

SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

THE FIRSTBORN

A SERMON – by MR. JAMES WELLS

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“That he might be the firstborn among many brethren.”—Roman’s viii. 29.

ALL the blessedness that ever was realized by man since the fall was included in that promise, “The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.” That promise contains the same things and the same doctrines as does our text. We see how blind Cain was to the meaning of that promise; he therefore sought to do without that promise, but we see that he sought in vain. We see how the old world lost sight of that promise, and we see how the Jews lost sight of that promise; and we see that none in the Old Testament age understood or entered into the mystery and blessedness of that promise but those that were called by the grace of God. If we had to depend for the salvation of men in ever so small a part upon the doings of the creature, not a soul would be saved; for we read that “the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” But Abel, by the grace of God, entered into the mystery, and so did all the Old Testament saints. The apostle might well say, “Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh.” Yet here concentrates our life, our hope, our all. And though some of us are favored to know the truth pretty clearly, and the dear Savior pretty clearly as the way, the truth, and the life, yet there are hidden mysteries in him, that just as the Lord is pleased to bring one beauty to light after another, thereby one blessing comes after another. We must therefore not think that our religion is merely a law of right and wrong; our religion is a gift of infinite treasure; our religion is a kingdom that rules over all; our springs of wisdom has in it all the wonders of God himself; all our springs of wisdom and everything else being in him.

I shall notice our text in a twofold form. First, the relation here presented, - “that he might be the firstborn among many brethren secondly, the entire and ultimately perfect harmony between him and his brethren.

First, then, the relation here presented; - “that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” There is a threefold respect in which he is presented as the firstborn; and while I have to bring out the meaning of this in all these three respects, yet, as everything pertaining to him pertains to us, and concerns us, I hope I shall be enabled so to speak as to make you feel that I am, as I go along,

speaking to you. First, then, he is the firstborn in dignity and place. With these two words I shall go through all the respects in which he is presented as the firstborn. He is thus firstborn in dignity and place. We all rejoice in that delightful scripture, — “That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” and that “he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.” Is it any wonder, therefore, that the Old Testament saints should so rejoice in the prospect of this child to be born, this Son given? I need not dwell upon his dignity, —the firstborn in dignity; I will dwell here chiefly upon the place; the firstborn in dignity and place. No person was ever before born under God’s law for others; no person was ever before born to be surety for others; no person was ever before born for such adversity as that for which Christ was born. And now most of you do, —which is a great pleasure to my mind, and seems to help me to go on in what I have to say—most of you do understand what our place is by nature—that we are under God’s law; and that in consequence of our fall in Adam that law is a fiery law, and that no doing whatever of the creature could have brought us from under that law we must have lived under it all our lifetime; though of course, being dead in trespasses and sins, we are unconscious of being under that law, as was Saul of Tarsus, until the Lord showed him what an awful place he was in—namely, under that law; and we must have died under that law, and have been judged at the last great day by that law according to our sins, without any thought or any work of mitigation stepping in to say a word for us, and we must have been lost to all eternity. Why, even you that have but a trembling hope in Christ, even you, in consequence of your hope being but a humble hope, often tremble at death; you often feel if death were to come now you could not meet it. What are you afraid of? I know what you are afraid of—not so much of death, but you are afraid of what may follow. Ah, say you, when I close my eyes in death, when my spirit leaves the body, what if I should lift up mine eyes in hell! What an awful portion mine would be! How happy the people, so far, that know something of where they are. Be it remembered that the everlasting God has decided, and there is no appeal from that decision, that not one jot or tittle of his law shall fail, all must be fulfilled, either in the sinner’s eternal lamentation, bitterness, and woe, or else in a substitute for us. Well then, see the blest Redeemer, made of a woman, born under this law, and he was to meet that law perceptively in his life; and how fitted he was for this place. There he was, not only holy, but infallibly holy; not only good, but infallibly good; not only wise, but infallibly wise; not only loving, but infallibly loving. The law required a perfection of love to God and to man. How suited was the blest Redeemer. He came under this law. And let us not for one moment lose sight of this complexity, being God and man in one person; he lived a life of obedience to that law, and thereby the precept is established without your doing a single thing; indeed, you never could do anything towards establishing the precept of the law. You might have done a little towards it if the law were merely external; but then you see, the law comes, as says the apostle, to the heart. The law came and searched Saul of Tarsus, and what did it find in him? You know what his testimony is as to what it found in him— “all manner of concupiscence;” — “in my flesh dwelleth no good thing.” Now, I say, we could have done nothing; but the Lord Jesus Christ has obeyed this law, has met the law in every sense of the word; and he did not do that for himself, it was done for others. And if you look at the representations given in the word of the Lord, you will see how infinitely suited this is to us. He is, in this work of his obedient life, called Jehovah our Righteousness—the righteousness of God. Now do you see here that the demands of the law are such that we never could have met any of the precepts, because the precept reaches to our hearts, to our nature, and our nature is corrupt throughout, there is no part sound; the whole

