

THE WAY OF MERCY

A SERMON

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“So then it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.” Romans 9:16

THE promise of God is that which seems here referred to, because the promise includes all the blessings of everlasting life, and that promise is to and by the Lord Jesus Christ. And so, this promise of life in Christ is not of him, either as to interest or possession, of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy. Nor is it always for him that wills; for there are many that have a will, and a wish, and a desire to go to heaven; indeed, I suppose most people have, more or less, and they do run in some sort of religious fashion; but then it is in the wrong spirit, and in the wrong direction; fulfilling the solemn words, that “many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” I will come at once to the language of our text, and will notice, first, *the way of this mercy*; secondly, *the sovereignty of this mercy*; thirdly, and lastly, that *all things are to be disposed of not by the will and doings of man, but of God, or by him that unto his people shows mercy.*

I notice, then, first, the way of this mercy. Of course, the way of this mercy is in Christ Jesus the Lord. And as the apostle does, in the preceding verse, quote from the 33rd of Exodus, we cannot do better than go to that chapter, and there learn what we can concerning the way of this mercy. And there is a fourfold representation in that same 33rd of Exodus of the way of this mercy. But before entering upon that, it may not be out of place just to remind you of one very solemn declaration which is there made; viz., that when Moses prayed that the Lord would reveal to him his glory, one part of the answer there, and bless the Lord, that it was not the only part of the answer the Lord gave, one part of the answer was, “You cannot see my face, for there shall no man see me, and live.” You can see at once, most likely, at least, you can, that this part of the answer is the language of the law of God. At Sinai, some months before that, this indeed was manifest, that no one could see God’s face and live; that is, if you bring the sinner into contact with God abstractedly, in his holiness, hell to us must be the result. Bring us into contact with him in his justice, and integrity, and power, then banishment from his presence, everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, must be the result. Why, even the Lord Jesus Christ could not see God’s face and live; even he, if he approaches God as a surety, mind. He sees God’s face now without ever dying again; and how is that? The answer is this ; that when he approached God at Calvary, Jesus Christ then stood as the representative of sinners; and their

sins lying upon him, and the curse due to those sins lying upon him, he must therefore endure all that those sins demerited, and he must complete the whole by laying down his life, for “the wages of sin is death;” and Christ took our sin, and thus took the wages of sin. And having thus put an end to sin, he now, risen from the dead, sees God’s face with joy. Christ saw God’s face with sorrow at Calvary’s cross, but now the other scripture is fulfilled: “You shall make me full of joy with your countenance, and at your right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” Whereas, God made Christ full of sorrow at Calvary’s cross; for “it pleased the Lord to bruise him, it pleased the Lord to put him to grief, it pleased the Lord to lay on him the iniquities of us all.” So that Christ could not, as our Representative, see God’s face, and live, but he laid down his precious, precious life. And having done that, sin is gone, and now, as I have said, the other scripture is fulfilled, “You shall make me full of joy with your countenance, and you set me before your face for evermore.” And what is true of him will be true of us; that the Lord will make us full of joy with his countenance, and make us realize the pleasures that are where Christ sits, at his right hand, and will, by his dear Son, set us before his face forever. Now just so, at least, to my mind, my mind is a simple mind in these matters, and it does, through mercy, receive, as it were, some of the rays of light that are thrown by the Holy Spirit upon the several parts of the mediation of the dear Savior; so in the 33rd of Exodus the Lord used these words: “There is a place by me.” And what place is that but the Lord Jesus Christ? Is it not said, in the 91st Psalm, that “He that dwells in the secret place” this secret place, “of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” “There is a place by me,” where you are chosen, where you are loved, where you are blessed, where your sins are taken from you, where righteousness is imputed to you, and where you are determined to everlasting life. “There is a place by me,” and no plague can come near you there.” That is one representation, I think, of the mediation of the Savior, “Chosen in Christ before the world was. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Now, Jesus Christ was God; he, then, is the Word; the Word is his relative character, called the Word for two reasons; first, because he is the root of all the words of the gospel; all gospel words arise from the mediatorial relationship of the dear Savior; and secondly, because by his word he achieves the victories which he does achieve; and so in his onward progress, 19th of the Revelation, he is called the Word of God. Now, then, “There is a place by me.” And then mark the next representation: “And you shall stand upon a rock.” And what rock is that but that of which the Savior speaks, “Upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” And the Psalmist, who had as much shaking about, and as many trials, perhaps, as here and there one during his whole lifetime, the early part of his life he had one class of trials, in the after parts of his life he had other classes of trials, made him feel his own weakness and his own nothingness, and made him speak, as he does in the Book of Psalms, so largely of the Savior in this character of the Rock. “You are my Rock.” Indeed, the prophets in all ages have delighted in this representation of Christ. “He is a Rock; his work is perfect” “Let the inhabitants of the rock sing; let them shout from the tops of the mountains.” “You shall stand upon a rock.” And another delights in the same thing when he says, “I waited patiently for the Lord, and he heard me, and brought me up out of the horrible pit and miry clay, and has set my feet upon a rock, established my goings, put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God.” Christ, then, is the place; he is the place where God and sinners meet; he is the meeting-place; he is the way the Lord shows mercy. “Of God that shows mercy.” Who provided this place, this meeting-place? and who founded this rock? Who laid this sure foundation in Zion, this chief, this precious corner-stone? Who has done this? “It is the Lord that has done it, and it is marvelous in our eyes.” You shall stand “upon a rock.” The third representation of the way of this mercy there, is that Moses should be put into a cleft of the rock.

