

SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT:

TRUE FASTING.

A SERMON

PREACHED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 19TH, 1864, BY

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AT THE SURREY TABERNACLE, BOROUGH ROAD.

"Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."—Matthew xvii. 21.

It is no doubt difficult to understand what is meant by "this kind;" but I think the Saviour here intends a distinction between the temporary visitations and dwellings of Satan, and the permanent dwellings of Satan; so that where there is a spirit of permanent dwelling, there our text is fulfilled in relation to the outcasting of such a spirit, that it goeth out only by prayer and fasting. You will see in the word of the Lord many instances where Satan has not a permanent, but only a temporary work to do; and then, when he has done his work, he voluntarily himself goes, and leaves the consequences of his work. A great many instances I could bring from the word of the Lord, but that would occupy too much of our time. I therefore simply remind you, for instance, of his visitation of David, in stirring David up to number the people; perhaps to get David to calculate the excellency of his position according to the human strength with which he was surrounded, instead of calculating upon his safety by what the Lord was unto him. And when Satan had done his work so far, he then hopped, and he was indeed the means of bringing a pestilence upon Israel; Satan then went his way, and left those whom he had deluded to suffer the consequence. And so it was with Job: he came to Job, but there his dwelling was only temporary; he did his work, went his way, and left Job to suffer the consequence. So it was with Joshua, the high priest: he stood at his right hand, and resisted him as long as he could, and then Satan went his way. And so it was with the Saviour: he had no permanent dwelling with the Saviour; visited and tempted him, and then Satan went his way. But in this case, here is a youth that an evil spirit had possessed from his childhood, and had turned this youth into a lunatic, and had made him also deaf and dumb. Here Satan, or one of the evil spirits or fallen angels, had a permanent hold, a permanent dwelling. And this visible (if I may so call it), permanent dwelling, which he had in the mind of this youth, making him a lunatic, and deaf and dumb, and to throw himself one time into the water, another time into the fire, appears to me a very clear, and at the same time very solemn illustration of the state of all men spiritually by nature; for I may say that all of us by nature are out of our right minds; all of us by nature regard the body more than the soul; and I am sure that is madness; all of us by nature regard time things more than eternal things, the creature more than the Creator, corruption more than incorruption, mortality more than immortality, the perishable more than the imperishable, and even sin, in some shape or another, more than God's salvation. And what is this but a kind of lunacy, a kind of madness that we are all under by nature? What is this but the permanent indwelling, though unknown to us, of Satan in our souls? And this young man had thrown himself sometimes

into the water, and sometimes into the fire; had gone into all sorts of dangers, and yet his life was spared. Neither the fire nor the water could destroy him. He was ordained to know Jesus Christ; there was therefore a gracious and a divine decree, that in spite of fires and waters, in spite of Satan and all the dangers to which he was exposed, there was a gracious decree that made him immortal until the time that the enemy should be dislodged, and that this youth should come to his right mind, and like another, of whom we read that he was sitting at the feet of Jesus, in his right mind, and clothed. And see what an illustration we have here, then, of the Lord's dealings toward all his children. When we were—we that now know the Lord—when we were in a state of nature, in what a variety of ways we might have lost our natural lives, and our souls have been ushered, by the weight of our sins, into hell, as others; there is no difference. But no;

"Heaven's indulgent care
Attended our wanderings here and there,"