head—that is God’s account, whether we see it so or not, that does not alter the fact, —the whole head is sick, the whole heart is faint, and from the head to the foot there is no soundness; full of wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores. But the blest Redeemer came in, and has met the law, and has so met it that I have now no more to do with it, I am no more responsible to God by his law than as though that law did not exist; and that law is as dead to us, in reality and legally, as our fiends that have died they are dead to us. The apostle uses this very simile; —if the husband be dead, then the woman is no longer under that law; and so, the law is dead to us, and we are dead to the law, and we are to see our own righteousness as filthy rags, and nothing else; and we are to look to him that thus justifies us freely by his grace. I am half ashamed to quote that scripture so very often—I believe I quoted it last Lord’s day morning, but I will just mention it here as I pass along, — “To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” This may well be called the wedding garment; this may well be called the best robe; this may well be called being justified freely by his grace. He was the firstborn, then, in dignity and in place.

Now go on a little further. He came under our sin: -not only under the precept, but under the penalty of the law; that whatever wrath there was due to your past, your present, your future sin, all that wrath the Savior endured. Hence it is written in Psalm lxxxv., — “Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin.” So that he bare all our sins in his own body on the tree; and the word of God is clear, that he hath put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. It is hard work to feel nothing but depravity in your own heart and mind, and yet believe you shall go to heaven, and that God will bless you; to feel from time to time the truth of the solemn testimony that “the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked,” and none but God can know it, and yet that God will bless you. Why, says Satan, for you to think God will bless you, or take you to heaven—you get to heaven! Monstrous! So it would be monstrous, the thought, if I had to get there by my good nature, by my good works, good tempers, and good deeds; but if I am to get there by the blood of Emmanuel, if I am to get there by the eternal redemption wrought by his blood, if I am to get there to the credit, to the infinite and eternal honor of that God that provided such a Savior, if I am to get there by the righteousness of Jesus Christ, by the freeness of that grace that is by the mediation of Jesus Christ, let my sinfulness be what it may, it would be a monstrous thought to suppose we could not get there; because that would be to suppose, that Emmanuel’s blood cannot cleanse from sin. My hearers, bring the blood of Emmanuel and the sinner into contact. What is the sinner? Only a creature. What is Emmanuel? Man. What is Emmanuel? God as well as man. And shall not that deity be stronger than your sin; shall not that deity be stronger than your steeped black and retched nature? Why, the Lord hath said by the mediatorial authority and infinite ability of Emmanuel, “Come, let us reason together;” look at my Son, see what he is, see what he has done, and, I will tell you that your sins, though red like scarlet, shall be white as snow; though they are like crimson they shall be as wool. “If ye be willing, to be saved in this way. “and obedient” with the obedience of faith, “ye shall eat the good of the land:” and the good of the land is the bread of everlasting life, and all the dainties of royal luxuries which are by Christ Jesus; that feast of fat things shall make us happy for ever. So, then, it is a monstrous thing, says Satan, for you to suppose you will go to heaven, such a poor creature as you are. But it is a more monstrous thought to suppose I shall come short if I am a believer in Jesus Christ. There is nothing Satan so trembles at as he does at a poor sinner getting hold of the atonement of Christ. The disciples could

