

SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

ORDER OF ETERNAL ADOPTION.

A Sermon

BY MR. JAMES WELLS,

PREACHED ON SUNDAY MORNING, 22ND MAY, 1870.

"There shall they be called the children of the living God."—ROMANS ix. 26.

As early as Genesis xii. 3 was the ingathering of the Gentiles predicted, and that promise is followed up and enlarged upon in after Scriptures. And we live in an age when we can look at the past and at the present, and see that that gracious declaration has been and is fulfilled, and will go on until it is complete,—namely, that "there shall be a root of Jesse which shall stand for an ensign of the people," that root being Christ; our first root, the first Adam, is withered up by the fall, and we also are withered in that fall; but Christ is that root that can never wither, never die; "to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious," or as the margin reads it, "his rest shall be glory," and I rather prefer the marginal reading, because it conveys this representation, that as his rest was to be glory, Jesus Christ would not rest until he arrived at eternal glory; and then that the people will not be allowed to rest until they come there; they will not be lost, and they cannot stop short of that eternal glory; "His rest shall be glory." In the first Adam we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God; but there is no coming short in Christ unless Christ himself came short. If Christ came short, the people must come short; but for the joy set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame; and he now possesses the joy, and reigns in the joy, and will continue as long as time shall last to minister even to his people here below, by his Spirit, and presence, and power, that joy with which they shall be filled when he receives them to himself on high. There are moments when the truths of God are the joy and rejoicing of our hearts; when we can rise with wings as eagles, when we can look down upon earth and all its littleness; when we can put eternal things into one

scale, and time things into the other, and rejoice in the weightiness and eternal reality and blessedness of the things that belong to them that are called the children of God.

There are three things I would notice this morning. First, *the order after which the people here included are called the children of the living God.* Secondly, *that from which they are adopted.* Thirdly, *their present state, or the glory into which they are brought.*

First, *the order after which the people here included are called the children of the living God.* First then, in that order of things after which the people of God are called children of the living God, is the love of God. We are assured in his blessed word that his love is like himself ;—"I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." And all that the Lord has done, all that he will do, and all that he has provided, will be the carrying out of that eternal love. John is so taken up with this subject that he sums it up thus ;—"God is love." It is important you should understand that God is not love by any necessity of nature, as though he loved of necessity and unavoidably ; for there would be no honour due to him if he loved of necessity ;—he does not love of necessity, he loves of choice. If he loved of necessity, then all must be loved alike ; but he does not love all alike ;—"Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated." But I shall not dwell on the dark, but on the bright side this morning. God, then, has loved the people with his whole heart and soul ; and you must remember that he fixed that love upon the people, or, if you please, embraced the people in an infinity and eternity of endearment, according to knowledge ;—he knew what he was setting his heart and soul upon ; he knew what he was taking into his pure mind and heart ; he knew what he was about. Creatures love they know not what, and after a time, perhaps, find they have made certain mistakes,—not so with the blessed God ; he loved in the infinity of his knowledge ; and he knows no more about you now than he did before the world began ; he knew as much about you then as he knows about you now ; and as there was not anything which he knew about you that could hinder him from embracing you in his love then, it is a fair, and I had almost said a logical as well as a Scriptural conclusion, that there is no reason why he should alter his love now. I am aware that men tell us that while we are in a state of nature God loves us with the love of pity ; and then, when we begin to pray, he loves us with the love of approbation ; and then, when we have worked out a certain amount of holiness and righteousness, he loves us with the love of complacency ; and then, if we finally hold fast, and get to glory at last, then he will love us with the love of delight. Well, these certainly are the elements, or some of the elements, of God's