Now we must be careful here to note the distinction of terms. While my glory passes by, you shall be put into a cleft of the rock, while my glory, not while I pass by we have that to come presently; but while my glory passes by, I will put you into a cleft of the rock, just where you can see the glory, just where your prayer shall be answered. You have wished me to show you my glory; and so, when my glory passes by, I will put you into a position in the cleft of the rock. And what is this but faith in Christ? and what is the glory but Christ's salvation? what is the glory but that which Christ should achieve at Calvary's cross? And the disciples were, though not literally as to the body, they were as to their faith, as in the cleft of the rock; and by-and-bye, when Jesus rose from the dead, they saw the salvation he had wrought, they saw the glory of God. Simeon was as in the cleft of the rock; his place was in a crucified Christ, in the smitten rock, the cleft of the rock, when he saw the glory of the Lord pass by; and that glory passed before the mind of Simeon, and he saw it consisted of salvation, and therefore desired to depart from a world where he could only distantly and partially, and now and then for a minute or two, see that salvation, into a world where he could wholly, uninterruptedly, perfectly, continuously, and eternally, in perfection, enjoy that salvation. "Now let you your servant depart in peace for my eyes have seen your salvation." Here, then, is God showing mercy: first, contriving a meeting-place; second, laying a foundation in Zion; third, putting us into this smitten rock, this cleft of the rock, Christ Jesus the Lord, that we may there see the salvation he has wrought. "And while I pass by;" mark the distinction of terms here; see the distinction between the glory and the Lord; "while I pass by, I will cover you with my hand." "When I pass by." Where shall we get an explanation of this? In the New Testament, said one, I shall want no hand to cover me, or protect me; for Lord, I will follow you even unto death. Peter, you cannot follow me now. God, in his awful majesty and flaming sword is about to pass by, and smite the Shepherd. God, in all the solemn demands of law and justice, of holiness and majesty; is about to pass by; and, Peter, you cannot follow me, you cannot come with me: I must drink the cup alone, I must bear the burden alone, I must undergo the sword alone, I must quench the fire alone; I must achieve salvation alone; my blood alone, my person alone, my sacrifice alone, my death alone, my power alone; I must stand alone, for of the people there can be none with me. They cannot help themselves, much less can they help me; I must find all help in myself; travel in the greatness of my strength. You cannot, follow me now, but you shall follow me afterwards. "I will cover you with my hand." "Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn my hand;" there it is. The disciples were not far off; but the hand of the Lord, the hand of mediation, was between them and their sins, between them and the wrath of God, between them and the bitter cup, between them and the sword of justice; between them and the sting of death, and that hand effectually covered them, so that they were not hurt by the death of the Savior. That death of the Savior; that, caused the globe to tremble, did not hurt the disciples. "I will cover you with my hand." Bless his holy name! What is this, then; But a fourfold representation of the mediation of the Savior? First, here is a place by the Lord, the meeting-place, hiding-place; second, here is the rock; third, here is the revelation of the glory; and fourth, here is the mediatorial hand between us and all that would hurt us. "I will turn my hand upon the little ones." And does not the prophet Isaiah refer to this same thing, or the Lord by him, when the Lord said to the church by Isaiah, "I have put my words in your mouth, and I have covered you in the shadow of my hand, that I may plant the heavens;" and what was the death of Christ but the plantation of heaven; "and lay the foundations of the earth:" not the old earth, for that had been done thousands of years, but lay the foundation of the new earth; and what was the death of Christ but the foundation of all the blessedness of the spiritual promised land we ever realize? "Lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, You are my people." And I am sure nothing can be plainer than this, that the Savior