and we were preserved to the time and place when Jesus met with us, had mercy upon us, brought us into our right minds, cast the enemy out, to enter into possession of us again no more for ever, in the sense that he possessed us before. I shall, therefore, you may judge from these few remarks, make use of our subject this morning spiritually, as it bears upon eternal things. And I will take, after these remarks, a twofold view of the subject. First, I will notice *that fasting and prayer of the saints essential to prove that they are saints*. Secondly, notice *the prayer and the fasting by which the enemy is cast out*. First, then, there is *a spiritual and essential fasting belonging to all the saints of God*. And it stands thus, that in the Old Testament age, as you see in the 23rd of Leviticus, on the great day of atonement there was to be a fast; every man was to afflict his soul, and he that would not afflict his soul on that day was to be cut off from among the people. Now this typifies a certain part of Christian experience. I do in my own soul feel, and I see, when I look around in the professing world, more and more the necessity of being careful to trace out the work of the Holy Spirit. For I may say, before I enter minutely into this subject, that whatever faith or knowledge we have, whatever profession we make, whatever confidence we have, if the Holy Spirit himself hath not begun a living work of grace in our souls, and what we have, if it be not by his quickening and indwelling power, we shall some day have to part with all our religion, if we have it not by the Spirit of the living God. "From him that hath not shall be taken that," saith Luke, "which he seemeth to have; but unto him that hath, it shall be given in greater abundance." Now there was the great day of atonement, and if we take that spiritually, it stands thus:—Here is a sinner brought to feel that by sin and by the sentence of God's law he must perish; and it is represented under that figure of perishing with hunger, because sin hath deprived us of everything. And we have an awful but a truthful, at the same time, representation of the privation to which we must come if we are not saved. We read of one that lifted up his eyes in hell, and longed for a drop of water to cool his tongue. You observe, had there been silver and gold there, they would have been of no avail to him. Now, then, when conviction enters into a sinner's mind, he feels his need of mercy, he feels his need of Jesus Christ, and his language is, "I perish with hunger;" that is, I perish with destitution. Here I am, sin and the law of God have made me a poor, deprived, destitute creature, like as it were a beggar on the dunghill. And that atonement, that day of atonement, was to be the tenth day of the seventh month; to be in the seventh month, on the tenth day. See how expressive this is. The atonement was to be in the seventh month. Doth not the seventh there point us to the perfection of that atonement? And when a sinner, thus convinced of his state, finds out the perfection of that atone-

ment, he is delighted therewith. Ah, he says, here then is that meat that endureth to everlasting life; here is that bread that endureth to everlasting life, because it is complete. Here is an end to my poverty, here is an end to my privation, and here the promise comes in, "My God shall supply all your needs, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." And it was also to be on the tenth day of the month. Doth not this remind us of another delightful truth, namely, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the end of the ten commandments, that he is the end of the law for righteousness unto every one that believeth? Here, then, the man that is brought into this spiritual fasting, he is the man that will appreciate that provision in the perfection of it; he is the man that will appreciate that provision, as bringing him to the end of the law. The seventh month denoting completeness, that that atonement bringeth us to the end of sin; and the tenth day reminding us of the tenth commandment—the end of the law; Christ's work bringing us to the end of that law. Now there were two things connected with that day; one was, that the people were to fast. And so you are to be brought to feel that nothing but that atonement can sustain you; you must not look, if I may so speak, for bread anywhere else, for any other bread; you must not look for any other sustenance; you must live upon nothing else. "He that eateth me shall live by me, and he that eateth my flesh," that is, he that believeth in me, and receiveth the testimony of what I have sacrificially done; "he that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day." Now this is a kind of fasting that all must be brought into, to conform their taste to God's truth; and God's truth there represents itself in a threefold form: First, here is a substitutional sacrifice, and you are brought to feel that you need a substitute, that you are nothing but a sinner, and that you need a substitute; brought to feel that and receive that. Secondly, as I have said, the seventh indicates completeness, and you are brought to receive it in that completeness. The tenth day of the month represents it bringing us to the end of the law. Thus you have a substitute, and you must be brought into a position that shall make the substitution of Christ meat and drink to you, that shall make the completeness of his work your delight, or as meat and drink unto you; and that shall make the delightful truth of his being the end of the law, as meat and drink unto you. I think this is one thing, then, intended by the fasting. Now I trust that some hundreds of us know what this fasting is; that we have been brought to feel our need of a substitute, and that our hope is in the substitute; that there is our life from death, that there is our light from darkness, that there is our pardon from guilt, that there is our freedom from all that stood against us. And as we have said, I trust also we have been brought to feel our need of the completeness of that substitute. You cannot dwell too much upon that; it will make you love the Lord, it will make you cleave to the Lord, it will make you feel the emptiness of other things, and the blessedness of standing complete in what the Saviour has done. And then, as I have said, the end of the law—what a blessed truth that is! When we remember that the law is spiritual, and we are carnal, sold under sin, for "he that offendeth in one point is guilty of the whole;" and "there is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good, and sinneth not." So that we receive the delightful truth of Christ being the end of the law for righteousness. This is a spiritual fasting, then, that conforms you to the truth of substitution; conforms you to the testimony of his completeness; conforms the soul to the testimony of his being the end of the law; so that, summing up these three, you may say with the apostle, "The life that I now live I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." And then, another point I may just notice:—on that day, if any man did any work, he was to be cut off from among his people; he was to be separated from among the people if he did.

