

SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

JUDGMENT AND MERCY.

A Sermon

BY MR. JAMES WELLS.

NOV. 1966

"Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."—Rom. xi. 22.

THE apostle in this chapter is speaking of two connected yet distinct subjects. The one is the final salvation of all the election of grace; and therefore in the beginning of the chapter he tells us that "the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." And the other is the transfer of a heavenly dispensation from Jews to Gentiles. Therefore it is said that "the kingdom of heaven should be taken from the Jews, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." This does not mean that eternal life should be taken from those who once had it, and given to others who would make a better use of it. No. It refers merely to the external dispensation, which the Jews abused. That dispensation, it is true, which was delivered to the Gentiles, was not the same in form as the other, and did not contain the same ceremonies; but it was the same in kind. The first dispensation was to set forth eternal things; and this is the design of the second dispensation, the gospel dispensation.

Now there is a moral possession of this dispensation, and a spiritual possession; or, if you please, a general, external possession, and a vital, internal possession of this dispensation. And it is the highest privilege of any monarch or ruler to defend Christianity in that liberty of conscience which the Bible enjoins. And this is the sense in which we are to understand that exhortation in the second Psalm,—“Be wise now therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth; kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little.” Christ claims a deference from all nations, for he is not the king now of one nation only, but he is “King of kings and Lord of lords;” and therefore all who abuse the laws delivered unto them (in a mere moral sense, mind—delivered providentially) will have to give an account to God for this. And this is the sense in which our text in the letter is to

be understood,—that “severity towards them that fell,” and “goodness towards thee ;” “goodness, if thou continue in his goodness,” but turn round and abuse these moral laws, and “thou also shalt be cut off.” But you must not confound this wilful conduct with what is spiritual and saving. No ; this is where men err. They take up that which is merely moral, and make it out to be spiritual ; they take up these calls for a general deference to God, and make them out to be calls to eternal salvation, and then say that men will not accept salvation. Whereas this chapter shows the very opposite : “God hath not cast away his people, which he foreknew”—“Even at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace”—“The election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded”—“And so all *Israel* shall be saved.” This shows you that the apostle has these two meanings in the chapter : the real, vital, eternal blessedness of the Lord’s people, and the transfer of the heavenly dispensation from one nation to another, together also with that reverence which it is the duty of all men to render to the name and laws and institutions of their Maker, wherever those laws and institutions come.

Now you see this chapter stands together. One part does not contradict another. It does in the letter of it, but not in the spirit of it, any more than any of the sermons I have published contradict my “moral government,” or my “moral government” contradicts them. They stand perfectly together in sense. Because they do not stand together in the letter, some of you think they contradict one another in the sense ; but they do not. This chapter contradicts itself in the letter, but it does not in the spirit. My text speaks of some who shall be “cut off,” and yet again it is declared that “all *Israel* shall be saved ;” if some are cut off, how can all *Israel* be saved ? and if all *Israel* be saved, how can any be cut off ? You see, the chapter seemingly contradicts itself. But we are quite sure, as God is the author of it, that it *cannot* contradict itself in meaning. And if you take in the external dispensation, and regard men as responsible and accountable to God in this moral sense, then you understand that part of it ; and if you take in the dispensation of saving mercy, then you see how it is that the Lord’s people *cannot* be “cut off.”

Now we will notice these two things which are expressed in the text. First, *contrast*,—“goodness and severity.” Secondly, *admonition*,—“toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness ; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.”

I. First, the contrast,—“Behold the goodness and severity of God.”

“On them which fell, severity.” Now all have fallen in Adam ;

and the sentence of severity, just severity, has been passed upon the whole human race. Therefore it cannot allude to our fall in Adam. The fall here alluded to is a wilful descent from that which men knew to be right.

The beginning of the text seems to say, it is something that shall be noticed by the Lord's people. "*Behold* the goodness and severity of God." And we may give you several circumstances from the Bible, just to illustrate this contrast, and set it before you.

