

THE ONE TAKEN, THE OTHER LEFT; OR, JACOB, LOVED; EASU, HATED

A SERMON

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“Jacob have I loved; but Esau have I hated.” Romans 9:13

AFTER all we have said upon these words, we have this morning to come to the great subject of *God's sovereignty*. *The sovereignty of God in loving the one, and the sovereignty of God in hating the other*; and the second will be that of *righteousness, eternal righteousness, in the salvation of the one, and in the condemnation of the other*; and then, thirdly, I will try and answer as concisely as possible *the main objections which are brought by men against this order of things*.

First: The first thing, then, is THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD. “Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.” Now, in one clause of our text, then there is no comparative difficulty; we can understand it pretty easily; namely, that the Lord was pleased to embrace Jacob; and what is said of Jacob, of course belongs to all Jacob's seed; that the Lord embraced Jacob sovereignly in his love; he loved him simply because he would; we can assign no other reason whatever; it was an exercise purely and simply of sovereignty, to make Jacob an object of his love or not, just which he pleased; but he did make him an object of his love; and that love of which Jacob was the object, is infinite; for God includes all his perfections in the love wherewith he has loved his people. This love wherewith he has loved his people is everlasting love, “I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore, in loving-kindness have I drawn you;” that is, I have drawn you by the eternity of my love; I have drawn you by the sovereignty of my love. And he has loved them with an immutable love; it is always the same; and therefore, he draws by these properties, these qualities, these aspects of his love; and they are all manifested in Christ Jesus the Lord. Now, as the Lord loved Jacob sovereignly, so he hated Esau sovereignly. Men tell us that the Lord hated Esau for his sins; and thus, they would get rid of the sovereignty of God in his hatred to Esau. But where is the Scripture that shows this, that he hated Esau for his sins? Where is the part of the word of God that demonstrates this? My text simply says that God hated Esau; and we are told in the connection, that “the children not being yet born, neither having

done any good nor any evil;” and the apostle brings Esau into this matter as well as Jacob. And, therefore, it is very clear to my mind that God did sovereignly, independent of Esau’s sins, constitute Esau as a creature the object of his infinite hatred; so that the great God was pleased sovereignly, independent of sin, independent of everything of the kind, to hate Esau; for it is true both ways, that his hatred is just as sovereign as his love; and that he has hated Esau; and Esau stands a representative of the people that shall be lost; that he hates them with an infinite hatred; that he loves his people with an infinite love; that he hates the other with an infinite hatred. This is the deep, the unfathomable, the inexplicable exercise of his mysterious sovereignty; and before I have done with this part of the subject the assertions I am now making will prove themselves, and that beyond dispute, to the spiritually taught mind; for there evidently is a parallelism here; that God has loved the one infinitely, independent of either good or evil; he has hated the other also infinitely; there are no bounds to this hatred; he has hated the one just as sovereignly as he has loved the other. Let us look for one moment at the idea that God hated Esau for his sins, as men tell usⁱ. Then it follows that if Esau had not been a sinner, God would not have hated him; and consequently, the Almighty is made subservient to Esau’s sins; so that God would have loved Esau, but Satan would not let God love him; God would have regarded Esau, but Satan would not let God do so! No; I know the object of men; the object of men in beclouding God’s sovereignty, and in getting rid of God’s sovereignty here in his hatred to Esau; the object is to make room for their golden calf of duty-faith; their eloquence will lose its life if you take away that pedestal upon which they rest their universal invitations, and universal exhortations. **But remember, just in proportion as you take away the absolute sovereignty of God, you bring God into bondage; and just in proportion as you bring him into bondage, you bring yourselves into bondage. Recollect that your freedom lies in the freedom of your God; and if your God be in bondage, you are in bondage. The very work of Jesus Christ was to bring us out of bondage into the same freedom in which the great God himself lives; so that we are to live by his free good pleasure where his sovereignty ranges to infinity in all its majesty; and he does as he pleases. And, therefore, let others do what they may, I must advocate the absolute sovereignty of God.** (emphasis is mine here and elsewhere in this sermon -Richard Schadle)