not help rejoicing in this: - “Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.” “I saw Satan fall as lightning from the heavens.” “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb.” Oh, see the blessed God here; see his love, see his counsels, see his good will, see his reigning grace, see his sure mercies. But for this infinite efficacy of the work of Christ, the Lord (I say it with reverence) could not have said with propriety, “Incline your ear, hearken diligently, and come unto me and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.” But if that atonement has not with infinite certainty removed sin, past, present, and to come, how can the mercies be sure? What, then, shall we say of this firstborn in dignity and place—that he should take our place? What an awful place! what a cursed place! what a dark place! what a miry pit place! what a stormy place! what an inclement place! Why, what a hell of a place! He took our hell, for these waters could not quench his love, nor could floods drown it. How feeble is language! I often think of the words of the apostle, and my soul sometimes longs to be where our thoughts and language shall be more in accordance with the theme. I have sometimes thought, how feeble his words, — “Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift.” Well, language is but language, and how feeble those words are when we look at this unutterable, this wonderful gift. But what sinner will prize such a Savior as this? None but the man that sees and feels what and where he is as a sinner, and there is nothing he can hope in but the Lord Jesus Christ, the firstborn in dignity and place; the first that was born holy, lived holy, died holy. And look down into the sepulcher, what do you see there? You see there that Holy One that cannot see corruption; no symptom, no sign of decomposition there; no, his nature must cohere. It is sin that has dissolved our nature, it is sin that has dissolved the elements of our nature into their original dust. Take away sin, nature coheres forever. And so, the Savior’s nature cohered, never could be decomposed. So, at the resurrection, when we shall be raised up without sin, our nature will cohere, and retain its youth, its vigor, its beauty, its fragrance, its incorruptibility; and its glory to all eternity, for we are to be like him, and shall see him as he is. The firstborn then; -never was one born before to occupy such a place. And let us stop for one moment, and breathe out a word of gratitude to God that no other is needed. He has done the work, the righteousness is done, the atonement is done, that victory is won; we have nothing whatever to do but to receive it, to walk in it, and enjoy it as far as the Lord shall enable us. The words of our Lord are very simple—” the firstborn:” -very simple; but when we come to the mystery, it contains that, that has lifted us out of hell, and will lift us out of the grave, lift us out of all our trouble, raise us up; the poor out of the dust, the beggar from the dunghill, and will set us upon the throne of glory, there to reign for ever and ever.

Secondly, he is not only the firstborn in dignity and place in his humiliation, but also in his resurrection. He is said to be the firstborn from the dead. Now some were raised up in the dear Savior’s lifetime, and some had been raised up in the Old Testament age, and all his people will be raised up at the last; but did ever anyone rise with such dignity as he rose? He rose by virtue first of his own perfect purity, he rose by virtue of his own perfect life, he rose by virtue also of his perfect atonement; —brought again from the dead by the blood of the everlasting covenant. Did anyone ever raised from the dead so rise, and can anyone ever no rise? No. If you and I rose not until we rose by virtue of our holiness, our righteous, our, our goodness, I am sure we would never rise, except to be cursed, except to go down into eternal perdition. But that same purity, that same righteousness, that same ransom, that brought him from the dead shall bring the people from the dead; but he not only was first in dignity, but also in place; -he arose as the resurrection of