The first we mention is that of the flood. You find there the world swept away; there is "the severity of God." There must be something awful in sin to the last degree, to entail upon the world even such a scene as that; though what was that compared to the eternal deluge to come? And then you see the goodness of God in those who were preserved. "And Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord;" and if we are not taken away with the general deluge, it is because grace has interposed and preserved us. "Behold the goodness and severity of God." And let me just observe that you will see, as we go along, in some of the circumstances we shall mention, mercy and severity travelling side by side so closely, that severity sometimes seems almost ready to go before goodness; but mercy takes good care to keep itself far enough before severity to get its objects out of the way before severity takes place. In some of the rest of the circumstances to be mentioned we shall see that severity was exercised without any conspicuous active operation of goodness on the other part, where for their preservation it was not so absolutely necessary; but here, you see, when the world was to be deluged, the Lord would not allow that deluge to take place until he had gone so far with Noah as to see that he was "shut in:" "The Lord shut him in." And here is set forth, in this circumstance the eternal security of his people—all "shut in" in Christ Jesus.

Next come the cities of the plain. And what a desolation is there! But "I cannot do anything," the Lord says to Lot, "till thou be escaped." So that here are "the goodness and severity of God." His goodness stepped in to take Lot out of the cities, and the cities could not be destroyed until Lot was delivered. Nor can the great conflagration take place until the last object of everlasting love shall be delivered from the plains of this world to be for ever with the Lord.

Then you come to the Egyptians and the Israelites. Here goodness stepped in, and exercised—I was going to say, its aversion to their adversaries. They were gathered together, and their deliverance and the destruction of the Egyptians were close together. No sooner were these on the opposite shore, in the land of safety, than the Egyptians were drowned. "Behold," then, "the goodness and

severity of God." And recollect, these circumstances are mere shadows. The deluge was a shadow of a deluge to come; the ark was a shadow of Christ as our refuge. The consuming of the cities of the plain was only a shadow of the fire to come—"the wrath to come;" Lot's deliverance, the type of the deliverance of the Lord's people, The sea rolling in upon the Egyptians was a figure of the billows of vindictive wrath, which shall meet upon those who are the adversaries of the Lord; and Israel's deliverance was a faint figure of our deliverance.

I go on through the wilderness, and I find persons rushing into the presence of the Lord with strange fire; I mean Nadab and Abihu; "and there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord." And I go a little further, and I find a rebellion raised against the power which the Lord bestowed upon Moses and Aaron; "and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up." Now in these cases here is severity exercised, and the rest (as it were) in a passive state; that is to say, destruction was wrought upon the adversaries, without endangering those who were not to be destroyed; but in the other cases the people who were to be delivered must first be taken out of the way, because the adversaries were to be destroyed by means that would have destroyed these also, if they had not been first delivered.

Passing by many circumstances that took place, illustrative of "the goodness and severity of God," we come to the case of Ananias and Sapphira. These were led away by a covetous heart; their object was the acquirement of a little yellow dust; and the death that justice inflicted was awful to the last degree. You must remember that the falsehood uttered by Ananias and his wife was not common falsehood; it was "a lie unto God." They professed to be interested in eternal things. The apostles clearly saw that the property of those who were Christians could not be long possessed by them, and therefore in their wisdom they turned the property into money, which they could make use of to the advantage of the whole infant church; but Ananias and Sapphira thought they could make a better use of their religion, and therefore they pretended to do the same as the rest, but kept back a part of the price of their possessions, meaning to live upon the general stock, and when that was exhausted they would perhaps be worth ten times as much as they were before. But "behold the severity of God." And we have plenty of Simon Maguses in our day—plenty of Ananiases and Sapphiras—and plenty of Judases. If I have a son to be brought up to the Church of England, why do I put him to college? It is not because I am concerned about the good of souls; it is the money I am looking after—nothing else. And therefore, although their judgment is

deferred, yet their damnation "slumbereth not;" although it is not executed, it slumbereth not in itself. The sword is drawn; it is hanging over their guilty heads, though they see it not.

