.

Surely, no love-call with which our mother awakened us in the morning from the happy sleep of childhood was ever more distinct than the call of God's grace to us when he spake unto us, and said, 'Seek ye my face.' Blessed was the day when our heart replied, 'Thy face, Lord, will I seek.' The Lord appeared of old unto us; he knew our name; for he called us by it; and he knew how to reach our hearts by convicting us of secret sin; he sent his servants to describe our character, and to say to us, as Nathan to David, 'Thou art the man.' We could not mistake the personal appeal which fastened cords of love about us, and drew us till we ran unto him who called us. As the Lord of old said to little Samuel, 'Samuel, Samuel,' and he answered, 'Here am I,' so hath God said to some of us, as clearly as if we heard it with our ears, 'Come to me,' and we have come to him.

Oh, the love of God, that in the foresight of every sorrow that can ever befall his children, he pledges himself

never to forsake them! He pledges his word that he will be at their side in every trying hour, and this word he pledges to them even though he has felt bound to chasten them. He says, 'Fear not, I am with thee; be not dismayed, I am thy God.' He hath said, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.' Come life, come death, come temptation, come poverty, come sickness, come assault of Satan, come whatever may, from heaven, or earth, or hell, the Lord has promised that he will bear you through and preserve you to his kingdom and glory. Oh, the perseverance, the omnipresence, the omnipotence of divine love! Who is he that shall measure, the length and breadth and depth and height of the love of God? Nothing can separate us from it, and nothing can harm us while we abide under its shadow. O Cold hearts, do you not feel the warmth of this marvelous love?

Our second text is in the minor key, it is love lamenting; 'But thou hast not called thee by thy name; I have called thee mine; but thou has been weary of me. I have redeemed thee with a matchless price; but thou has bought me no sweet cane with money. When we think of God's delight in us, and his love to us, is it not shameful that we should have been so seldom engaged in devotion toward him? Oh, how slack we have often been in private prayer! How hurried, how superficial! How little of praise have we brought; now and then a hymn, and this only when we were in the public congregation! How little of secret praise and reverent adoration have we rendered! The Lord has done great things for us, and heaped honor upon us; but how seldom has his name been joyously upon our tongue! How little have we spoken of him or to him! It takes a world of trouble to drive some of God's children to their Father; they live without him, and are tolerably comfortable; and even when darkness lowers they are slow to run to him. Alas! they hasten to some human friend, instead of returning at once to him who has dealt so bountifully with them. Brothers,

ARE WE TIRED OF OUR GOD?

If not how is it that we do not walk with Him from day to day? Really spiritual worship is not much cared for in these days, even by professing Christians. Many will go to a place of worship if they can be entertained with fine music, or grand oratory; but if communion with God is the only attraction they are not drawn thereby. They can spend many an evening where all sorts of levity and nonsense waste the hour; but when do they spend an evening with their God? If some of you had ever done such a thing, it would be marked down in your diaries as a wonder. Can any of you say, 'I did once spend a night with God?' Is it not, then, true, 'Thou hast been weary of me?' Alas! some of my hearers have never spoken with God in all their lives; they are not on speaking terms with him; they do not know him. Small wonder is it that you do not believe in him; he alone truly believes in God who has come to know him. He that lives with God, and walks with God, has no questions or doubts about his existence: he has risen long ago above that wretched state of mind. Everything we have God has given us, and he has given to us far beyond our deserts or even our expectations. What small returns have we made! In the religion of Christ there is no taxation; everything is of love, it spoils our gifts if we give because we must; it is the voluntariness of what we do for Christ that is the excellence of it.

What condescending tenderness that the Lord of glory should complain, 'Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money!' It is the plaint of love. Remember, the Lord does not need our sweet canes nor our money. 'The silver and the gold are his, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. He says to his enemy, 'If I were hungry I would not tell thee.' He needs nothing at our hands. But when he chides us for withholding our love-tokens, it is because he values our love and is grieved when it grows cold. Yonder father does not need anything of his child, and yet when his birthday comes round, and there are whisperings over the house and little contributions, that something may be given to dear father, he is greatly pleased; he is more charmed with the little ones' trifling gift than the gold he wins on the exchange. It is because the Lord loves us so much that he bemoans our lack of grateful affection, and sadly mourns. 'Thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.' What hath the Lord done that we

should treat him so? O brothers, let us mend our ways. Surely we have treated everybody better than our God. In him we live and move and have our being; and yet, by the way we act, one would think we had never heard of him. He has loved us with an everlasting love, and dealt with us in amazing mercy, and yet we are ungrateful and cold. Well may we smite upon the breasts which harbor such stony hearts, and pray that the Holy Spirit may inspire us with ardor of love to him who loved us, and gave himself for us.