did return to his disciples, and practically say to those disciples, "You are my people;" did he not? Gathered them up into the peace that passes understanding, poured out at the appointed time the Spirit of the Lord upon them, and so the Lord said unto Zion, "You are my people." Now, then, this is the way that God shows mercy. And this is a matter of essential importance; for unless we have the Spirit of faith in Jesus Christ as the mediator, then we have not a right spirit; unless we are brought to the end of all other confidence, and to have no confidence anywhere but in this work of Jesus; if we have confidence anywhere else, we shall be deceived. But if our confidence be placed in him, then our confidence is placed where there is mercy from everlasting to everlasting, where there is a fulness of grace; yes, where mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace embrace each other.

Now the other part is not so clear: the other verse is to my mind exceedingly ambiguous, and very difficult to understand; The Lord said, "You shall see my back parts; but my face shall not be seen." Mr. Huntingdon says, "Back parts there mean after revelations; they mean gospel revelations;" still the form of speech there does appear to me to be ambiguous. I must confess I cannot get at clearly the meaning. But I should think that it is a form of speech referring to those that should follow the Lord, called back or after parts. I have thought, and I cannot thoroughly understand it; so, I must leave it in that ambiguous position for the present. But I have thought that the sixth chapter of Isaiah throws a little light upon that last verse of the 33rd of Exodus, where the prophet says, "I saw the Lord sitting upon the throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple." And his people are a train that follow him. And I am sure that no one ever followed God in that perfection that Christ did. Christ was a follower of God, Christ was the foremost of the train, Christ is the brightest of the train, and strengthens all the rest. So that we are not to see God in his abstract character, but we are to see him in the after covenant, the new covenant, that revelation he makes of himself by his dear Son, and through his prophets, and apostles. Now if that be the meaning there, we get something like a very pleasing view of the Lord. Presently we get a little farther, and Emmanuel's face appears; then our hope and joy begin; then faith comes in, salvation comes in, and then we feel released and happy. Was it not so with Isaiah? When he saw the Lord, even in the distance, in his terrible majesty, did not the prophet tremble. Did he not say; "Woe is me! for I am undone: because I am a man of unclean lips;" alluding perhaps to the leper, that had, when he was in his leprosy, to put his hand on his lips, and to cry, "Unclean, unclean!" and "I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." But now comes a revelation, through the Lord's minister. A seraphim, which represents the minister of the gospel: the word seraphim, signifying a burning and a shining one; and the Lord makes his ministers burning and shining lights. "And he flew;" a minister does spiritually fly, when he has such tidings; when the Lord gives the minister a live coal from off the altar, a living truth, and the seraphim's own heart and soul, the minister's own heart is warmed with this live coal, this sworn promise, this encouraging mercy, this pardon, this freedom, this blessedness; why, it sets the soul on fire, and that minister is then on, the wing to proclaim the same pardoning mercy to his fellow dying mortals. And wherever the Lord is pleased to cause the same testimony to touch the sinner, in comes the verse, "Lo, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged and now you know the way in which you can see the Lord. You cannot meet him in the straightforward way of the law; there you cannot see his face; but look into the after revelations, the after covenant, the second covenant, the new covenant, the new and living way, there you can see his face, there you can realize his mercy. This, then, is the way of mercy, and how suited it is to us. But before I leave this part, let us look at some of the properties of this mercy. We have