Secondly, God has loved the one and hated the other, not only *infinitely*, but also *eternally*. God’s sovereignty in his love will never leave his people; he has loved them with an everlasting love; and, side by side, runs God’s eternal hatred to Esau, independent of his sins; we will come to that presently; independent of his sins as a creature, God has constituted Esau as a creature an object of eternal hatred. And if I am speaking to some this morning that are objects of God’s hatred, you can never become the objects of his love; if he has hated you, he has hated you to all eternity; and live in ignorance of him you will, live in enmity against him you will; die in enmity against him you will; be damned to all eternity, you to all intents and purposes must; there is no remedy. I shall not mince the matter; it is quite possible I may give great offence, but I cannot help that; I must abide by the truth of the blessed God. This hatred is eternal. Do you ever read anywhere in the Bible of the fire of hell being quenched? Men quench the fire of hell in theory, but it will never be quenched in fact; it is a fire

that never is quenched, a worm that never dies. Ah! say you, that's a matter of law. Ah, but the root of it is sovereignty, as we shall presently show. Therefore, there is an infinity of love to the one, an infinity of hatred to the other, independent of good or evil, there is an eternity of love to the one, independent of good or evil; and an eternity of hatred to the other, independent of good or evil. Again, let us look at this sovereignty, or this hatred, in the fall of man. Now is it reasonable, for we are not to throw our reason away, we are to use reason, and use it scripturally. The fall took place; what are the Lord's dealings with one part of the human race in the fall? He leaves them there. Well, say some, are you going to say he decreed sin? No, no. Are you going to say he decreed that the nations of old should walk in their own way? No. Are you going to say that he decreed that all these men should commit sin? No: I am not going to say that, I am going to say he *suffered* (editor: tolerated is a more modern term, "he tolerated or allowed") the fall to take place. It is not said that he decreed that the nations should walk in their own way, but he *suffered* them to walk in their own way. And, therefore, I will not say that God did positively decree the fall; but I will say, and challenge any man to contradict me, that God did *negatively decree* the fall; that is, he determined not to prevent it. Now then, what but an infinity of hatred could leave a soul in the state into which we are brought by the fall? There we are lost; that is, they who are left there are lost. I take that fact as evidence the second. First, I have the testimony of God that the hatred is sovereign; secondly, I have the circumstance of the fall; and I look upon the lost being left in that fall, as the evidence of God's hatred to them; they are left there; just as I take on the other hand this great testimony, that the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world; and if you ask for whom he was slain from the foundation of the world, the answer is: that he was slain from the foundation of the world, for those that were ordained to eternal life. "Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world." And therefore, your being taken out of the fall, is an evidence that God has loved you; the others being left in the fall, is an evidence that God has hated them; and nothing but infinite hatred could ever leave a sinner in that direful, that woeful condemnation.

Third, as I take on the one hand the provision that God has made for the salvation of the one, namely, the gift of his dear Son, who obeyed the law, atoned for sin, and put away sin; so that those whose names are in the book of life are saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation, and shall not be ashamed, nor confounded, world without end; I take this as a demonstration of God's love to them. So, on the other hand, his making no provision for the others, is a demonstration of his infinite and eternal hatred to them. Was the Paschal Lamb provided for the Egyptians? No; but for the Israelites. Was the high priest to bear on his breast-plate the names of the nations around? No; but the names of that people whom the everlasting God had chosen. Why, my hearers, when I look into the spirit of the religious world, I see hardly anything abroad now, but deadly rebellion against the eternal sovereignty of the most high God; and that, men arrogantly take upon themselves the salvation of others; and will even impudently, and ignorantly, and arrogantly, tell us that they are responsible for the salvation of souls! Poor moths! poor worms! poor autumnal leaves; poor cobwebs! poor shadows! here today, and gone tomorrow; and yet, arrogating to themselves that position that never could be occupied by any but an Incarnate God; the government on which rests the eternal salvation of

man, could be borne up only by the Almighty shoulders of the Great Mediator; and when I hear a dying moth step in, and arrogate to himself such responsibility, it proves to me from where the mission comes. So then, no provision made for the goats, no provision made for the tares, no provision made for the foolish virgins, no provision made for the man of one talent, no provision made for the bond children, no provision made for those who are lost; what is this? It is a demonstration of God's infinite and eternal hatred to them. Thus, it runs side by side; here is infinite love to the one; infinite hatred to the other; here is eternal love to the one, eternal hatred to the other; here is the demonstration of love to the one, and the demonstration of sovereign and eternal hatred to the other.