"Behold," then, "the goodness and severity of God." The Lord is determined to maintain his dignity; and on the other hand, he is determined to provide for the welfare of his people. And awful as are these judgments, we shall by and by more clearly see the justice and necessity of them. Why, if the Lord our God did not thus defend his character, where would his people be? where would his dear Son be? where would all the promises of his word be? They would all sink. But, then, let us not pass by the goodness of the Lord, though it is not my intention to keep you long upon this contrast. Suffice it here just to observe, that our concern, or the concern of those who are born of God, is whether the severity of God is against them or whether it is for them. "What!" you will say, "*the severity of God for them!*" Yes, if the goodness of God be for us, his severity is for us; for all his judgments have been in defence of his people. According to those promises to his dear Son in the 89th Psalm, "I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him." To be made honest before God in these things, and to have a conscience bearing testimony that the desire of our soul is unto his name, and that the only end we have in view is the salvation of souls—to have such a conscience as this, is to have a jewel of incalculable value, and whatever afflictions or troubles may take place, we shall be safe through them all.

II. Now after these few words upon the contrast, leaving you to look at the infinite distance between the two—the depths to which divine sovereignty sinks its objects of severity, and the heights to which it raises the objects of its choice,—look, in the next place, at the admonition: "Toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."

Now there is a question to be put here; and we must answer it, clearly, plainly, and simply. Is this admonition conditional or distinctional? If I can prove that it is not conditional, but distinctional, then we shall at once get at the meaning of the apostle's words, admitting the full force of this admonition in the sense we will presently notice.

Now if this admonition be conditional, there is not one soul, that ever did or ever could get to heaven. There is not one man in the world now, who is sensible really of what he is, that could have the least grain of hope. I have no hesitation in saying, that if our "continuing in the goodness of God" depended upon us,—if our final success depended upon our "continuing in his goodness," and our "continuing in his goodness" depended upon us, then (and I am not

speaking rashly, I am speaking as in the sight of God, in the fear of God, and in the consciousness of what I am) I should really have no more hope than those that are now in the bottomless pit; not the least whatever. And again, if this admonition be conditional, how is it that we have in the Bible such clear proofs of the unconditionality of everlasting salvation? Yea, such clear proofs of it in the song of the church, and in the experience of the church throughout? The old covenant, remember, with its conditions, could not swallow up the new covenant; but the new swallows up the old. Let all the curses of the Bible, let all the *ifs* and *buts* and *may bes* and conditions be all assembled, and try to raise their voice against the people of God: why, all these, when they come to the Lord Jesus Christ, fall into his mediatorial power—fall into his great salvation; the curses are annihilated, all the threatenings are neutralized, all the conditions are completely swallowed up, all is rendered clear and calm; and, “Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation, they shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end,” is the only voice that can be heard throughout the Bible. It is a voice that swallows up all the rest, but nothing can swallow that up. And therefore if the language were to be understood in the conditional sense, then the love of God is not everlasting, the covenant of God is not “ordered in all things and sure,” Christ hath not “perfected for ever them that are sanctified,” he that “hath begun a good work” does not “perform it until the day of Jesus Christ,” Israel shall not “be saved with an everlasting salvation,” God’s purpose cannot stand, it must come to the ground, the Almighty must be dethroned!

I use strong language sometimes, and some of you perhaps do not like it. I do not wish to indulge in coarse phraseology, but I must say that those men, who wrest the Scriptures to bring in again the covenant of works, do appear to me to be most awfully under the influence of the devil; and, I believe, living and dying so, they will sink to the lowest hell. The Saviour says most awful things of him that shall “offend one of the little ones which believe in him;” and nothing can offend them so much as that which tries to take them away from Christ, or to take Christ away from them,—to take away God the Father in the eternity of his love, to take away the dear Redeemer in the perfection of his salvation, to take away the Holy Spirit in the continuation of his work. And therefore I do say, they are damnable systems,—as the Scripture calls them, “damnable heresies;” I hate them with all my soul, and if I had ten million souls they would all be on fire against those abominable systems that would becloud the brightness of eternal mercy.

“This,” you will say, “is talking very zealously, but we had better

come to the text again." Then, having seen what must take place if the text is conditional, the conclusion is that it must be distinctional. And if you read it in this way, you will see what I mean by its being distinctional: "If thou art of those" (distinction of character, you see)—"if thou art of those that continue not in his goodness, but have some of their own, thou also shalt be cut off." But though I have read the text to you in this way, that is no proof to you that it is to be understood in a distinctional sense. I will now give you proof of it.