noticed, it is true, some of the properties already. The Lord, in his gracious answer to Moses, said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you." Let us not for a moment forget that we shall be sure to have a wrong view of the Lord's goodness, that we shall not rightly see it at all, if we lose sight of Jesus Christ. I had almost said Jesus Christ is God's goodness; he is the Good Shepherd. And if I take the goodness of God here spiritually, which I must, and providentially too, take it both ways, for both are by Jesus Christ; if I were to take the goodness of God, which is to pass before us, first spiritually, and you were to say, Now what scripture do you think concisely and very beautifully sets before you this goodness? the answer is, the tenth chapter of John, "I am the Good Shepherd", so you are, Lord; "and I lay down my life for the sheep", so he did. "And he goes before them", and so he does; "and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice", and so they do. "And a stranger will they not follow;" but they follow the true Shepherd, and they shall not perish, but have eternal life neither shall they ever be plucked out of his hands. Here, then, is that goodness in which the Psalmist rejoiced, when he said, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." "I will make all my goodness pass before you." Still, you see, we come into all these things by faith in our God, by faith in this blest Mediator. And then, if we have this faith in Jesus Christ, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?" I have no doubt in my own mind that there is a secret lying in the mind of God in relation to giving his own Son that, perhaps, we have not entered much into. It is a matter that I have meditated upon many times, but never could get any light upon, not the kind of light I want. I will tell you the kind of light I want, which I have prayed for, and have not got it yet, and perhaps never shall in this world. The kind of light I want is to know what it really was to God to give his Son; how far, I must use the word for want of a better, how far it was trying to the mind of God to give up his Son to such a death for such wretches as we are. I know he did it with infinite willingness, because of his love to us, I know that; but how far God the Father found in it something that tested his love, and the very perfection of his nature, I have no doubt there is a secret there worth our having, if we could get at it. Think you that he gave up his own dear and well-beloved Son in an off-hand sort of way, without any sympathy with him, without its being any test to him, without its being any trial to him? Is there not something of this hinted at? I have no doubt you have sometimes thought so; only we feel afraid of dishonoring the divine nature by comparing it too closely with human nature: but was there not something of this kind indicated in the case of Isaac? "You have not withheld your son, your only son, from me," We all reckon that to be a great act of faith on the part of Abraham, thus, rather than part with God's command or God's truth, to give up his son Isaac, accounting that God was able, to raise him up from the dead. That was putting Abraham to the test. It seems to throw a little light upon that great secret, God giving up his Son, and also of the Holy Spirit. These little rays of light upon these deep matters will, when we got home to glory, spring up, and raise in our souls those raptures and those wonders, those ecstasies and those delights; that will make all we enjoyed on the way appear very little in comparison of the fountain-head itself. Well may the apostle say, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor entered the heart of man, the things that God has prepared for them that love him;" and though he has revealed them to us by his Spirit, yet we know only in part; when that which is in part is done away, then that which is perfect shall come, There is nothing under heaven I am so much at home in as I am looking into these things. I hope I love the circumstantial of the gospel, and the precepts of the gospel, and all the exhortations, and reproofs, and rebukes; but I am not so much at home in them as I am in these absolute mysteries. I do not suppose you are either. If you were to say you were, I should think you were a deluded Pharisee, that you do not know the plague of your own heart, or that you do not appreciate the things that angels desire to look into. The very

things that angels desire to look into are described in the first part of the first chapter, of the first epistle of Peter; there he goes on, as you know, upon these very same things; these deep mysteries are the very things that angels desire to look into. And I think the apostle meant something of this when he said, "Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory" from one degree of glory to another, "as by the Spirit of our God." Mercy, then! Jesus Christ is the way of mercy, and the goodness of the Lord shall pass before us; Christ is the goodness of the Lord, and by him all the providential goodness we need. As Mr. Huntingdon used to say, when a fresh trouble came, "Well, here 'is a little more work for faith, and patience, and prayer;" and so it is. And so let patience have its perfect work, let prayer have its perfect work, and let faith have its perfect work, and all will, in the Lord's own time, come straight, you may depend, if his word be true, and I am sure his word is true, I rejoice to know that.