Again, I come to the dealings of God with man personally. Esau was left in his practical sins. Now, every practical sin adds to original sin; all men are lost by original sin; that is where we are lost; we are not lost by any practical sin we commit; we were lost before that. "By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation." Your body is not mortal by any practical sin you have committed; you are not brought under the sentence, "Dust you are, and unto dust you shall return," by anything you have done. It was original sin, sir, that made your body mortal; it was original sin, sir, that fastened and fixed your soul, for all that angels or men could do, in eternal condemnation. But, while original sin did this, every practical sin adds to the guilt, adds to the crime, adds to the fire, adds to the wrath, adds to the misery, adds to the hell of those that are lost.

Now come, I say, to personal dealings. The Lord left Esau to go his own way; the same as he leaves thousands now. What is this? Why, a proof of his hatred. If you are brought to feel that you are a poor sinner, and brought to feel that you must be saved by the good pleasure of the blessed God, brought to feel that "It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy;" would you not take this as a token of his love? The apostles sets it down as such, "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love, wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, has quickened, us together with Christ; by grace are you saved." So, then his leaving one, and taking another, is a proof of his love to the one, and his continued, his immutable hatred to the other.

Again, come to the last judgment; the sentence upon the one, not on the ground of God's hatred, but God's hatred is the root of it. We have the line of righteousness to attend to presently; I am now speaking of sovereignty. Now, at the last great day, when the Savior shall say, "Come, you blessed, inherit the kingdom;" when the Savior shall bring you up out of mortality into immortality, out of corruption into incorruption, out of the earthly image into the heavenly; out, shall I say, of the dust of death to the thrones of glory; out and from the dunghill, to which we were sunken, into "That inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled, and fades not away;" Will not this be perfecting the demonstration of the infinity, of the eternity, of the immutability of his love to you? Will not this love then be perfected? will not the saints then be perfected? will not Christ then relatively be perfected? will not the promise then be perfected? will not the Savior's work then shine forth in our eternal glorification, brighter than ten thousand

suns, on the one hand? Certainly, it will; you will not deny this. Then, on the other hand, the terrible sentence, "Depart, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared (originally) for the devil and his angels." Can there be a more fearful sentence? And if the great God, in the unfathomable depths of his sovereignty, had not constituted these persons objects of his infinite and eternal hatred, he would have sought some means to have lowered, or lessened, or softened the sentence, or have delivered them from it altogether. Yes, what but infinite hatred to them could make the Almighty himself happy through a never-ending eternity, and yet to witness the writhing and unutterable agony of millions that are lost shall not disturb him. But, here I have a heavy charge to bring against the doctrine of duty-faith; that doctrine is one of the mysteries of hell; that doctrine comes up from the bottomless pit; that doctrine is a doctrine that many of our old Puritans were confused by; and the consequence is, when you take up their books you can read very few passages that you are not pestered with this smoke of popery. Those of the duty-faith order, tell us that we are to remember that while the Savior says, "Depart, you cursed," he says, "Come, you blessed of *my Father*:" see, they say, how cautious, and how careful, see how guarded the Savior is, he does not, he does not say, "Depart, you cursed of *my Father*" Now they remind us of thisⁱⁱ. Ah, sir, according to your doctrine it ought to say so. You tell us, you duty-faith men, tell us that God the Father damns the people, because they would not be his children; they might have been his children, say you; and because they would not become his children, he damned them. You, sir, turn the paternity of the Father into the wormwood and gall; you tell us that they will be damned, because they would not trust in Christ, because they would not have the Savior, because they would not make him their Savior; and thus you turn the sweet and dear mediation of the blessed Redeemer into wormwood and into gall; and that while the Holy Spirit does by his ministers strive for the reformation of men, for he never strives for the regeneration of men; the Holy Ghost never strives for the regeneration of a man; when the Holy Ghost comes to regenerate a man, he does it majestically, enters the soul, life is there, the man is born, and born forever. And yet, you duty-faith men, tell us that the Holy Spirit will seal the sentence because they would not have him, because they resisted him, because they would not have him; and thus you duty-faith people will tell us, that their bitterest drop in hell will be that they would not become the children of God the Father, would not become the sheep of Christ, would not become the temples of the Holy Ghost. Now what is this? Go, sir, to Deuteronomy 32; and you will see what this is; I read there that "their vine is of the vine of Sodom;" and that system that can turn the New Covenant paternity of the Father into something damning; that system that can turn the Savior's blood into something that shall be damning; that system that can turn the Holy Dove, the peaceful Dove, into the cause of damnation, I will tell you that such a gospel as that is described in Deuteronomy 32 in this way: "Their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah; their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter:" and all the fruit such a vine bears is bitterness against the people of God, and bitterness against God's counsel, and bitterness against the real liberty of the gospel, "Their wine is the poison of dragons;" *dragons* there will mean *devils*; "and the cruel venom of asps." Oh, for that poor creature to be damned because God the Father did not write his name in the book of life; for that man to be damned for his name not being written where none but God could write it; for that man to be damned for not trusting in a Christ that never