Mark the following language:—"Every plant which my Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." The devil plants a great many; parsons, false parsons, plant a great many, and a great many plant themselves in a profession; but he says, "Every plant which my Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." Now what does this prove? Why, here is a mixture of people,—some plants which God has not planted, some which he has planted; and we hardly know which are and which are not, there is so much likeness about them; we hardly know the wheat from the tares; and we say, "*If* thou continue in his goodness." Those of you that are of them that are planted of God will be sure to "continue in his goodness;" there is no danger, no possibility of such being cut off. But if you are "in his goodness" in a mere profession, the time is coming when you will not be able to continue there; you must be "cut off." Mark the language of the Lord to the church in Philadelphia: "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world to try them." Again, "He that exalteth himself shall be abased." If you call yourselves Christians, which is the highest honour a man can have (to be one with Christ),—if you call yourselves Christians without the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost, you are "exalting yourselves;" and God says of such that they shall be abased. If you are thus taking the highest seat, calling yourselves children of God when God has given you no authority to come to that conclusion, he will come by and by and send you out of that seat, down (if grace prevent not) into the lowest seat of all—ay, into hell itself. If thou art come into the wedding without the King's authority, without his having brought thee in, he will order, "Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness." Is it not, then, a matter of solemnity when taken up as the language of distinction? If thou art of those "that he hath not planted," thou shalt be "rooted up;" if thou art of those that "exalt themselves" into the character of Christians, and call themselves children of God without his regenerating power, thou shalt be cast out; if thou art of those that come up into "the highest seat," and enthrone themselves in an assurance

of interest in eternal love by the power of the flesh, and God has not brought thee to this, he will cast thee down by his mighty power; if thou art thus taking the things of God to thyself in a mere profession, then that which thou seemest to have shall be taken from thee, and thou shalt lie down in everlasting shame.

Now we like close work; and I really cannot help speaking to you, just as the Lord makes me speak to my own soul. I can truly say I understand the following text upon the points I have been treating of:—"For the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart." I know that when God calls a man to a knowledge of himself, he says within himself, "What right have I to consider I am planted in a oneness with Christ?—is it really so?" What right have I to conclude I am a Christian?—am I really born of God? What right have I to take this high seat of assurance?—is it of God? What right have I in the banqueting-house, and professionally participating in these things?—has the King brought me in? What right have I with the name of Christ? What right have I with the promises of Christ? Does not the Lord say, "What hast thou to do to take my name?" What right have I? I say, when the Lord calls a man by his grace, these become weighty questions. And let me appeal to you that know the Lord, Have not the greater part of your troubles upon spiritual things arisen from these heart-searchings? Do you not see thousands around you jumping into a profession and taking the highest seat, when you can see they have no more authority to do so than devils, while your hearts have been led to tremble lest your religion should be of yourselves instead of God? Now "if thou continue in his goodness," if thou art brought out of thyself into Christ Jesus, thou shalt not be cut off; but if thou hast planted thyself, if thou takest the seat thyself, if thy religion is of thyself, "thou shalt be cut off."

"Behold," then, "the goodness and severity of God; toward thee, goodness," if God be the Author of thy religion; and if he be not, "severity." For God hates the religion of the flesh as much as he does what is called the sin of the flesh. God will have no flesh in the matter. Mark the language of Paul: "Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, that according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." And in another place, "That no flesh should glory in his presence." Now free-will is the flesh, and therefore moderate Calvinism is flesh; they say that all have a chance, and that is flesh; but God has determined "that no flesh should glory in his presence," and if you are taught of God, you must renounce the whole of it. I assure you, it is a matter of concern with me; I am either standing in God's severity, or I am standing

in God's goodness; and therefore here is a crying to God—"Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." The Lord, in the great plan of eternal salvation, has sifted matters to the bottom; he would not rest with plastering things over with false principles. God has determined that his throne shall stand firmly; the dear Redeemer has determined that his people shall stand firmly; and when they are called by his grace, they are desirous that they should be sifted to the bottom, that they may not stand upon false principles, but may know what is in their hearts, and feel and know that their religion is of God. Enoch's religion was of him; Abel's religion was of him; the religion of the Pharisees was of themselves and of the devil, and therefore they could not endure that which was of God.