But here is something else. In this mercy of God, we have not only adapted mediation, and the goodness of the Lord by Christ Jesus thus passing before us, to clear the way for us, and to cheer us on, and to encourage us, to keep us from despair. "I had fainted," said one, "but for this; were it not that I believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." But there is another thing the Lord promised to Moses, which is well worth our notice, "I will proclaim the name of the Lord" and so he does, both sides of his name. He first proclaims his eternity; secondly, his eternity coupled with interposition. "He proclaimed the name of the Lord, The Lord" that is, Jehovah, "The Lord God," that is, Jehovah the Interposer. First, his eternity, to sweep away all temporary gods; then he couples that eternity with his mediatorial character, to denote that his interposition for his people is an eternal interposition. He does not interpose for a time, but to all eternity. He interposes with eternal love, with an eternal choice, with eternal life, with eternal mercy, and with an eternal salvation. "The Lord God, merciful" and that is what we need. I like to look at that; it is very beautiful; "merciful and gracious," mercy in Christ, grace in Christ; "and long-suffering" the long-suffering in Christ. The Lord would never bear with us as he does apart from Christ; it is in Christ: "and abundant in goodness and truth" goodness in Christ, and the truth is in Christ; "keeping mercy for thousands" he knows who the thousands are for whom he keeps the mercy; "forgiving" for Christ's name's sake forgiving, "iniquity, transgression, and sin" and that is a nice way of getting rid of it; it endears the Savior, endears the Lord, endears the truth, and endears the way. An unforgiving spirit towards others is one of the greatest curses that we can have come upon us. "Anger rests in the bosom of:" say you, You might as well come out with it; you can read it for yourselves. "Forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin." "And that will by no means clear the guilty." Why, say you, there is a contradiction. No; there is a contrast, but not a contradiction, there is an apparent contradiction in terms, and there is a real contrast in meaning, but not a contradiction. Who are the guilty that he will not clear? Just take a threefold view of this. First, that "whosoever was not found written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, was cast into the lake of fire." So their sins were never on Jesus laid, and they were held guilty, and there was no means provided for their pardon, and so they never were and never can be clear. The second view I take of it is, persons living and dying ignorant of the truth, ignorant of Christ, they are the finally guilty. "There is a sin," said John, "unto death; I do not say you shall pray for it." We must leave our old acquaintances the Roman Catholics to do that. The sin unto death I take to be final unbelief: man dies dead in sin, that man is the guilty; the Lord will by no means clear him. There is no mercy in hell; once in hell, in hell forever. The third view I take of it is this, that professors that apostatize from the truth, or that join an apostate church, all the same. If you profess the truth, then apostatize from it, put the Son of God to an open shame, count the blood of the

covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, become an enemy to his grace, doing despite to the spirit of his grace; living and dying in that apostatized state, there is nothing to look for by such but fiery indignation that shall devour them as adversaries. He will by no means clear the guilty in this respect. Or if you join an apostate church, it is all the same. For instance, suppose, when I began to make a profession, that profession had been of myself instead of being of the Lord, and suppose been pleased with some amiable Roman Catholics, and there are very many amiable Roman Catholics, I do not mean exactly in their religion, but in their taste and temper; you must not look at them though they were I don't know what; many very excellent persons. Suppose I had been so won over by their natural excellencies, and could have been persuaded that the priest, for a few shillings, could give me peace of conscience from time to time; if I had joined that church, and become settled down in it, I thus should join an apostate church, and should be dealt with as an apostate; for though I had never personally apostatized, yet I have joined an apostate church, and thereby have consented to the counsel and deed of them that put down God's truth, and thus I shall be one of those that the Lord will not pardon. So, then, the only persons that can be pardoned are those that are brought to believe in Jesus, and to receive him as the way of God's mercy; these are they that the Lord will not lay one fault to their charge; while the others cannot by any means whatever; they hate the only means that God has provided, and there is no other means by which they can be pardoned. Thus, the Lord has given us both sides of the name; the Old Testament meaning is the same in substance as the New Testament, which says, "He that believes shall be saved;" he that believes not shall by no means be cleared.