others. Was there ever such a thing before? No, and such a thing is not needed again; - "he dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him;" and because I live ye shall live also." "Your life" for he became our life "is hid with Christ in God; and when Christ, who in our life shall appear, then shall we," by his life "appear in glory with him." Let us now look at the Scriptures upon this matter; let us hear the representation of the Holy Scriptures, and it will not be unprofitable to attend to some of the predicted circumstances connected with that resurrection. Isaiah xxvi, — "Thy dead men shall live;" how shall they live? I do like that scripture very much; — "together with my dead body shall they arise," Our resurrection is spiritually, now, quickened into spiritual life now; we are brought from death unto life now; even this is by virtue of the resurrection of Christ. The power by which he works in them that believe is the power by which he raised Christ, from the dead. "Thy dead men shall live; with my dead body shall they arise;" —there it is; the first in place; he rose as our resurrection. "I am" said the dear Savior, "the resurrection;" I am so glad he did not stop there. If the Savior had stopped there, men would have said, Ah, you see Jesus Christ is the resurrection, but if he raises you up, you must mind and keep yourself alive. But he says, "I am the resurrection and the life." I am as much engaged to keep you alive after I have raised you up as I was to raise you up. "No man keepeth alive his own soul. "He holdeth our soul in life and suffereth not our foot to be moved," And those that he raised up, he gives them to see what their dwelling by nature is. "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust." Dust? Yes. What is my righteousness? Dust. What have I been pursuing all my days? Dust: —it may be gold dust, or silver dust, or some other dust; it is but dust; It will all come to dust. "Ye that dwell in dust;" that is where you have dwelt. And if you have dwelt in false doctrines, these false doctrines are the serpent's meat; —he shall eat dust, lies, false doctrines, all the ceremonies and inventions of men—they are the dust which the serpent and his servants eat, Let the dust represent mortality, let it represent vanity, or sin, or death, let it represent everything that is carnal. "Awake and sing ye that dwell in dust." How am I to sing? By the resurrection of Christ. But how am I to sing by that resurrection? When the Lord makes his truth refreshing to the soul. "For thy dew is as the dew of herbs," Can you recollect, perhaps some of you cannot, perhaps some of you can—when you first heard the gospel with refreshing, when the word came to you, softening and gentle as the dew, and you wondered to feel the hardness of your heart depart; the Holy Spirit poured the sympathies of everlasting love into your soul; the tear of joy and gratitude flowed, and you were ready to say, Lord, is this indeed true? Am I thus forgiven, am I thus saved, am I thus blessed? Why me, Lord; why me? And the only answer is, "Even so, father, for so it seemed good in thy sight," This is one, we have two or three more yet, of the circumstances that follow the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, The first born in dignity and in place; —it is a place, a position, that brings us to life, and brings us under showers of blessings, "Thy dew is as the dew of herbs," Is that all, Lord? Yes. What, no thunderbolts? No, No fire? No, No wrath? No, No tempestuous cloud? No. You all know the laws of dew—that it is by the radiation of heat. When there are any clouds you do not get any dew; but when the skies are clear, and there are no clouds, then the heat radiates, and you get dew. So, our sins are the clouds, and Jesus Christ is the morning without clouds; he has passed all the clouds away, and so the love of God radiates, and reaches out hearts, deposits the sympathies of the gospel in our souls; and the soul becomes a loving soul directly; it loves the truth, loves Jesus, loves God. Some of you have walked half a century, pretty well, in this precious love, in this precious, sympathy; and while the Lord has smitten down and taken from you many that were dear to you in the ties of nature, yet he has not taken himself from you, he has not taken his truth from

you, he has not taken his promise from you, and he has not suffered your sympathies towards his name and his truth to wither. See then what Jesus does in this resurrection place. No one occupied such a place before; and when the Savior becomes unfit for this place, we will then look for another to take it; but he never has proved himself unfit yet; he has always proved himself adequate and fit for every position he took; and therefore, I am sure it will not be with the consent of any of his brethren that he should be otherwise than he is—namely, Lord of all; we glory therein. And this resurrection of Christ, when thus known, brings about a separation from the world. “The earth shall cast out the dead.” These persons become dead to the world; and their religion is such that neither newspaper editors nor any other carnal men can understand it; and when they meddle with it they make such bumbles they do not know, what to do. They try to make us look foolish, but it so happens instead of making us look foolish they make themselves look foolish. Therefore, they had better take Gamaliel’s advice when he said, Take heed what you intend to do touching these men, for they are very difficult sort of people to deal with. So “the earth shall cast out the dead.” They say, Have you heard such and such a minister? Oh yes, —that high-doctrine Antinomian; I hate him. Thank you. I hope I am one of those so hated; for I do not read that the Pharisees ever cast a blind man out; but when the man’s eyes were opened, and he could not see anything worth having in comparison with Jesus Christ, then they cast him out; and the Savior soon found him, and enthroned him, and made himself manifest to him. So, the earth will cast out the dead, and the dead are very glad to get out. But we must go a little further yet; —what will become of them when they are cast out? The Lord directs them what to do, and you see it fulfilled in the case of the disciples. “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers.” So, the disciples did; and, what were their chambers? Why, God’s everlasting love, and God’s, promises, and the Savior’s name, and the various truths of the gospel; and there they were hid. “Shut, thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation,” the calamities, “be overpast.” But, say you, they did not hide themselves. Yes, they did; for while Peter and John and the rest were visible to the mortal eyes of those around them, they had a *hidden* standing. Gamaliel hit by accident, as we say, not by wit, but hit upon the truth; but if he could have seen further than he did, he would have spoken more strongly. He said, “Lest haply ye be found to fight against God.” That is just what they were doing. Why did they do it? Because they did not see God there; there was the hiding of his power. The apostles had a standing which their enemies could not see. Well, here are Paul and Silas, they are not hidden. Yes, they are; they are in their chambers, where the king is; and they have a hidden standing. We will put them into the inner prison. We do not care where you put them; they have a hidden standing, and in putting them into prison you are putting Jesus Christ into prison; in putting them into prison you are putting God Almighty into prison. Do you think you can keep Jesus Christ in prison? Oh, we don’t believe in Jesus Christ. Very well. Do you think you can keep God Almighty in prison? No, we could not do that. Very well, then, you will not be able to keep these men, you may depend upon it. By and by the foundations shake, the bands fall off from all the prisoners, and the doors are opened; —that is God Almighty coming out. God coming out, say you? Yes; —he does not bring Paul and Silas out yet, they are coming out presently. The jailer thought they were all run away. Why, says Paul, we are all here; —what, frightened you? No, no; we have a hidden standing; we have God Almighty, God eternal, with us. Your little bits of cobweb chains, and locks and doors and foundations, we are not frightened of any of these. “We are all here; do thyself no harm.” You have not hurt us, and never will be able to hurt us, for our Master has said, “Nothing shall by any means hurt you.” Well then, if that is it,