Some think that we high Calvinists take away the force of this text,—"*If thou continue in his goodness.*" But I ask (if we speak of force), does not this view give it much greater force than the other? Does a statement that this declaration is distinctional take away the force of it? No. And if the Lord should send it home to some poor trembling sinner this night, he will see that the force is not taken away, but brought into his conscience, so that he cannot get rid of it.

But look a little further at the use (which indeed is implied in what we have said)—the use of this text. "*If thou continue in his goodness.*" There is a point I wish not to pass over, for it does appear to me that the apostle here has not only in view the end I have noticed, namely, to distinguish between the living and the dead and "*take forth the precious from the vile,*" but also to express his disapprobation and detestation of that spirit, which he saw arising in his day—a spirit of conceit, being "*wise in their own conceit.*" We live in a day when there is a great deal of hard, unfeeling profession; and with many, many a professor all they talk about is—"Oh, it is all in Christ, it is all right, it is all well, the counsel of God will stand, the decrees of God are sure, it is all in Christ." All this may do for them; it will not do for me; I want something more than this. And then again—"Oh, you must not look to the work wrought *in* you; you must look to the work wrought *for* you." Ah! this too may do for them; it will not do for me. My Bible says, "*Examine yourselves;*" my Bible speaks of something *in* me—"Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; Jesus Christ is *in* you, except ye be reprobates." Therefore I say that the people of God are not saved by that which is wrought *for* them without the same things being wrought *in* them; nor are they actually saved by the things wrought *in* them without the things wrought *for* them. The fact

is, that which is wrought for them is the selfsame thing that is wrought in them. They appear to me to speak of the work of God in the heart, as though it were something apart from Christ. I will show you that it is the same in the hands of each Person in the Godhead, and then I will ask you whether we can be saved by that one great truth, without its coming into those several positions which I will now mention, and in which, in truth, is included the whole affair of eternal salvation. First, sanctified of God the Father and preserved in Christ Jesus : by being sanctified of God the Father we all understand God the Father accounting us in his sight holy and righteous by the great work of the Lord Jesus Christ, thus making choice of us to hold us in this position as his people ; and *there* is the beginning of our salvation. Then Jesus Christ came forth, and it is said that he “sanctified the people with his own blood :” God the Father sanctified them with the same thing, and therefore Christ sanctifies them mediatorially ; it is the same sanctification going on. And then you read of the sanctification of the Holy Ghost ; and what is that ? Why, says Christ, “he shall take of mine,” and “there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem ;” that same sanctification comes into our souls and takes us to heaven. Now if this sanctification had stopped with the Father, it would not have saved ; if it had stopped with the Saviour’s mediatorial work, it would not have saved ; it must come and take hold of us, and give us a vital union to God. And therefore I say, men may easily talk of its being “all in Christ” and “all in Christ,” but I say it is Christ *in me* ; and it can only be by the Holy Ghost, for he alone can bring home the word with power. And therefore when men say we are not saved by the work *in us*, but by the work *for us*, they talk presumption, they talk folly, they talk ignorance, they talk delusion. It is one and the same salvation in all its stages ; but if it does not move, how can it save ? if it does not act, how can we get the advantage of it ? And hence we say of a man of wealth, we are not to estimate him by his wealth, but by the *use* he makes of it ; we say of a man of wisdom, we are not to estimate him by his great talents and powers, but by the use he makes of them. And so how are we to know and enjoy God, but by the use he makes of that salvation ? We esteem his riches, because he makes a good use of them ; we esteem his greatness, because he makes a good use of it ; we esteem his power and love him, because he makes a good use of his power. And therefore—“*if thou continue in his goodness ;*” and these will be sure to do so. You see the text is not conditional, but distinctional ; and God makes it a matter of concern with all his people, as to which they belong to.