any work. And so, if you attempt to bring in any of your own works to help out in any way the atonement for sin; if you attempt to do anything to add to his righteousness, that would prove, if you die in that state, that although you do hold the doctrine of his atonement, though you hold the doctrine of his righteousness, though you hold the doctrine of his substitution, yet you have never been taught of God; you have acquired a sentiment concerning Jesus Christ, but you have never been brought to feel that all your righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and consequently you have still few free-will or duty-faith works that you attach great importance to, and believe that the Lord will hear you and bless you on the ground of the same. Now, all such were to be cut off. And so it is now; the Lord will bring his people not to gratulate themselves, but to loathe themselves; not to have any confidence in themselves, or anything they do, for their confidence shall be in the Lord, and in the Lord alone. Thus, there is that hunger that constitutes the fast, and there is that prayer, that desire for Christ that constitutes prayer; and there is at the same time that renunciation of all confidence in the doing of the creature that makes way for the coming in of the Saviour in that victory which he hath achieved.

I will secondly notice in this part, this subdivision, *the circumstantial fasting*. Now literal fasting is a natural consequence of trouble. A person in deep temporal trouble cares but little for luxuries, or rather nothing at all; and much more a soul, or a man in deep soul-trouble, he cares but little for the luxuries of life. There is no feast you can prepare for him, there is no music, there is no entertainment, there is nothing under the sun can meet his case. He, therefore, though he may be surrounded with all the glory of Solomon, must, nevertheless, be a mourner in Zion. He feels his need of something which the Lord alone can bestow. And hear what the Saviour says about this,—and it just accords with the feeling of the man that is taught of God. The Pharisees of old, they made a great show of their doings, the same as Pharisees are fond of doing now. But the Saviour says, “Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast.” It is not between you and man—matters between you and men are easily settled, and even if they should remain unsettled while you live, that won’t be long, it is only a little while; don’t fret about that—don’t be uneasy about that. If somebody that once liked you now hates you, never mind, it won’t last long; if somebody that was once pleased with you is now displeased with you, don’t break your heart about that, don’t fret about that, don’t be cast down about that. It is only the breath of a dying mortal that you are fretting about; it is hardly worth having in its best condition, and hardly worth mourning after when it is gone; don’t fret about that. You have as many friends as the Lord intends you shall have; and he gives friends, and he takes friends away. And so your better way is not to appear unto men to fast; not to put on the habiliments of woe to please men, but to fast unto thy Father which is in heaven. Let the matter be between you and God; if matters are pretty right between you and the Lord, thy Father which seeth in secret, he sees you mourning, he sees you cast down, he sees you unhappy, and he counts all your sighs, and all your groans, and all your tears, and all your fears, and all your troubles; and a mother cannot watch over her sick infant with equal care that the Lord watches over every one of his children. “As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you, and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.” And therefore fast not before man, but before God, “unto thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly,” so openly that you shall see the reward; and other people may not enter into your