I have been fighting against God, and therefore I am a poor sinner; what must I do to be saved? Do the same as we have done— “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved;” and so he was, and his house; bless the Lord for the children again; —yes, the children, were given too. I have gloried very much in seeing the dear children of our long standing friends brought to know the Lord. “And he was baptized, him and his, straightway;” so Satan was defeated. Thus then, “enter into thy chambers,” “pray unto thy Father which is in secret.” Whatever power you have to encounter, whether it be a Pharaoh, a raging sea, a Goliath, a Nebuchadnezzar, a burning furnace, a lions’ den, let it be what it may, God being with you and for you, what then can be effectually against you? Thus then the Savior is the firstborn from the dead in dignity and place; he occupies such a place as to take care of his people; the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he might have, what he does have, and ever will have, in all things the pre-eminence.

Now the prophet Isaiah sees the destruction of his nation, and brings in one of the most solemn testimonies we have in the Bible. I am quite aware that my remark upon that is already in print, but it will do no harm to repent it. The words to my mind are very solemn. “Behold, the Lord cometh out of his place, to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.” There was a system of iniquity, of organized hostility to Christ and by which system of organized hostility, called the mystery of iniquity, they crucified Christ. Now mark— “the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.” They put the prophets to death, but not one rose from the dead to hear witness against them. But when they put Jesus to death, the earth disclosed her blood, and could no more cover her slain. They made it as shut as they could—rolled the stone, set the seal; but Jesus rose from the dead, and now the earth discloses her blood, and can no more cover her slain. Is it possible that that person we slew is alive? Yes, said Peter, “Jesus of Nazareth, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree, him hath God raised from the dead, and set him at his own right hand, a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance unto Israel and remission of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; and so also is the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.” Much more could I say here, but I suppose I must say no more upon these two parts. First, then, you see the Savior is the firstborn in dignity and place in his humiliation; secondly, he is the firstborn from the dead in dignity and place, not in the order of time, but in the order of dignity and place. And remember, for I shall not have time to amplify that beautiful truth, that the people themselves are designated by the same term, —they are called the firstborn, named after him because they are one with him in dignity, and shall in his exaltation be one with him in place; for “where I am, there shall ye be also.’