love ; but I rejoice that they do not stand in that order, for when we were in a state of nature, he loved us with the love of pity, but then he loved us in Christ, and he loved us with the love of approbation, because he loved us in Christ, by whom he approved us ; and he loved us with the love of complacency, because he loved us in Christ ; and he loved us with the love of delight, because he loved us in Christ. And therefore this love, like himself, is eternal ; “ I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.” This is the first foundation,—his free, sovereign, eternal love ; and his existence as God is not more certain than the perpetuity of his love ; his existence as God is not more certain than every one of the objects of his love getting home to glory. Some talk of persons being lost that God hath loved with this everlasting love. Why you might as well talk of Christ being lost ; you might as well talk of God himself being lost. Let the Lord once assure my soul that I am thus loved with this eternal love, I am as satisfied and as comfortable as possible ; I become directly then like an iron pillar, or a brazen wall, or a defended city. As the sonship of Christ cannot be shaken, and the people are joint heirs with him of the same love, here they cannot be shaken. He himself saith, “ Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me, and thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” This is one essential, then, to your eternal salvation. The apostle, when speaking of the Lord bringing us out of a state of nature, says, “ But God, who is rich in mercy, and for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when dead in sin, hath quickened us together.”

Secondly, eternal election is another thing essential to sonship, or eternal election forms a part of the order of eternal sonship. “ Blessed with all spiritual blessings, according as ye were chosen in Christ before the world was.” Your parentage, the place of your birth, the place of your life, the husband or the wife you were to marry, the family you were to have or not have, the circumstances in which you were to be placed, the number of years you were to stay on this terrestrial globe, the time and the place where the Lord would manifest his choice of you by bringing you to choose him,—everything was open to his immense survey. Every one of his children were not only numbered, but the very hairs of the heads of all of them were numbered at the same time, and that before the world was. Hence that great and majestic scripture,—“ Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father ;” and then Peter goes on to enumerate the blessings of this election,—sanctification of the spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Christ ; bringing us to see that we are chosen in Christ Jesus the Lord, and to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. Here then the

Old Testament saith that the mercy of the Lord was from everlasting. My hearers, is it not senseless—for though the Scriptures are above reason in a sense, they are not contrary to right reason, for if they were the Lord would not say, "Come, let us reason together"—is it not senseless to talk of the mercy of the Lord being from everlasting if objects of guilt, objects of misery, were not taken into consideration from everlasting? And therefore there is mercy arising out of this love; and it is positively declared, I was going to say in the same breath, if not in the same breath it is with the same breath, the breath of infallible, divine inspiration, that the same mercy that thus took us up from eternity, thus rolling on to eternity,—the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting. I may stop here just to throw in one digressive remark, and it is this;—how far persons may live and die ignorant of this great truth of eternal election, and yet get to heaven, I cannot say; but one thing I will say, that none ever did enter heaven, and none ever can enter heaven, and none ever shall enter heaven, if God be true, whose names are not found written in the Lamb's book of life from the foundation of the world. Therefore if we are among the children, we shall be brought to feel our need of what is provided for the children. Men set up their schemes and plans, and think we don't need this, that, and the other; but if you are convinced of what you are only in some measure, as was Saul of Tarsus, then you will be led to see that unless God has thus loved you freely, he could not have loved you at all; and unless he was pleased to choose you, there was nothing in your life that could make him do so. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." Ah, say you, but he chose us to be holy. Yes, but he did not choose us to make ourselves holy; and that we should be without blame, but he did not choose us to make ourselves without blame; and that we should be perfect in love, but he did not choose us to make ourselves perfect in love. He chose us to be holy, but he took care to provide the ransom that should take away all our sins; he chose us to be blameless, but he took care at the same time to provide the righteousness by which we should stand blameless before his eternal throne; and that we should be perfect in love, but he took care at the same time to come into such a form and to bring us into such a knowledge of himself as to make us see that all is love from first to last, and thus our souls become swallowed up in love;—we dwell in God, and dwell in love. And even the very pains and afflictions we are the subjects of while travelling through this wilderness, the time will come when we shall see that all was done in loving kindness;—"As many as I love I chasten and rebuke." That is another part of the order after which you are chosen.