died for him; for that man to be damned for not accepting a life that was never intended for him; for that man to be damned for not being found in a kingdom into which God never intended he should come; and even thousands that do come professionally will be cast out; “He shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend!” And thus, this duty-faith system then, that denies the sovereignty of God, turns the New Covenant into wormwood, turns it into gall; their grapes are grapes of Sodom, their clusters are bitter, their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps; and I would as soon kiss the Pope’s great toe as I would receive such a testimony as they bear against the New Covenant character of the blessed God. **I speak as a dying man.** People, I know, think it does not matter. Does it not matter, about doctrine, my hearers? If I die with enmity in my soul against God’s sovereignty? If I die with a lie in my right hand, where must I go to? Did the Israelites on the eastern side of the Red Sea refuse to glorify God because he had manifested both his mercy and his wrath? No; they said, “The Lord has triumphed gloriously.” And shall not the church, in her final anthem, sound out the Alleluia of Jehovah’s eternal sovereignty? And when the church shall stand at the Savior’s right hand, and the anthem shall roll forth through the myriads of the redeemed, then shall the smoke of the adversary arise, shall ascend forever and forever; while the church shall walk majestically on into eternity, with the never dying Alleluia, **“The Lord God omnipotent reigns.”** I could say much more upon this matter; but I have thus tried to show that God has constituted a part of the human race, I will, speak out, **independent of their sin**, objects of his infinite and eternal hatred; their being left in the fall; no provision made for them; their being left to their personal sins, their dying in sin, the sentence of the last day, and the nature of the hell to which they must come, are all demonstrations of his eternal hatred.

Second Part: I now notice the next line; that of RIGHTEOUSNESS. Now remember that that is the law of right which the Lord is pleased to make the law of right. God never gave a law of *necessity*; he did not give the law in the garden of Eden of necessity, he gave it as he pleased; that is how he gave it; he might have given a law in any other form, but he gave it in that form that pleased him. He might have given no law at all, or no breakable law. The saints have no breakable law in Christ, no violable law in Christ, no transgress-able law in Christ. To all eternity you cannot transgress when you get to heaven; you could not do it; there is no violable law; there is no transgress-able law; there is not the shadow of a condition-ability; and where there is no law, there is no transgression. And therefore, while the lost will transgress to all eternity, for they will go on adding sin to sin to a never ending eternity; no question about it; for it is impossible for the devil to behave himself, even in the prison of hell; for even prisons have their laws as well as other departments; but with the saints there will be no transgression; but they will be governed by a self-acting law of life, and love, and holiness, and righteousness. Then again, why should I be condemned for a sin committed six thousand years ago? Why should I be corrupt? Why should I be in a lost condition for a sin committed six thousand years ago? Why should I be under the grasp of an eternal law, and consequently can do nothing that will please my Maker, in consequence of what I am by a sin committed by a man six thousand years old? There is no human law of right and wrong by which you could make this a matter of justice; but God has so ordered it, and it is so; it is right because he has so ordered it; he has so