Our third text exhibits.

LOVE ABIDING.

Notice how the Lord still calls his people by the same name: 'Remember these, O Jacob and Israel.' Still are the names of his elect like music in the ears of God. One would have feared that he would have dropped the 'Israel,' that honorable name which came of prevailing prayer, since they had not called upon him. Why call him a prevailing prince who had grown weary of his God? We should not have marveled if the Lord had only called them by their natural and carnal name of Jacob. But no, he harps upon the double title; He loves to think of his beloved as what they were, and what his grace made them. O heir of heaven, God loves you still! God doth earnestly remember you still. Jehovah Jesus wears upon his breastplate the names of his people, and he has not torn one of the gems from its setting, neither hath He erased a single name of Reuben, Simeon, Gad, or Levi from its jewel. Your name is still upon the palms of his hands. If nothing has touched you before, this ought to arouse your conscience and melt your heart. O child of God, your God remembers you! He calls you still by name, and owns you as his.

The Lord longs to be remembered by us. Did not our loving Lord institute the sacred Supper to prevent our forgetting him? Oh, hear him at that table of fellowship tenderly saying: 'Do not forget Me!' Let us each one cry, 'We will remember Thee.' Canst thou, O heir of immortality, forget Him who died for thee? Canst thou forget him that gives thee life eternal? Thou who comest forth from God's own love, begotten unto a lively hope by the Father's grace, thou canst not forget him by whom thou livest. Let us think of our Lord's memory of us, and of his desire that we should remember him, and then let our love flame forth.

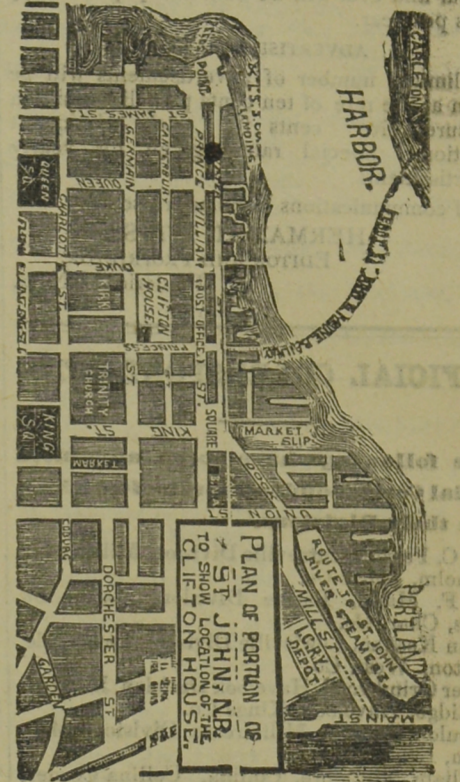
I have seen the clouds come hurrying up, driven by the wind. They were black as night in the distance, and for a while they spread darkness around us, Anon, drops of rain have fallen, for an April shower has come; and the clouds, where are they! Not a vestige remained. The clouds were blotted out, the sky was blue, and all things glittered in the sunlight as if hung with pearls. Thus our God beholds our sins gathering like clouds. He cannot endure them;

HE SWEEPS THEM AWAY:

no trace is left. 'As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.' Child of God, thy Lord forgives thee. If thou art ashamed and confounded for all thy shortcomings, he hath put them all away. Therefore return unto thy God; return to thy first love; return to all thy former joy, and rise to a still higher joy.

TREES IN THE VALLEY OF MEXICO.—A contract was lately concluded by the Mexican government with Mr. Oscar Droege, to plant 2,000,000 trees in the valley of Mexico, within four years. The trees specified are chiefly ash, poplar, acacia, and mountain cedar, with a sufficient margin for miscellaneous kinds, according to special conditions of site and climate; and the arrangements contemplate the formation of national nurseries in which the study of scientific forestry may be pursued on a footing in some degree commensurate with its importance. The valley was densely wooded in the time of Montezuma, when Cortez and the Spaniards burnt off the country. But the Spaniards entered and destroyed the timber.—Scientific American.

CIRCUMSTANCES ALTER CASES.—No, sir; I haven't seen the will, but I propose to fight it. My uncle was crazier than a loon and couldn't make a will. Lawyer Filchem: But I drew it up for him, and know that he bequeathed his entire estate to you. Is that so? Then just consider yourself retained to defend the instrument I propose to protect my dear uncle's memory to the furthest extremity.



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