Thirdly, predestination,—the decrees of heaven. Can you find from the beginning of the holy Scriptures to the end one blessing that does not come by the high and sovereign decrees of the great God? I am not ashamed of predestination, I can tell you; I am not ashamed of the eternal decrees of the Most High. I believe God decreed everything that was good, but I am not going to say he decreed the evil; no, “he suffered all nations”—not inspired them, but suffered them—“to walk in their own way;” he suffered the evil to come in, and suffers the evil to abound, but he is in no shape or form the author of it; though I bless God that he is above it all, the ruler of it, and he saith even of the evil, “Hitherto mayest thou come, but no further.” Are you a believer, then, in Jesus Christ? Do you believe him to be the way, the truth, and the life? Do you believe that if you have access to God it must be because he has loved you, and chosen you, and blessed you? How came you with this faith? Here is the answer,—“As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.” When you first began to feel that you were a sinner, that was the working of a secret and an eternal decree from God in your soul. When you went on, and tried to settle matters by your own doings, that was the working of God’s eternal decree in your soul that you should settle matters only in the way that he had settled them; that matters should be settled between you and him only by the perfection of the mediation of Christ, and by your submission to his order of things. So if you are a believer, you owe it to God’s sovereign eternal decree. Poor worms of the earth, little pieces of clay, calling the great Judge of all to account, as though he could not do what he pleased among the armies of the heavens and the inhabitants of the earth; as though he must ask the poor, blind, fallen creature man what he is to do! Why, the inhabitants of the earth to him are reputed as nothing, and less than nothing; and he doth what he pleaseth among the armies of the heavens and the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? Oh, my hearer, no wonder the Saviour should say a grain of faith will uproot the tree, overturn the mountain, quench the violence of fire, stop the mouths of lions,—having God thus on your side; as saith the apostle, “If God be for us, who can be against us?” And are you included in our text as a child of God, and trust you are, and believe you are, and look at your evidences, and have the marks and evidences of being a child of God? What are you indebted to for that? To an eternal decree; —“having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ.” Here is eternal decree again. Shall you obtain an inheritance also? How do you obtain it? Being predestinated according to the purpose of him that worketh all things after the counsel of

his own will. We turn and twist about, and are frightened of this, and that, and the other;—why, the greatest revolution that ever took place in the world is a mere ripple upon the sea of his affairs in comparison of the mighty revolution brought about by our dear Immanuel when he dethroned sin, Satan, death, and hell for ever, founded his own throne, established his own kingdom, bid defiance to all his foes, secured all his seed, made them as safe as he himself is safe, for “Because I live ye shall live also.” So, then, if you are a believer, as many as were ordained to eternal life believed; if you are a child,—predestinated to the adoption of children; if you got the inheritance,—predestinated. And how came a Saviour to appear upon the earth? Can you get a Saviour without divine decree, without divine predestination, without God’s eternal counsel? I think not. “Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.” And when his greatest enemies were gathered together, what were they gathered together to do? Why, whatsoever God had determined to be done. That was not their motive; Pontius Pilate, and the Gentiles, and the people, were gathered together to do their will and purpose, but they did only what God determined to be done. Ah, then, says one, I begin to see that if enemies gather together against me to do me an injury, they can do only what God has determined shall be done. That is all; therefore be quiet; Jesus is in the ship, he is at the helm, he will manage the matter, he will arise and command a calm, stop the mouths of these enemies, and give thee the victory at the most advantageous time. Is, then, the blessed God to be hated because he has unalterably determined to love you with all his heart as long as eternity lasts? Is the blessed God to be hated because he saw if he did not choose you and bless you before the world was, there was no other way in which you could be taken into the covenant, or into salvation, or into his kingdom, or into heaven? And is the Lord to be hated because he determined that poor sinners at a certain time, and by certain means, and under certain circumstances, should be brought to know him in these eternal wonders? And is the blessed God to be hated because the Saviour did not come into the world by chance, and because he did not come with an indefinite mission,—because Christ did not come to do what he could, but came to do what the Father would,—came to do the Father’s will, and delighted therein?