But thirdly, he is also the firstborn in dignity and place as the last Adam, Hence said the apostle, “the firstborn of every creature,” the firstborn in dignity and place of every creature; for no creature was ever born with the dignity that that human nature of Christ was born with, “That which shall be born of thee,” just look at the sacredness, the dignity, — “that which shall be born of thee is of the Holy Ghost;” -it is of the Holy Ghost. What a holy, solemn, and delightful mystery is the dignity of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ! I have no desire to understand it philosophically; I have no desire to understand it in that way; God's word is enough for me, and I do rejoice and glory therein. Now he is the firstborn in dignity and place as the last Adam; “firstborn of every creature,” stands at the head of every creature, because it was needful that his hand should be, - and that is a solemn scripture realized in Christ,—in the neck of all his enemies, and he can stop their breath when he pleases; and it was needful that he should have the command of all his

brethren, I dare not enlarge upon this, but I have been in my own soul very much entertained with this department, —the firstborn of every creature in dignity and place; and I thought within myself, Well, what does this do? He is, therefore, as the last Adam, the firstborn, as the head in dignity and place. And I went to the latter part of 1 Cor. xv., —there I find a description of what we are in the first Adam, —corrupt and mortal and earthy, and death, and everything distressing. On the other hand, here is the last Adam, —the firstborn in dignity and in place, for none ever took such a headship before, and no one will ever succeed him, for he is the head of the church for ever. And thus, you will find in those beautiful verses, that as we have borne the imago of the earthy, we are to bear the image of the heavenly; that this corruptible must put on incorruptibility; that this mortal must put on immortality. So, the Apostle goes on till he comes to the beautiful climax, “Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory, O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin;” —and the sting of life, too, very often; — “and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Thus, then, I think you will understand that he is the firstborn, — not in the order of time, though some would take it in one sense even in that way, But, my days are too short now for me to meddle with controversial matters, therefore I hope to deal in plain, simple truths the little time I am with you. Observe, then, he is the firstborn in dignity and place in his humiliation; the firstborn in dignity and place in his resurrection; and the firstborn in dignity and place as the head of every creature; the firstborn of every creature. And of course this Includes another doctrine, which I must not stop now to dwell upon, —namely, he is the firstborn heir of all things. And here I ought to say a word. It is, to my mind, a wonderful thing that, although the Lord Jesus Christ is the son of God, and you would think thereby that he is heir of all things, yet he even is not thereby heir of all things without that doctrine that people despise; and I would just name it as a caution to those that despise that doctrine, Here God has a Son; that Son stands naturally as the heir of all things; but shall it be so or not? As every man has an absolute right to dispose of his property as he pleases, our God had an absolute right to do what he would. And now mark the language; “Whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom he made the worlds,” —by whom he made the ages would have been better; by whom he regulated the age of providence and grace; “whom he hath appointed.” Ah then, would Jesus Christ bow to the Father? —Father, I am thy Son, naturally heir of all things; but in addition to that I have thy good will; I am predestinated to it, I am appointed to it, on the ground, as you know, of divine Sovereignty. Therefore, he owns the brethren; “For both he that sanctified and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.” Now he in his humiliation thus received the doctrine of sovereign appointment, received the doctrine of divine predestination. Why, my hearer, it tempts me to say that if the Son of God received that doctrine, if that be needful to establish his heirship, how infinitely much more was a sovereign decree essential to your soul? We are all by the sentence of the law appointed unto wrath; therefore, unless the Lord meet that judgment, and bring in another decree, to that wrath we must come. He “hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,” There, then, is another decree, the decree that is in and by Christ Jesus.

But lastly, the entire and ultimately perfect harmony between him and his brethren, Rom. viii. 29.; “Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” Their being conformed to his image denotes the

complete harmony that shall be between them and him. They shall be of his mind; to be conformed to his image is to be of his mind, is to receive him in what he is, and to receive God's testimony concerning him; and sweet harmony shall reign. What a sweet and lovely harmony reigned between the disciples and the Savior; and when they had their little disputes, how easily he ended them. Well, James, I am more loving than you, says John, so I shall have a higher post than you. Well, says Thomas, I am more cautious than you, John; you believe anything; I always take care to believe nothing too fast therefore I shall be put into a post of greater trust than you; you believe anything, but I believe nothing unless I see it. As to Matthew, You are very well acquainted with business; I daresay you will have a good business post. And they were reasoning who should be greatest. So, the dear Savior asked, "What was it that you disputed among yourselves?" Not a word did they say they did the wisest thing they could do-they held their peace; glad to drop the subject, depend upon it. Ah, my hearer, the dear Savior; whatever there is the matter, when he steps in with "Peace be still," "waves obey him, and the storms before him fly."

And how he kept tip that harmony; how nicely be managed their little disputes.