ordered it, that if Adam sins, the whole human race sins in him; he has so ordered it, that if Adam dies, the whole human race must die in him; if Adam loses his standing, the whole human race loses their standing, in him. This is the first link in the chain of God's law of righteousness. All men are alike by nature; different in practice; but all alike by nature; the most conscientious and the most profligate, widely as they differ in practice, degraded as is the one, and admirable as is the other, yet in their nature, they are both alike, all corrupted just the same. Well then, are we condemned by a law of righteousness? Are you going to acknowledge that? Why is it right? Is it righteous because you can see it is so? I believe you can see it is so only in the light of God's authority, only in the light of God's word, and of Divine revelation. People say, Oh well, but we get our ideas of right and wrong from God. Do you think so? There would be some force in that observation, friends; but alas! alas! by the fall the will is perverted, the judgment is blinded, the affections are vitiated, the memory is dilapidated, and all the powers of the soul are out of order; so that we have a correct view of hardly anything that pertains to God, or to eternity, until he gives it to us. Therefore, don't let us pique and pride ourselves upon our wisdom; for the Lord knows the thoughts of men, that they are vanity; yes, "Evil, and only evil, and that continually." Again, we come to Calvary's cross. Now mind, we are speaking now of a process of law; that by a process of law, in that order of things that God has established, the whole human race by process of law, not by any decree, any further than that God was pleased to order it so, that there should be a natural and federal head; and that by his fall, the whole human race are by one man, under condemnation.

Secondly, I come to the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Savior lived for sinners and died for sinners; he is the end of the law for righteousness; and therefore, God can righteously save us; the salvation of a sinner by what Christ has done becomes a matter of righteousness; and it is said, that "It is God that justifies." On the other hand, Esau is not condemned on the ground of God's hatred to him, but Esau is condemned on the ground of his original and practical sins; on these two grounds; first he is condemned with all the rest of the human race in the fall of Adam; and, secondly, according to his personal and practical sins, as a matter of righteousness. That is how I view the matter. On the other hand, we are justified by the righteousness of a Surety; there being no surety for Esau, he is condemned on the ground of original, and practical, or personal, sins.

Again, I come to the last great day. It is a matter of right that those for whom Christ died should possess the kingdom; for he has constituted them all righteous; therefore, they shall inherit the land forever, as a matter of righteousness, mediatorial righteousness. But the others come to judgment with their sins, and on the ground of their original and practical sins they are eternally lost. Thus, then, friends, we must draw a line of distinction, (though we must not separate the two) but we must draw a line of distinction between the exercise of sovereignty, uncontrollable sovereignty, and the process of law. Therefore, the lost are condemned, not on the ground of God's hatred to them, but by process of law. And the righteous are saved, not by the love of God to them apart from equity; not on the abstract ground of God's love to them apart from equity, apart from righteousness, so that the one is saved righteously, the other

condemned righteously. Thus, then, here is sovereignty, constituting one the object of hatred, the other the object of love; here is sovereignty making provision for the one, but not making it for the other. Yet the Lord is righteous; because he had a right to do just as seemed good in his sight.

Third Point: I shall now notice hastily, in conclusion, the OBJECTIONS, the main objections, that are brought generally against this order of things.

Objection the first, is, that *God is unjust if it be so*. I dare not repeat the blasphemies that men have uttered against the sovereignty of their Maker in this matter. I have a very short answer; no answer indeed but the apostle's answer, "What if God, willing to show His power, and make His wrath known." And again, "Has not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?" So, as soon as ever you can prove that there is not this infinity of disproportion between the Creator and the creature, that gives him right to dispose of all as he will; prove that, then you can prove he is unjust. **But I have no other answer than that; the infinite disproportion between the Creator and the creature;** he has left angels in their state, fallen angels; and therefore, I found the justice of God upon his right to do as he pleases. That is all the answer I have; and if you choose to undertake to prove that sovereignty does not naturally belong to him; if you can undertake to prove that you are such an important piece of clay that the everlasting God ought not to have exercised his sovereignty without consulting you, if you will undertake to prove that, then do it.

Objection the second, is, *it is detrimental to good works*. My answer to this also, is very short indeed. God's order of things is a rule by which Noah worked well; and the Lord shut him in. God's order of things is a rule by which Moses worked well, got out of Egypt well. God's order of things is a rule by which Joshua worked well, gained the victory. God's order of things is the way by which Daniel worked well, stopped the mouths of lions, and so on. It was that by which Moses built the tabernacle, that by which Solomon built the temple. **God's order of things was that by which the apostles went forth, east, west, north, and south; cast out devils, raised the dead, healed diseases, and brought innumerable souls, instrumentally, to the Lord Jesus Christ. But because you duty-faith men cannot work by such a rule, you think nobody else can. Ah, you say, it is detrimental to good works. Well, sir, I believe it is detrimental to your good works; for I believe God's truth is a rule by which you cannot work, because you do not know it, you do not know it; therefore, I don't much wonder at you saving so. Free-grace people can work by free-grace rule. What is Hebrews 11 from the first verse to the last, but the demonstration of the mighty works wrought by that order of things to which they were conformed in submission to the great God.**

Objection the third is, that *it hinders men from coming to Christ; for if some are loved, and some are hated, what is the good of striving?* **I have a very short answer for that too; and that is this; that it certainly has a great tendency to hinder men from coming to Christ delusively, it certainly has a great tendency to open the eyes of**

men, and make them see that coming to Christ in the flesh is one thing, and coming to him in the spirit is another; make them see that coming to Christ by his coming to them by the power of his Spirit is one thing, and coming without is another.

Luke 4. The people came to Christ and listened to the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth; but as soon as he came to sovereignty, then the delusion became manifest; the very people that had adored, now tried to thrust him down the brow of the hill. John 6; The people came to Christ; and he fed them; and here were five thousand apparently converted; and when he went over to the other side of the sea, they said, we will find him out; and they went after him, but as soon as he put them to the test of God's sovereignty, "No man can come to me, except my Father, which is in heaven draw him," it so offended them that it showed they had come to Christ delusively, and he sent them away. Therefore, all the answer I have, when men say it discourages people from coming to Christ is, it does hinder them from coming delusively. Ah, my hearers, to come to Christ on false premises, where he never was, and never will be savingly met, and to come to him on true premises, are two distinct things.

Objection the fourth, is, that *it is incompatible with the command to preach the gospel to every creature.* My answer to this, is very short, and it is simply this; that **this is the gospel, this is the gospel to be preached to everyone;** and it is no use to preach a lame gospel: a lame sinner, and a lame gospel coming together, would make a lame concern of it.

Objection the fifth, is, that *somehow or another, it does not agree with human responsibility, and sweeps away all accountability.* My answer to this is very short. I hold that **man is accountable according to the light that he has;** I hold that it was the duty of the Jews to receive Christ; receive him savingly, they could not, but they might have received him morally, and circumstantially, and ought not to have persecuted him, any more than some of you now persecute the people of God; you know better, but you do it; that is your responsibility: you will add to your condemnation by doing what you know to be wrong. Therefore, "Woe to you, Chorazin, woe to you Bethsaida; for if the mighty works that have been done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented, and the cities would have continued unto this day." **But the repentance by which the social state of men is bettered, their towns and villages saved; why that, and the repentance of regeneration, and eternal salvation, are two very distinct things. So, sir, we have plenty for you to do in accountability, more than you will ever fulfil, you may depend upon it.**

The last objection, and the strongest too, in their estimation, is this: they think it a most powerful one, they think it a triumphant answer. What, then, is this powerful objection? Why, it is an objection just about the weakest of all they use, though they think it is the strongest. Why, they say *God is love; and therefore, as God is love, it cannot be that he has sovereignly constituted part of the human race the objects of his hatred.* This looks a very strong objection; but to my mind, it is as weak as water, as absurd as absurdity itself. **Now, sir, if God were love of necessity, there would be some force**

in your objection; but he does not love from *necessity*, but from *choice*, he is love there, where he pleases to be love, and nowhere else.