We come next to the mediation of Christ as another essential part of this eternal order. What is his righteousness called? “Jehovah our Righteousness.” So that, to be plain, God was determined that not one jot or tittle of the law should fail, but that its majesty, both in its precept and its penalty, should be maintained. Jesus Christ

came under the precept; he obeyed the law, and that obedience was not for himself, but for others, and that obedience has in it all the worth of his wonderful person. Five times in the 71st Psalm does David, with most beautiful effect, mention the everlasting righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. When I look at his righteousness, I do not wonder at what the Lord saith: “No weapon formed against thee shall prosper;”—how in the world can it? “and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.” Lay anything to their charge? Not a spot, not a blemish. Here am I this morning, nothing but a poor, vile lump of clay in myself; but as I stand in God’s love, in his decree, and in the righteousness of Christ, I am just what Jesus as man is,—just the same, and as free from sin virtually as the Lord Jesus Christ himself. Hence then, if this be the case, and if we attain at the last the resurrection of the body, and become like him, how is it? By eternal decree; for “he hath predestinated us to be conformed to the image of his Son.” In a word, if we do obtain eternal salvation, how is it? “He hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain eternal salvation.” Here is eternal decree again. And as soon as any of you become ashamed of electing grace, predestinating favour, sovereign love, and God’s right to do as he pleases, I should be ashamed of you directly, and so would the Lord; for “he that is ashamed of me and my words, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed.” We have nothing to do with what professors say about these truths; we have to do with the “Thus saith the Lord;” and if our experience be right, it will bring us low into the dust, and conform us to this order of things.

Then we come to the death of Christ. Some people in our day exalt repentance into something almost like Popish penance. They exalt a little natural contrition and a little natural moral reformation into something like a saviour. They cannot think that the business of repentance, that is, the business of conviction, is to make way for the coming in of an atonement that has put away sin. Repentance does not put away sin, reformation, or anything in the creature. “Jesus Christ, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.” You are not to get rid of sin; you are to receive that which has got rid of it. Jesus Christ put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Then, if I receive that sacrifice, I am identified with it, as Abel was identified with the great sacrifice through the medium, as it were, of the typical sacrifice; and therefore being identified with the sacrifice that was accepted, he obtained witness that he was righteous. I solemnly declare that there is not a thing you can name,—no, not the continued existence of God, that I have

more confidence in than I have in the completeness of the atonement of Jesus Christ. I do reckon perhaps Popery to be the greatest lie, the most huge lie, in existence ; and the next huge lie to that is that a soul should be lost for whom Immanuel shed his blood ; whereas the holy Scriptures declare not only that the redeemed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion, but that everlasting joy shall be unto them, and that sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Oh believer, if thou could'st but see how thou art beautified as thou standest in Christ ; if thou could'st but see and feel a little of what the prophet felt when he said, " I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God ; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels."

* Strangely, my soul, art thou arrayed,
By the great Sacred Three."

I rejoice in these eternal settlements : I rejoice to read such a scripture as this,—“ I will settle you after your old estates ;” the old estates provided for you before the world was ; “ I will settle you ;” if not, no one else can. Job's friends tried to settle him, but they could not ; but the Lord did when he came ; and the disciples often tried to settle matters, but they never did till the Lord came ; and when he comes in, he settles matters, puts everything to rights, settles us down grounded, rooted, and established ; and such shall not be afraid of evil tidings, for no evil tidings can counteract these tidings, but only show more clearly our need of them ; the hearts of such are fixed, trusting in the Lord.

Then when you come to regeneration. What is regeneration ? “ We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.” The sinner has no more hand in the regeneration of his soul than he had in the creation of the world, or than Adam had in his own creation. “ Created in Christ Jesus.” Look at the old Testament upon this : “ Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and that formed thee, O Israel : return unto me ; fear not, I have redeemed thee.” And in Isaiah xlv. 17,—“ Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation : ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.” Why not ashamed ? Nothing to be ashamed of. Ah, but there is sin. That is gone. There are my own faults. All gone, sin covered. Ah, but my own poor weak services ; I have not done as I ought. All gone, nothing to do with it. “ Ye shall not be ashamed”—nothing to be ashamed of,—“ nor confounded,”—nothing can confound them. That is what it says in Isaiah xlv. 17. Now in the 22nd verse of that same chapter it says, “ Look unto me, and be ye saved,