sorrow nor into your joy. "The heart knoweth its own sorrow, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with its joy." As they entered not into your grief, they will not enter into your joy. Some of the people of God may, when you testify of what the Lord has done for you in turning your fast into a feast. "For thus saith the Lord of hosts; The fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts;" and so it was, when the city was besieged there was a fast, and when the temple was burned there was a fast, and when Gedaliah was slain there was a fast. The Lord turned all these into feasts. So the Christian is sometimes like a besieged city; there he is, surrounded on every hand, and he wishes himself everywhere but where he is; or, perhaps, some one whom he loved is slain or taken away. Now the Lord, then, has promised to turn all these fasts into feasts; or, to use the Saviour's own words, to turn our sorrows into joy. "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy." Thus, then, the Christian does not assume to fast; he does not put on a fast. It is not going without his food literally that does it—no; it means a spiritual fasting, a spiritual mourning, sackcloth spiritually—in sackcloth and ashes, as it were, spiritually. And so we have, as Christians, a great deal of this during our pilgrimage. The Pharisees of old reproached the disciples because they did not join in their formal fasts. Now you have no occasion to appoint any fasts: they will appoint themselves; fasts will come fast enough. You have no occasion to say, "I am going to fast on such and such a day." You may leave all that. You may take my word they will come without your appointing them. And so the Saviour said, "Can the children of the bride-chamber fast while the bridegroom is with them;" while they enjoy his presence? Every Christian says, No; for when he is present it fills our hearts with joy, and makes us happy. But the day shall come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, not vitally, nor fatally, nor finally, nor as to union, but as to communion; and then shall they fast. What a mercy that is—what a mercy that is; what a mercy 'tis that when you can't enjoy the truth you don't go after another gospel, and try and fill your belly with those husks! what a mercy it is that when the Lord hides his face you are saying, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him," and in him alone! Off goes the stony-ground hearer to something else; but the Christian says, No, I will live fasting and die fasting rather than I will turn to another gospel; rather than I will look to another Jesus Christ. "Whom have I in heaven but thee; and there is none upon the earth I desire besides thee." So then, if you know what the essential fast is, to be brought into such a sight and sense of need as to receive Jesus Christ, typified by the atonement of the great day, as I have stated, then you will know what these after-fasts are; you will read many a chapter, pray many a prayer, hear many a sermon, and often be at the house of God, without getting one crumb, one drop, any help; all will seem dead spiritually. And what is this for? Why, it is to try us, whether we will cleave to the truth or no, whether we understand the value of the truth. For the convinced sinner, the man that is a true disciple of Jesus Christ, he understands the word, the value of truth, and therefore knows that it is too valuable ever to be parted with. So then, "tarry by the stuff; tarry at Bethlehem, tarry in Jerusalem;" and though thou mayest wait for a long time, yet the Lord by-and-bye will come in, make it all up, turn your sorrow into joy. Thus, then; there is essential soul-poverty, hungering and thirsting, to humble us, and to make way for the coming in of Christ in the respects I have named; secondly, there are many after-fasts, and our times of feasting are in the Lord's hands. Ah, what twaddle do some men talk upon this subject! Come, say they, and don't live that half-starved life; come and eat, and drink, and be merry, and be happy. Well, say they, the word

says so. I know it does; but it is one thing for the word to say so in the letter of it, and another thing for the word to say so in the spirit of it. When the word says so in the spirit of it, then it comes with power, and causeth us to do what the Lord commands, but the gospel in the letter of it is as helpless as I am. The letter without the Spirit of God can no more help me than I can help that; it is the letter, and here am I as helpless as that is, and that is as helpless as I am. But when he comes, and tells me with power, "Set on meat;" when he is pleased to bring me into the banqueting house, and wave manifestively the banner of everlasting love over my head, then I can eat, and drink, and be merry, and be happy; then I can eat my bread with a merry heart, drink my wine with joy, go my way; and then I can rejoice that I am accepted in my beloved, and rejoice that while I have many fasting times, there is, when fasting times shall be no more, an everlasting feast. It is not by this kind of fasting and prayer, then, that the evil spirit is cast out; no; but to that presently.