These objections, then, when they are brought into connection with God's truth, lose all their force. Ah, my hearer, people may rebel, and rebel; but there stands God's truth, and you can never overturn it. So, it is as true, that "Whom he will, he hardens," as it is true, that "He has mercy upon whom he will have mercy."

ⁱ Notes by Richard Schadle. This sermon is part of a series by James Wells on Romans 9:11. While I'm certain that he had different sermons, books and people in mind a particular sermon by Charles Spurgeon was clearly upmost on his mind. Spurgeon's sermon titled "Jacob and Esau" was both preached and printed a short time before this series by Mister Wells. That sermon by Spurgeon illustrates perfectly the sub-scriptural approach that Wells correctly abhorred. As can be clearly seen in the following extract Spurgeon denies God's sovereignty in the reprobation of Esau and the rest of the reprobate.

"Now, let us look at Esau's character, says one, "did he deserve that God should cast him away?" I answer, he did. What we know of Esau's character, clearly proves it. Esau lost his birthright. Do not sit down and weep about that, and blame God. Esau sold it himself; he sold it for a mess of pottage. Oh, Esau, it is in vain for you to say, "I lost my birthright by decree." No, no. Jacob got it by decree, but you lost it because you sold it yourself—didn't you? Was it not your own bargain? Did you not take the mess of red pottage of your own voluntary will, in lieu of the birthright? Your destruction lies at your own door, because you sold your own soul at your own bargain, and you did it yourself. Did God influence Esau to do that? God forbid, God is not the author of sin. Esau voluntarily gave up his own birthright. And the doctrine is, that every man who loses heaven gives it up himself. Every man who loses everlasting life rejects it himself. God denies it not to him—he will not come that he may have life. Why is it that a man remains ungodly and does not fear God? It is because he says, "I like this drink, I like this pleasure, I like this sabbath-breaking, better than I do the things of God." No man is saved by his own free-will, but every man is damned by it that is damned. He does it of his own will; no one constrains him. You know, sinner, that when you go away from here, and put down the cries of conscience, that you do it yourself. You know that, when after a sermon you say, "I do not care about believing in Christ," you say it yourself, You are quite conscious of it, and if not conscious of it, it is notwithstanding a dreadful fact, that the reason why you are what you are, is because you will to be what you are. It is your own will that keeps you where you are, the blame lies at your own door, your being still in a state of sin is voluntary. You are a captive, but you are a voluntary captive. You will never be willing to get free until God makes you willing. But you are willing to be a bond slave. There is no disguising the fact, that man loves sin, loves evil, and does not love God. You know, though heaven is preached to you through the blood of Christ, and though hell is threatened to you as the result of your sins, that still you cleave to your iniquities; you will not leave them, and will not fly to Christ. And when you are cast away, at last it will be said of you, "you have lost your birthright." But you sold it yourself. You know that the ball-room suits you better than the house of God: you know that the pot-house suits you better than the prayer-meeting; you know you trust yourself rather than trust Christ; you know you prefer the joys of the resent time to the joys of the future. It is your own choice, keep it **Your damnation is your own election, not God's**; you richly deserve it."

To Spurgeon though, denying God's sovereignty whenever he feels the need to is completely compatible with accepting God's sovereignty at other times. To him God can be both sovereign and not sovereign at one and the same time. This has become the norm in so called Calvinistic circles today. When we allow our pride, feelings, human standards, anything at all except the pure Word of God to dictate truth we no longer have an objective standard and Satan gains that mastery in human terms. Ultimately of course, every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that God is sovereign in all things whatsoever they are.