all the ends of the earth." Who is the Lord speaking to there? The man that is conscious of his need of the salvation contained in the seventeenth verse,—“saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation, ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.” Look unto me, who saves after this manner. “Ah,” say you, “I would not look to such a God as that.” Then you cannot get to heaven. That is the God that speaks; and he speaks to the man that knows his need of this eternal salvation, that is taught his need of this certain salvation. If I profess to be a child of God, and yet neglect or leave out this eternal and certain salvation, how then shall I escape? I can escape only by this eternal and certain salvation: “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth,”—driven to the end of ail earthly confidences, and conscious of their need of such a salvation as this. I would just as soon ask a flint stone to become an angel, as I would ask a natural man to become a Christian. “Ah, but Agrippa said, ‘Almost thou persuadedest me.’” And suppose Agrippa had been persuaded quite, his religion would not have been worth twopence. “Well, Paul, you are powerful in your reasoning; I think I will be a Christian.” Very well; he would have been a Christian only in name, not in heart, not in experience, not in understanding; there would have been no conviction of his need of Paul’s gospel. The apostle knew that: “I would to God,”—your being persuaded is not much account; a religion which a man can receive or refuse is not a saving religion. Saul of Tarsus was made willing by the power of God and received the Saviour of necessity,—“I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.” As you are, Paul? Why, you are one of God’s elect. Ananias told you, “the God of our fathers hath chosen you;” you are what you are by the grace of God; you are called, and saved, and governed, and led, and supplied, by grace; and you have told us you are determined to preach the unsearchable riches of God’s grace; and you would wish Agrippa to be like you. Ah, it is God’s work to make a Christian. “Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us;”—decree again; for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.” God has done this of his good pleasure. If you know your need only of man’s Christ, you will be content with man’s gospel; but if you have the Spirit of God, nothing will satisfy you but the Christ of God, the counsel of God, the decrees of God, the decisions of God, the provisions of God, the glory of God.

Then we must also be saved after the order of a new, unalterable, and eternal covenant. You Wesleyans do not know what it means; I have not the time to explain it to you now; you do not know what

the new covenant means, you do not understand it; and yet there is the solemn Scripture that "the secret of the Lord,"—that is, the counsel of the Lord, what he means to do,— "is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant." His covenant is nothing else but his testamentary will, confirmed by the death of Christ, and sworn to by God himself. The new covenant is his testamentary will, willing everything himself with infallible certainty; that will, sealed with the Mediator's blood, God himself hath sworn to the will:—"Because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, saying, In blessing I will bless, in multiplying I will multiply;" and we ask triumphantly, "Who can hinder him?" There is no hindrance here. Even we cannot be hindered any further than he permits us to be hindered. The wisest thought that bars, gates, and posts would hinder Samson from getting away, but they did not. And they thought that when he came to die, or at the last to make sport of him, that they should enjoy it. Ah, this old parson of a Samson, let us have a bit of fun with him; let us see what the old Antinomian will do now." He let them see what he would do. God was on his side; he knew God had suffered him to do as he had done, and that God was with him; his locks began to grow, his heart went out to God in prayer:—"O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes." Down went the pillars, off went Samson to heaven and his enemies to hell; that's what I believe. Our religion is not a cold, mawkish trust and hope, and, if you wish it, concern. Our King goes forth conquering and to conquer, and does just as he pleases. It matters not how hard the heart is, he can melt it; it matters not with what scales the eyes are sealed, he can open them; it matters not with what death the soul is dead, he can cast the enemy out, minister life, and bring us into the knowledge of these eternal things. This, then, is the order,—a covenant ordered in all things and sure. I may just hint at one more thought, and that is, that the Lord Jesus Christ was not more careful of the way in which he lived; he was not more careful of the way in which he died, and of the way in which he reappeared to and gathered his disciples together; he was not more careful in any of these things than he is in carrying on the work in your heart. He will water it every moment. Since you have been sitting here, the Holy Spirit has been cherishing this new life in your soul; perhaps not in a way to make you feel it; but there is the promise—"I will water it every moment." The Lord so loves you that he would not lose a moment by looking away from

you; he would lose his delight if he did not look at those he loves every moment; his eyes are never off the objects of his love. He keeps his eyes because his heart is upon the objects of his love. "I will water it every moment; and lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep;" he shall indeed keep the feet of their faith from being moved: he shall preserve them from all fatal evil. That is the order of things.