There is also a *joyous fast*. I have read of a man that had nothing to eat for six weeks. That's a long time, say you; how did he look then—very thin? No. Very haggard? No. Very cast down? No. Very miserable? No. As though he would eat a flint stone almost? No. Very sorrowful? No. What was his name? His name was Moses. He was forty days with nothing to eat, nothing to drink. How was that, say you? He was too happy. And when he came down from the mount, his soul could not hold the happiness; it emanated from the body, and his face shone almost like the sun; so far so that the Israelites could not steadfastly behold the countenance of Moses, for the glory that was upon that countenance. Oh, it was a joyful fasting; he was too happy in the soul to want anything for the body; the cheerfulness of the soul animated the body; the delight that he had in his heart was indeed during that time a continual feast; for "he that hath a merry heart," that kind of merry heart that God makes merry, by his grace, his mercy, and his presence, "hath a continual feast." Now there is forty days fasting—a joyful fast, too happy to care about eating and drinking. And Elijah's was somewhat of an approach to this; he went forty days and forty nights, and he was no doubt happy all that forty days and forty nights. He was very much frightened, just before that, at old Jezebel; he knew the power that old Jezebel had, so he thought the best thing was to get out of her way, so off he started, and when he was far enough out of her way just to get a nap, Here is a nice juniper tree in the shade; I can lie down and take a nap here. Very miserable! The angel of the Lord came—knew where he was, you see—yes. He was not a duty-faith angel, nor an Arminian angel, or else he would have said, Now, Elijah, if you had believed as you ought to it, I would have come to you. If you had done your part, I would have come to you; but now you have run away from that beautiful old woman, I won't come to you. But no; came to him, gave him some cake. Now have another nap; now you may have a nice little nap after that, and I will wake you up again presently. So he did; and Elijah went on his journey next day, all day. Why, Elijah, you have been travelling all day, ain't you hungry? No. Ain't you weak? No. Ain't you frightened of that old woman? No, no; my heart is strengthened, soul strengthened, body strengthened; very comfortable. So he went on day after day, forty days; it's a long time, you know, is it not? And yet, in the strength of that faith that he had, he travelled that solitary desert forty days and forty nights. So it is now, when the Lord is pleased to bless us with a word of power, strengthen our faith for forty days, on we go, fear nothing, care for nothing, tremble at nothing, triumph over everything; care neither for life, nor death, nor hell, nor men, nor devils, nor anything else. All the time the man is thus strengthened, and feels the Lord God

eternal is with him, he looks around him—whom shall I fear? Now I understand that God is reigning, Christ is precious, all is well. I do not know how long the apostle Paul was in the third heaven; but I would venture to say he fasted all the time. He doesn't tell us how long he was there; perhaps he didn't know; whether in the body or out of the body he could not tell. I do not apprehend he was just caught up for a few moments, and then back again; can't tell how long he was there. But however long he was there, he wanted nothing for the body; no, the soul was then filled with a wonderful foretaste of that perfect glory yet to be revealed.

Now, it's the opinion of divines, who are reckoned, of course, authorities—alas! unhappy me! I can't receive them as such, but they are reckoned authorities,—that if the minister fast and pray properly, all that hear him will be converted. And I say there is an awful responsibility upon those ministers if they do not fast and pray so as to convert all their hearers. "This kind," say they, "goeth out only by prayer and fasting;" and as the poor lunatic couldn't fast or pray for himself, and had not sense to do so, it is the work of the minister. Then woe to the man that doesn't do his work! I have seen a sermon a little time ago upon this very subject; that sermon advises stout people to fast; tells them it will increase the force of their prayers wonderfully. Well, I am not one of the stout ones, I have no fat to lose, so I am free from that. And the proposition is made in that sermon, that certain very plethoric persons take some enormous sinner in hand, and they are to fast all day, and by the time night comes, their prayers will be so powerful that this big sinner, the sermon tells us, must be then converted. Then I say, shame to those men if they don't do so. How they can do all the fasting which they say they ought to do, and yet remain so enormously fat, I can't make out; there is a want of reality somewhere. If I started a doctrine, I would stick to it, if I broke my neck by it. If I started a doctrine, I would do it. If I believed that by fasting for a month I should thereby save a soul, though I knew that that fasting would kill me, the living God is my witness, I would do it, if I believed it would have that effect. I mention this because of the eternal nonsense and eternal delusion set before us, and which the world swallows, and is delighted with. What is the fasting, then, by which the adversary goes out? That described in the 58th of Isaiah. The fasting here, the prayer here, means the intercession of Christ, and it's only by the intercession of Christ that the devil can be dislodged where he has a permanent dwelling; only by the fasting of Christ. What does the fasting of Christ mean? Not merely his forty days' fasting, but it means the whole of that privation which he underwent to obtain for us eternal redemption? "Is not this the fast that I have chosen, to loose the bands of wickedness?" The rulers had wickedly bound the people with their traditions. Satan hath wickedly bound us in our state by nature; Christ comes, and looses us from those bonds. "To undo the heavy burdens." Satan hath brought us under heavy burdens; Christ comes, and undoes those burdens, and takes them away. "To let the oppressed go free." Satan and his agents are as oppressors to the saints of God, and Christ healeth them that are oppressed with the devil. "And that ye break every yoke." So Christ hath done, and set us perfectly and eternally free. "Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry?" So Christ has done, so he does do, and blessed are they that do hunger for that bread which he deals to the poor and the needy. "And that thou bring the poor that are cast out," cast out in their own eyes, cast out by the world, "to thy house;" and Jesus doth do so. "When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him;" and Jesus doth do so, saying, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him." "And that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh;" and so Jesus hath ever declared his Father's name unto his brethren; his heart was never lifted up above his brethren. Now