Here is Spurgeon's doctrine in his own words from that sermon:

"I have endeavored to give a scriptural reason for the dealings of God with man. He saves man by grace, and if men perish they perish justly by their own fault. "How," says some one, "do you reconcile these two doctrines?" My dear brethren, I never reconcile two friends, never. These two doctrines are friends with one another; for they are both in God's Word, and I shall not attempt to reconcile them. If you show me that they are enemies, then I will reconcile them. "But," says one, "there is a great deal of difficulty about them." Will you tell me what truth there is that has not difficulty about it? "But," he says, "I do not see it." Well, I do not ask you to see it; I ask you to believe it. There are many things in God's Word that are difficult, and that I cannot see, but they are there, and I believe them. I cannot see how God can be omnipotent and man be free; but it is so, and I believe it. "Well," says one, "I cannot understand it. My answer is, I am bound to make it as plain as I can, but if you have not any understanding, I cannot give you any; there I must leave it. But then, again, it is not a matter of understanding; it is a matter of faith. These two things are true; I do not see that they at all differ. However, if they did, I should say, if they appear to contradict one another, they do not really do so, because God never contradicts himself. And I should think in this I exhibited the power of my faith in God, that I could believe him, even when his word seemed to be contradictory. That is faith. Did not Abraham believe in God even when God's promise seemed to contradict his providence? Abraham was old, and Sarah was old, but God said Sarah should have a child. How can that be? said Abraham, for Sarah is old; and yet Abraham believed the promise, and Sarah had a son. There was a reconciliation between providence and promise; and if God can bring providence and promise together, he can bring doctrine and promise together. If I cannot do it, God can even in the world to come."

As James Wells so ably shows in his sermons God is SOVEREIGN over all. That is the Apostle Paul's statement in Romans 9:

14 What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! 15 For he says to Moses,

"I will have mercy on whom I have mercy,
and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."

16 It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God's mercy.
17 For Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." 18 Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, **and he hardens whom he wants to harden**. 19 One of you will say to me: "Then why does God still blame us? For who is able to resist his will?" 20 But who are you, a human being, to talk back to God? "Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it,

‘Why did you make me like this?’” 21 Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for special purposes and some for common use? 22 What if God, although choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction? - NIV version, emphasis is mine.

ⁱⁱ For sake of completeness here is the passage from Spurgeon’s sermon that James Wells is referring to.

“If any of you want to know what I preach every day, and any stranger should say, ‘Give me a summary of his doctrine,’ say this, ‘He preaches salvation all of grace, and damnation all of sin. He gives God all the glory for every soul that is saved, but he won’t have it that God is to blame for any man that is damned.’ That teaching I cannot understand. My soul revolts at the idea of a doctrine that lays the blood of man’s soul at God’s door. I cannot conceive how any human mind, at least any Christian mind, can hold any such blasphemy as that. I delight to preach this blessed truth, salvation of God, from first to last, the Alpha and the Omega; but when I come to preach damnation, I say, damnation of man, not of God; and if you perish, at your own hands must your blood be required. There is another passage. At the last great day, when all the world shall come before Jesus to be judged, have you noticed, when the righteous go on the right side, Jesus says, ‘Come, you blessed of my father,’ (of my father, mark,) ‘inherit the kingdom prepared’ (mark the next word) ‘for you, from before the foundation of the world.’ What does he say to those on the left? ‘Depart, you cursed.’ He does not say, ‘you cursed of my father’, but, ‘you cursed.’ And what else does he say? ‘into everlasting fire, prepared’ (not for you, but) ‘for the devil and his angels.’ Do you see how it is guarded, here is the salvation side of the question. It is all of God. ‘Come, you blessed of my father.’ It is a kingdom prepared for them. There you have election, free grace in all its length and breadth. But, on the other hand, you have nothing said about the father, nothing about that at all. ‘Depart, you cursed.’ Even the flames are said not to be prepared for sinners, but for the devil and his angels. There is no language that I can possibly conceive that could more forcibly express this idea, supposing it to be the mind of the Holy Spirit, that the glory should be to God, and that the blame should be laid at man’s door.”