Secondly, *that from which these people are adopted.*

They are by nature children of wrath; and some, perhaps good people, can hardly decide in what way that ought to be understood. Their idea is that they are vessels of wrath by nature only because they are in a state of wrath and enmity against God's truth; and that they are called children of wrath by nature because they are in a state of enmity and wrath against God's truth. This is the view that some good people take, because they are afraid lest they should take a view that would contradict that stable order of things of which we have spoken this morning. Therefore it becomes me to be as clear as I can upon this point. First, then, did the wrath of God ever rest upon the children of God? I answer: no, not in the penal sense. God personally was never wrath with his own people; never one thought of wrath moved his pure bosom towards an object of his love; he always loved them with all his heart, therefore no heart left to be wrath with them; he chose them with all his heart, therefore no heart left to reject them; saves them, and calls them, and dwells with them with all his heart.

Yet here is a point we must be careful upon. "He that believeth not on the Son of God shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him;—that is, the law and its threatenings remain upon that man. If he were to die to-day where he is, he must be an object of final wrath, a vessel of final wrath, and must be lost, like others. Therefore the people of God are by nature children of wrath, vessels of wrath, clay of the same lump;—they are all children of wrath and vessels of wrath; not objects actually of God's wrath, but objects of wrath *deservedly*; not actually the objects of God's wrath—that cannot be, because he loves them. They are not only the subjects of wrath and enmity against his truth, but they are vessels of wrath and children of wrath *deservedly*. I am sure this accords with the truths I have advanced. Every one that is taught of God feels that he deserves the wrath, that he deserves the threatenings. Therefore "are we better than they? In no wise." That definition satisfies my mind that they were never children of wrath otherwise than *deservedly*; while by nature wrath and enmity against God, they were never children of wrath except *deservedly*;—filled with wrath

and enmity against God the same as others. I hope I have made this point somewhat clear; I thought I had done so last Lord's day evening. See then what they are adopted from;—they are adopted just from what others are;—they are said to be clay of the same lump.

Lastly, *their present position.*

In this chapter you have a train of temporal privileges that belonged to the literal descendants of Abraham; and if you take those six privileges in the Christian sense, then while as they belonged to the literal descendants of Abraham they were temporal, when by Christ Jesus they belong to the spiritual descendants of Abraham, then the same privileges are eternal. And they stand thus:—"to whom pertaineth the adoption." Now you see their adoption was national, earthly, and temporary; but your adoption is by Christ Jesus unto God, to all eternity. "And the glory." What was their glory? God with them by the priesthood and by the mercy-seat. And what is our glory? God with us by the priesthood of Christ, and by his eternal mercy. With them it was only temporal, but with the Christian it is eternal. "And the covenants;"—there was the covenant on the plains of Moab, after the covenant at Sinai; but then they were but temporal,—they are waxed old and vanished away. But the covenant that pertains to you, as we have shown, is eternal. "And the giving of the law;" but the law that God gave to them was temporal. I speak now of the law of that covenant, and it is gone; but the law as given to you is the law of everlasting love, and the law of liberty is eternal. "And the service of God;" but the service of God there was merely external, ceremonial, and temporal; but your service of God is spiritual and eternal. "And the promises;" but the promises there to the Jews, as you see in Deuteronomy xxviii. and Leviticus xxvi., were conditional; but the promises that are given to the Christian are yea and amen, never were forfeited yet, and never can be. Children of the living God: this stands in contrast to false gods and to all persons and things that must die: other lords besides thee have had dominion over us, but they are to have dominion no more; by thee only will we make mention of thy Name; that is, we will not make mention of the Lord by false gospels, but only by thy testimonies will we make mention of thy Name; these false gods and false gospels are to us dead, and they shall not live in our hearts;—they are dethroned, decessed, and shall not rise. Thou hast visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish (Isa. xxvi. 14); and so, O thou who art the living God art our life and portion for ever and ever. Amen.