I cannot but just drop this hint before I go to my last point. Per-

haps I am speaking to some who think they are Christians, and yet it never was a matter of concern with them whether their names are in the book of life or not. "Oh, sir, I never trouble myself about that!" Allow me to tell you what, perhaps, you never heard before. "What is that?" Why, that you are dead in your sins. Be assured of it; and your parson is an awful liar and a dreadful deceiver if he is leading you along and telling you you have nothing to do with election. If you have not you will never get to heaven; for all whose names were not written in the book of life "were cast into the lake of fire."

But now let us come to the subject of "cutting off." Does the apostle insinuate in our text that the people who are thus brought into the new-covenant goodness of God may be "cut off"? Let us come to the Scriptures in this matter. Cut off! why, what is to cut them off? That is the first question. Sin? Jesus Christ "made an end of sin;" therefore that can do no more; sin cannot cut them off: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifieth." Can the world cut them off? Why, says Christ, "I have overcome the world." Can death cut them off? He has "swallowed up death in victory." Can the law cut them off? Christ has gone to the end of the law, magnified the law, established the law. Will God the Father cut them off? No; "it is his will that not one of them shall perish." Will Jesus cut them off? He says, "None shall pluck them out of my hand." Will the Holy Ghost cut them off? "He that hath begun a good work in them will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Therefore the Lord forbid I should leave you this evening with an idea that there is something like a secret danger somewhere of being cut off. Oh no. Mark the following scriptures. In the first of Nahum, "Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off." Then how can the people be cut off? No; your heavenly refuge never cut you off from one heavenly privilege, and never will; you were always "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ," and ever will be; the Holy Ghost never neglected you in one circumstance, and never will. No; "the wicked passed through us" in the first Adam; he cannot in the last, nor ever will. No; but in the last Adam there was something done which good gardeners cannot do. And what is that? Why, brambles and thorns turned into fir trees and myrtle trees." "Ah!" say you, "that is contrary to the laws of nature." Yes, but not so in grace. "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree." Mark, it is said in Micah that we are all briars;

that is our state by nature. And what is the law of God? a fiery law; and we are fit only to be burned up. But God says, "I will turn these briars and brambles into fir trees and myrtle trees; I will bring about a mighty change; they shall not be briars and thorns, objects of consuming fire, but trees of righteousness; my dear Son shall take away all their thorns, and bear these in his temples, and from him is their fruit found: "and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that *shall not be cut off.*" Now, Free Will, what do you think of that? You will never get over that. To all eternity they will stand in the garden of the Lord to bear testimony that he is good, and "his mercy endureth for ever." You, then, who are brought over into his electing mercy, brought over into his redeeming love, brought over into his regenerating grace, brought over into decision for him—there is no danger of your being "cut off." What! God "cast away his people!" Why, without going out of this very chapter, it tells you that "the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded;" it tells you that they were preserved while in a state of unbelief, so that no one could commit the unpardonable sin; and at this wonderful work and wisdom of God the apostle exclaims, "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" No "cutting off;" no "cutting off!"

You see, then, the import of this,—“If thou continue in his goodness.” You see the utter impossibility of getting out of his goodness. Look at your past experience, and let that be a sample of the future. Has not your past experience been of that kind to assure you increasingly of the truth stated by the apostle, that “in your flesh dwelleth no good thing”? What has been the result of this experience? Oh, say you, the goodness of God, in Christ Jesus, from an experience of my destitution of goodness, becomes more and more desirable. And the Lord will take good care you shall never have any goodness of your own. He will carry on his own work, and keep us sensible of this; so that there is not the least danger but we shall continue in the experience of his goodness, in the doctrine of his goodness, in the hope of his goodness, in the pursuit of his goodness. “The goodness of God endureth continually.”

Thus, friends, I have, in the fear and the love of God, reminded you of the solemnity of the contrast—“the goodness and severity of God;” I have shown you how utterly impossible it is that the admonition should be conditional, but it must be distinctional—to distinguish those who have some goodness of their own, and are mere empty professors, and will not “continue in the goodness of God,” from the children of God. And, lastly, I have set before you the utter impossibility of *their* ever being “cut off.”