then, when this fasting and intercession of Christ, when Christ's intercession is brought in, when he requires the heathen for his inheritance, the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession, by his fasting, by the privation he underwent; when this is brought in, then Satan's permanent dwelling is put an end to, Satan, by sin, the state into which he has brought us, has a permanent dwelling in us all; and he was the strong man that kept our souls in false peace; but presently a stronger than he comes, and that stronger is Jesus Christ, and he binds the strong man, the devil, spoils his goods, casts him out, and as he here saith, "I charge you to enter no more into him." This is the fasting and the prayer; Christ prays for his people, and Christ's whole life was a spiritual fast; he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. See then the 58th of Isaiah, let the intercession of Christ and the fasting of Christ come in, let that be brought in, then, let the man's state be what it may, out Satan must go. He is dislodged, not by human fasting or human praying, but he is dislodged by the intercession and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Doth not this accord with the Holy Scriptures, which say that "as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he likewise partook of the same, that he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Does it not accord with another scripture, namely, that "they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb?" This kind goeth out, therefore, by the prayer and fasting of the Lord Jesus Christ. He hath said, "Without me ye can do nothing." I detest the notion that the blessed God has rested the eternal destiny of souls upon the confidence that these lordly gentlemen are pleased to exercise. If we exercise a lordly confidence, and go without our breakfast, and then without our dinner, and then without our tea, why, then the work will be done. The man, calling himself a gospel minister, that can talk such old wives' fables, I would not give the butt end of a straw for all his fasting, and all his confidence, and all his prayers; for it is all assumed, it is merely human invention. No, my hearer, if the soul be quickened, it is by the desire of Christ. He looked upon you while in a state of nature, and he says, Father, give me that soul. The Father says, Take it; and he keeps the same. On what grounds is Jesus Christ to have the soul? On the ground of the sorrows he felt, on the ground of the privations he has undergone. He has taken our sorrows; he has undergone a lifetime of privation, that we may have an eternity of possession. You may seek to overcome the devil otherwise if you like; give me this way; give me the Saviour's name, I shall then rejoice that the devils are subject to me through his name. "Do not rejoice merely in that, "but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven," because you will often find the spirits are not subject to you; you will have to endure a great deal from them, and that will lower the cause of your rejoicing, but if you rejoice that your names are written in heaven, you will rejoice in that which is always the same. Thus, then, here is the essential fasting, the circumstantial, and the joyful, and the mediatorial prayer and fasting of the Lord Jesus Christ, by which the enemy is overcome.

Now, in conclusion, just mark three things relative to this lunatic. First, that what the Saviour did, he did freely. It is true the father was led to pray for it; but then who gave the father that spirit of prayer? The Lord alone could do that. What he did, he did freely. Did the lunatic do anything towards it? Was he not still a lunatic when the Saviour met with him? Was he not still deaf, and still dumb? Could he speak? No. Could he hear? No. Did he know what he was about? No. And we were just the same spiritually; we were as insane spiritually as this youth was literally. And what did this insanity, and deafness, and dumbness of the man do? Why, commended him to the Saviour. It was a case that would magnify his power, his grace, his name, and his mercy. Now then, in this young man, first, it was free; second, it was effectual.