Now I wanted to say a word upon *the sovereignty of this mercy*, but I hardly know where to begin. I can hardly ever keep myself steady upon this subject of the sovereignty of God, because I am more delighted with it than I can express. Why are you so delighted with it? First, because I am as satisfied as I am of my existence, that if the Lord had waited for one good thought in me before he had shown me mercy, no mercy could he ever have shown to me; and if the Lord had waited until I acquired the good opinion of men, I should have stood upon very precarious ground. I am very thankful that, "it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs;" not by human merit, personal worth; or human recommendation, "but of God that shows mercy." People angry with the sovereignty of God? Am I going to blame the Lord because he was pleased to have mercy upon me, because he was pleased to love me, and because he was pleased to choose me, and to give me to his dear Son, and to bring me to him; and because he still deals with me according to the same free mercy, the same Sovereign mercy, the same provision of mercy, according to the same covenant, according to the same sovereignty? You see a brother or a sister in fault, or fancy yon do: you think to yourself, If I were God now, I would cut that one in two pretty well, I would grind him to powder pretty well. If you are a Christian, while you are thinking that you are forgetting yourself; no question about that. But suppose the Lord thinks just the reverse. Peter, I heard you swear, heard you decry the Lord, heard you tell lies, and swear to the lies; you ought to be sent to a double hell; never ought to show your head again, you wretch. That is the way some of his fellow creatures and fellow Christians, when they forgot themselves, might have spoken him. But the Lord did not think so. He looked upon Peter with a solemn look: Peter's heart was melted in love to Christ; went out, and wept bitterly. And this very man, Peter, instead of being put into the background was the very man to whom the keys of the kingdom of heaven were given, in a way they never were to any other. The apostle Paul never had the honor that Peter had. The day of Pentecost comes; Who is to open the kingdom? This very same Peter. Who is to preach the first great sermon? Who is to give, the devil's kingdom the first mighty blow, and make the empire of Satan tremble from end to end?

This very Peter. Who is to be bound between two soldiers; an angel comes and smites off the chains, the gates open before therein and brings the man out of prison, and he can secretly laugh at all the prisons and chains that men may surround him with; who is the man that mercy shall thus defend? This very Peter. Some of the old martyrs said, and a very good saying it was, "These Popish fellows grudge us our salvation." That is the secret of it all. Satan inspired them, and caused them to grudge the men their salvation. So, if you will not give up your salvation? Why should we do that? If we give it up, you do not want it. No, we do not want your religion. Well, and we do not want your, and so what do you meddle with us for? You are quite welcome to your religion, for I know it is of the devil, I speak now of Popery, and they might as well leave us with ours, for we know ours is of God. Ours is "not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy." Never give up the sovereignty of God, friends; if you do, depend upon it you are done directly. You will never get over one hill, nor through one desert, nor through one wood, nor conquer one foe nor achieve one victory, if you once give up the great truth that the Lord God omnipotent reigns, and reigns as he will. "God that showed mercy." God increase our faith in his dear Son in mediatorial perfection. And there is a greatness of mercy behind the scene yet to be developed; and so, the apostle was not at all afraid, nor were any of the apostles afraid; that we should outgrow everything; they all longed to see us grow up in the Lord, grow in grace. You will not outgrow it; no, let your soul's experience and your knowledge be what it may, you will not outgrow this boundless mercy of the blessed God. Thus, then, mediation, and thus sovereignty. Do you not come to the house of God sometimes saying; Dear me, what is the use of my coming? Here am I, hard hearted, ungrateful, carnal, worthless, everything contrary to the Christian; a poor, sinful creature, seem to have no evidence that I am a Christian; I don't see how the Lord can bless me this morning, or this evening, as the time may be. No, you cannot; but you do see two things, first, the perfection of his dear Son; secondly, the sovereignty of his mercy, that he blesses just whom he pleases. "It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy."