

God's Glorious Work

Joseph Irons

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Compliments of:
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throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever" (Rev. 5:11-13). And who can tell but I may be permitted to add two lines of one of our hymns-

He brought me here by sovereign grace,

And hath done all things well.

From first to last, His love, His blood, His grace, have saved me; and my Triune covenant God shall never hear the last of it in praises.

May He command His blessings on these few hints, for His name's sake.

Amen.

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God's Glorious Work

A DISCOURSE.

Delivered in Grove Chapel, Camberwell, Sunday Morn., Dec. 21, 1851

Joseph Irons

*"His work is honourable and glorious,
and His righteousness endureth for ever." Ps. 111:3*

These words were impressed upon my mind in the recollection of the date to which we arrive this day. Some of you will have it fresh in your memories, and others may have heard of it, who were not present, that it was on the twenty-first day of December, thirty-three years ago, that we joined hands in Christian Fellowship under the superintendence of dear old Griffith William's ministry, in what was then called the carpenter's shop, but which I used to name the large upper room, but which is now called Veranda Place. There the Lord God wrought mightily, and all that He did was "wonderful and glorious." In defiance of all the rage and spite of carnal men, on went the work; sinners were converted to God, and believers were fed and nourished. As soon as it could possibly be accomplished, we removed from thence to this beautiful house, where our God has been working honourably from that day to this. I look back upon the years bygone, and I come to this conclusion, "Well, my whole life has been laid out there, and God is welcome to it in His cause." I have not been left to work alone, but Jehovah's arm has been stretched forth, and His glorious voice has been heard, and the lighting down of His arm has been felt. I could not but rejoice, as we offered prayer just now, to think that there were scores - probably hundreds - now in heaven concerning whom it is said, "This man was born there; that man was born there." The Highest Himself has established His own

and will then pass on. Jehovah saith concerning His dear Son, "I have given thee to be a light to the Gentiles, and the glory of my people Israel, that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the earth." There He owns Him as "my salvation." The Church takes up the same language in the 12th chapter of Isaiah, and says, "Behold, God is my salvation." Well then, God claims it as His own, as being the Author and Finisher of it; man claims it as His portion and inheritance, being the special gift of God for His present use, and comfort, and joy, and for His eternal security.

One word more: the dignity, distinction, and destiny. "Well," you say, "that's three words." Well, they begin with the same initial, and we will take them as one. Dignity that shall dress me in the righteousness of God and deck me with all the jewels of His Holy Spirit's graces; distinction that shall mark my present Christianity as directly opposed to the Christianity of the world - theirs is of man, ours is of God; destiny that secures our being place for all eternity in the immediate presence of God, to sit down with Jesus upon His throne, even as He hath overcome and is set down with the Father upon His throne. Oh! Then sure I am, that there will not be an inhabitant of the blessed place - and if there was, I should not like His company - but what will join in the one universal chorus, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 1:5,6). Again, "Ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, sing with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing;" while all His universe join in the chorus, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the

work. It is not "by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." Therefore I thought we could not do better, in commemoration of such an event, than first to dwell upon the works of the Lord as contrasted with the work of man; because you must know, beloved, that the grand dispute, in which all other disputes merge, in the day in which we live, is just simply this, "Is Christianity the work of God or the work of the creature?" All the difficulties, all the doubts, all the free-will mutterings, all the controversies - all merge in that one question. Our Lord put it in that form to those who came to question and cross - question Him. "I will also ask you one question - the baptism of John, was it from heaven or of men?" The same thing I say now; the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the work of grace, that which constitutes real Christianity, vital godliness, is it from heaven or of men? Is it the manufacture of the creature, or the workmanship of God? If it be the latter, the work is honourable and glorious; if the former, contemptible and vile, and nothing less than actual rebellion against God; it is a rejection of God's method of saving sinners, to set up man's pride, stubbornness, and free-will, and self-righteousness in the face of God's proclamation.

Now, the language of my text is part of a very beautiful Psalm, full of sacred encouragement and instruction. In it the Psalmist seems disposed and determined to dwell chiefly on Jehovah's wonderful, honourable, and glorious works. Now, if we were to follow him through all the departments of creation, of nature, and of providence, we should be inclined to say at every step as we move on, "Well, this is honourable and glorious;" for God never did anything unworthy of Himself. But we pass these by; we shall not have time to enter into them this morning. My chief point is to rivet your attention, if God will, upon that great work which is above all other works in the esteem

As then the seed is incorruptible and liveth and abideth forever, so the righteousness, which is "unto all and upon all them that believe," must abide and endure forever also. And here be it observed for a moment, that the prophet was commissioned to proclaim it so in contrast to all the free-will rebellion. "Look at the heavens, and the earth, and all the clothing upon them, and all the efforts of mortals," says Jehovah, "they all shall wax old like a garment, and shall be eaten up as with moth, but my righteousness endureth for ever, and my salvation shall not be abolished." Now my hearer, which will you choose - the salvation of God, which is to endure for ever, or the salvation forged and palmed upon man as a deception, which consists only in creature doings? By the latter, you will perish eternally - I am clear of your blood - by the former you shall stand complete in the sight of God when worlds are in a blaze, when time shall come to an end, when the heavens shall be wrapped together as a scroll, when the millions of angels shall attend the glorious Judge upon His cloud - built car, and when all the creatures He ever made shall appear before Him at His tribunal to receive the just sentence: then standing complete in the righteousness of God, furnished with a capacity that can enjoy God, brought to rest my eternal all upon the faithfulness of a covenant God, I may join with the poet and sing:

"Bold shall I stand in that great day,

For who ought to my charge shall lay?

Just mark again that this duration of the righteousness and salvation of God - mind you, it was all His own doing; to touch it is to mar it; only receive it, and accept of it - is owned and accepted both by God and by His people. I will give you two short texts just to clench that statement,

of God, as well as important to you and to me; for if God had created us super-angelic, it would not have made us as capable of enjoying felicity, as we shall be when we get Christ's glorious righteousness. If He had ordered His providence so as to put in our possession all the wealth that man can crave, all the honours, and dignities, and governments,, and control of all kingdoms and nations, it would not have fitted us to die; it would not have rendered us capable of enjoying God, but would have left us all to perish in eternal despair. But if this one great work, of which I am about to speak a little is really commenced in our heart, we will take up the solid ground, or take our standing upon the solid ground which the apostle did, and say, "We are confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Now mind you, in speaking of this glorious work of our God, and its being so honourable as well as glorious, I shall limit myself entirely to His work of salvation; I shall not stray from that at all. A multitude of things might be interesting to take into our account, but they are of much less importance and magnitude than the great question with me, and to how does God save sinners. If He leaves them to do it themselves, they will all perish. If He does it only in part, He has only mocked their misery. But if His work, as we want now to show, shall prove to be "honourable and glorious, " worthy of Himself, then we shall see, in the second place, that it objects to all rival interference, which we shall reprobate in the strongest terms we can find; and then, in the third place, the durability of God's work when every other work shall perish. "If a man's work be burned, he shall suffer loss." God's work never can be burned. Popes can harm the poor carcass in which it is placed, but they cannot burn God's work. There may again be a burning day for the Church, and I believe it is not far distant; but it will not consume an

atom of God's work. It will outlive the flames, it will outlive all torment, and outlive all the persecutions that may yet arise, and will glorify its Divine Author.

1.- Now I want to invite your attention, according to this plan, in the first place, to the great work of God in salvation; because, after all that can puzzle and engage the mind, and thoughts and struggling powers of man about sciences, and things that are passing in this evil world, which may fall down and expire, and be of no use to us - after all that can be said about these things, the one thing of great moment and importance to me is, "Has Jehovah undertaken my salvation? Am I to say, as the prophet did, 'Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid?' " I shall have to deal with the opposition presently, but I must dwell upon God's work exclusively first. And suffer me here just to remind you, that God's method of saving sinners was ordained and ordered, honourably and gloriously, before all time, and He will not alter an atom of it. David looked upon this with sacred delight when, amidst domestic trials and distresses, he cried out, "What though my house be not so with God, He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure." This was his confidence; there he got it; this was God's method of saving sinners, honourably and gloriously arranged, settled, and ordered - "ordered in all things" - so ordered that every Person, and all the attributes of Deity, should be glorified therein, that nothing should be compromised, sacrificed, or forfeited of the honour due Jehovah's name, but that He should get glory everlasting in the salvation of ruined sinners, that deserved nothing but eternal torment and despair. Pity to mar such a work as that - is it not? Pity to set up a rival against it, and to tell poor proud man that God has done His best, and done all He can and all He means to do, and left them to do the rest - that very much

begin to hope that He does really mean to lift me up again. I will now say a few words upon the duration. His righteousness has been brought in by Himself, perfect and complete, "unto and upon all them that believe;" and it endureth for ever. "His righteousness endureth for ever."

Now, beloved, I beseech you to mark that grace is an incorruptible seed, and therefore, it is secure forever. You will recollect that the apostle, speaking of the heavenly birth, says, "Who were born, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever." Men talk of sinning away their grace. Well, I dare say they can sin away all their grace; but can they sin away what they have in Christ, where all fulness dwells? I have sinned away all my grace every day of my life, as far as its actings, and comforts, and enjoyments, and victories are concerned; but there is a glorious stock from which a fresh supply is constantly flowing; and of His fulness do we all receive, and grace for grace." And that incorruptible seed, which is nothing more nor less than the life of godliness in the soul, can no more die than God can die; it can no more die than the pillars of His throne can be shaken; it can no more die than His word can be forfeited. Jesus says, concerning all his sheep, "They are in my hands, and they hear my voice, and they know my voice, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." Here again, the proud rebel, free-will, comes in and says, "Oh yes, but they may sin away their grace if they don't take care of it;" they ought to improve it. I want it to improve me. "They get that lie from Satan, you know, not from the word of God. I am fully satisfied that He who has sworn, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," never forfeited His word yet. Men may charge Him with having been a God to lie - God that cannot lie spake all the prophecies.

man, "justified with a little water - at least, partly so - they must complete the rest." My hearer, if you follow this out into sanctification, into adoption, and into every promise and privilege set forth in the gospel of Christ, you will find that the free-will system upsets and neutralizes them all - puts an extinguisher over them all - makes a blank of them all. What, think you, do they say of sanctification? Why, just making clean the outside of the cup and platter, trimming up old Adam nature, putting a gay¹ coat over his old rags, and then letting him go to make it better and better every day; he is to improve day by day. I have never found out that yet. What says my Bible about it? "Jesus, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood;" that is Christ's sanctification. Then every elect vessel must be sanctified by the Holy Ghost - by the word of God in power. Then, again, he is sanctified by God the Father, before time, being chosen in Jesus, and called. The word of God gives the whole work of sanctification to Jehovah as an "honourable and glorious" work; proud free-will gives it to man, and so proclaims itself an Atheist. Moreover, let it be remembered that the spirit of adoption is reversed in the same manner. The promises of God are eyed conditionally, as the legal promises were under the Mosaic economy relative to Canaan; all the blessing so the gospel are held up for auction sale, for man to be the procurer, according to the merit he can muster to buy them - throwing God out of the question. Now my Bible tells me, that every good and every perfect is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, "with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

3. Well, now let us proceed to the third particular of our subject; and I hope you will thank God, with me, for having given me so merciful an alleviation thus far; I do

depends upon their praying, repenting, believing, and the like. It is an infernal falsehood, dragged out of the Vatican of Rome, having been deposited there by Lucifer himself from the bottomless pit. I abhor the very name and thought of attempting to meddle with God's work. It is so honourable that the Father is honoured in all the glorious perfections of His nature, and satisfied in all His demands both of law and justice; that the Son is honoured, taking the bond voluntarily, and honouring that bond in the fulness of time in His obedience and sufferings; and the Holy Ghost is honoured in recording the names of God's elect children in the Book of Life, and in due time taking possession of them personally. Moreover, this work is so glorious in its order and arrangement in olden times as ordained of God - it is so glorious that not one jot or tittle of the word recorded concerning it can by possibility fail, "though heaven and earth should pass away." So said my Lord. It is so glorious, that the devil cannot tarnish it; it is so glorious, that the world cannot dilute it, nor mar it, though it has often tried to do so; it is so glorious, that the vilest sinner out of the bottomless pit is not out of the reach of it, for He is "able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him." What think you of that, poor ruined sinner? Is it not a glorious salvation, a glorious work of our God? It is so glorious, that it must not even be touched by angels, except as they are ministering spirits, to minister to the heirs of it; it is so glorious, that it could not be committed to the care of any created being, for, says Jehovah, "I will not give my glory to another, nor my praise to graven images."

Yet, further, if we look at this work, this great, glorious, and honourable work of salvation, how it shines in the uniting of the Head and members inseparably. There shines the glory and the honour of Jehovah's salvation. It at once casts aside all idea of contingencies and

¹ Showy

uncertainties. Contingencies and uncertainties may deceive mortals, and delude them to their eternal ruin, but will never save a soul; the deceptible things of unrighteousness are in them, and they are sure to be incrustated either in careless formality, or infidelity, of Popery. The first, formality, makes men posts; the second, infidelity, makes men brutes, and so awards them nothing better than brute force; the third, Popery, makes men fiends, lowering them beneath the dignity of any other beings. But Christianity is so glorious and so honourable, that it brings the entire election of grace, the whole Church of God, first into a virtual union with her covenant Head and Husband, Jesus Christ, and then into a vital participation of that union in the fulness of time. And what renders this more honourable and glorious is, that there can be no possible separation. The Lord God of Israel saith that He hateth putting away; and though His people sell themselves for nought, He will redeem them without money; and though they will go astray, He will bring them back; and though they will wander from Him, He will heal their backslidings and love them freely; He has sworn by Himself that He will never leave them nor forsake them. That is the salvation for me - "honourable and glorious." What so honourable as to take the worms of the earth, creatures of a day, cursed under the law, and not merely these, but rebels and traitors against Jehovah, and give them an honourable betrothing, a marriage - union with the Lord of glory! Why that was something like a prodigy, something like an unspeakable honour to put upon a poor worm. If one in affluent circumstances betroths and marries one who is in what is called the inferior walks of life (though, after all, they are but two poor worms of the same old stock of Adam) we say, "What an honour is put upon such an one by the union."

So, again, this abominable free-will system neutralizes all the doctrines of the gospel. You cannot fix upon one of the doctrines which the Bible holds forth, but what the free-will system of mortals goes to neutralize it. Thus, for instance, the doctrine of election. "Ah, I do not like that," say you. But what is that to me? Is it in the Bible, or is it not? Did not the Holy Ghost command the apostle to say, "Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father?" "Shall not God avenge His own elect?" I find it all through the Scripture. But, now, proud free-will says, "no; God may elect a nation, and separate one nation from another, but not individuals; they must make choice of Him, not He of them." And sure I am, if that were so, I should never have made choice of Him. "We love Him," says John, "because He first loved us;" not to make Him love us, but "because He first loved us." Moreover, if you do not like this doctrine of election, we will take the doctrine of justification. I suppose you are looking forward to being justified and accepted before God, and not to being among them that are hurled from His presence. And how stands this doctrine in the Scripture? "Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." But even lawnsleeved gentlemen can tell us that justification begins in water-baptism. So it is in print, to the eternal disgrace of the author; and then they tell us, that it remains for the creature to go on and to complete that justification, that He has begun, with a little drop of water. My hearer, is it not actual stupidity - is it not beneath brutality, for mortals to prostrate their intellects to such dogmas as these? Is that justification by grace? Justification by the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ is set aside, and neutralized. I read in my Bible, that it is in the Lord that all the seed of Israel shall be justified, and shall glory; so their justification is coupled with election, for it is said of Israel that they are all to be justified in the Lord, and shall glory. "No," says

decide for myself, and to decide when I shall repent, and when I shall pray, and do it as I please, and when I please, I do not want the prophecy of Christ - "I will pour upon them the Spirit of grace;" I do not want His prophetic office nor His prophecy to tell me that, when I can do it myself. Moreover, if a priest after the order of Aaron or after the order of Infidels will do for me, I do not want Christ as the "Priest after the of Melchizedec." I neutralize and reject His priesthood by adopting any other and every other. I want a priest that can atone and has atoned and who is Himself the altar and the intercessor, and who has entered within the veil with His own blood. If my free-will is to be sovereign, and to take matters in hand as my own, and put God at my caprice, I want no King-Jesus is no longer King in Zion - and I set myself, and say, "I will be King." Abimelech, Adonijah, and others, suffered for it, and so will you, as sure as you insist upon setting up old free-will king; he is a rebel and a traitor, a usurper, an enemy to God and man in his fallen estate; and if you set him up as a king, be sure of it you will rue for it in God's time. Now I want the offices of Christ to be sustained, that He shall be King in Zion, and wear His many crowns, and upon His head they shall flourish; and I want Him to be Priest in Zion, and for no other priests to be owned except as intruders and interferers with Jehovah's work; I want Him to be Prophet among His people, and teach us all things, and so fulfil the declaration, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord." And while I can trust to His divine teaching, and rely upon His finished work, and perfect satisfactory atonement, and throw myself into the embraces of His kingly sovereignty, heaven earth, and hell may move against me - all is right enough while Jesus' offices are maintained and sustained.

Then tell me, if you can, the amount, the extent, the glory, and honour of that union which Jehovah has formed between Christ and His Church in taking rebellious traitors, slaves of Satan, as filthy and polluted as sin can make them, ignorant and far from God by wicked works, and making them nigh by the precious blood of Christ, and giving them to participate of the vital oneness which communicates grace and the fullness of grace to their personal experience, and which participation leads them to the virtual union which Jehovah announces, "I have betrothed thee to me in faithfulness, and in lovingkindness, and in tender mercies; and thou art mine." And is not this the meaning of our beloved Lord when He says, in John 17., "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me?" We ask, "Who giveth this woman in marriage?" some say, this or that relative or friend. Who gave us in marriage to Christ? He was sure of the Father's decree; He was sent by the Father, the God of all grace. In the secret counsels of His ancient settlement of love, in the glorious arrangements and appointments of the Holy Trinity in Unity, Christ was given to the Church as her Head and Husband, to lie in His bosom. The Church is given to Christ as His spouse and His bride, and he owns the match. "I am married unto thee." "Thy Maker is thy Husband; the Lord of hosts is His name; the God of the whole earth shall He be called."

Just mark one thing more in this honourable and glorious work of God - I mean the regenerating of all the members of His elect family, one by one, by the power of the Holy Ghost. I take up this point with the deeper interest, because the devil so utterly hates it, because he so utterly hates the doctrine of regeneration as revealed in the Bible, that he has set his proud lying agents to drown it in a little water or in a great deal, whichever they

may happen to choose. He has sent his lying agents to make men take the work out of God's hands by dipping their fingers into a little water, and repeating a few words. I insist that the work of God is an honourable and a glorious work. It is His own sovereign province to impart life Divine to sinners "dead in trespasses and sins." It is so honourable that it is "without money and without price;" that it is unasked, unsought, the entire gift of God, the sovereign operation of the Holy Spirit upon a poor sinner's heart. My hearer, let me here warn you, before I come to second particular of the subject upon which I intend to be a little severe - let me here warn you solemnly against believing those Popish falsehoods and legends which would give you to (think of this for one moment, bring your intellect to bear upon it) - which would, by a little water, a few words of prayer, or a sentence or two uttered by a poor fellow - mortal, give life Divine to the soul. I really am astounded that men, at this late period of the world, can be so thoroughly stupefied, so lowered beneath the level of the brute creation, that they can have so entirely abandoned intellect and common sense as to receive, for one moment, such frightful dogmas. I well spurn them with my whole power as long as I am able to speak for God.

Let me tell you, beloved, that regeneration is nothing more nor less than Jehovah's Spirit entering into a poor sinner's soul, taking possession of the habitation that has been occupied by "the strong man armed," and introducing the knowledge and preciousness of Christ there; "for he shall testify of me," said Christ. And when Christ is made known to that soul in its renewed capacity by powers newly created an implanted, Christ, as the way of access to the throne, is made known and revealed, and the regenerated soul is accustomed to aspire, to go up, to go out, to go forth in holy meditation,

exclusively; salvation must be ascribed to His name; and all the inhabitants of heaven shall join in the chorus of "Salvation, and glory, and honour, and praise to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever." I am sure it would make sad discord in heaven, dreadful jargon, if some proud free-willers were there saying, "We thank our prayers, or stedfastness in believing, for getting us here; and we thank our priests for helping us." But there will be no such jarring work in heaven. I do not say there will be none in heaven who were Arminians on earth, because God can change them in the last hour. There will be no Arminians there; but all, with one consent, will acknowledge that salvation is of the Lord.

There is one point more - I think, if possible, more severe - that I want to invite you to in this obstinate hostility of man to God's method of saving him. Why, this is the quarrel I have had to keep up and maintain these thirty-three years among you in Camberwell. I think my preaching would have gone down with multitudes more if I had give man something to do - if I had let him keep on some of his old rags along with Christ's righteousness - if I had complimented the powers of mortals, and so robbed God. But no; I have all along determined - I take you to record this day, that all the years I have been with you, during which I have worn out this life for the glorifying of Jesu's name, I have kept to my one point, that salvation from first to last, is the decree of the great Eternal, the work of Jehovah - Jesus, the communication of the adorable Spirit of Jehovah; and I mean to go on, as long as God gives me strength, in the same strain.

Now the other point I wanted to name is, that this half-way, yèa-and-nay, free-will system neutralizes all the offices of Christ; yea, and all the truths of righteousness. It goes to neutralize all the offices of Christ; for if I am to

confess, I would just as soon bow down to a crucifix, or bow down to Juggernaut's car, or bow down to any Pagan image, as I would bow down to what me be termed the Christian's God, if He was incapable of saving me; or, if He were a God that promised to save me, and then altered His mind, and would not do it, or a God that wanted my help. But, blessings on His name, He will save me in the face of my rebellion, He will save me in the face of my helplessness, He will save me in the face of my wanderings, He will save me in the face of, and in spite of, sin and Satan, He will save me in the midst of ten thousand foes, He will save me with an everlasting salvation. Let me beg of you to read your Bible attentively, and look at such phrases as those I have been citing, and then see if you are not obliged to come to the conclusion that Jonah did, though he struggled hard against it, and determined that the matter of salvation should not be all the Lord's He would not do as he was bid, nor go where he was sent. When he was ordered to go to Nineveh, he said, "I will not go with any such a message, but I will go to Tarshish instead." Away he goes; he paid his fare - fools always do throw away there money - and he went down into the ship, all this while quarrelling with God. What would he do at Tarshish, when he got there? God meant that he should go to Nineveh, but he must pass through the billows and waves, sink in the mighty waters, be swallowed up by a great fish, and learn to call it "the belly of hell." Well, now, could the fish get rid of him? Could he struggle his way out? Did he accomplish his own deliverance? No; God spake to the fish, and made him vomit Jonah upon dry land. And what followed? This is what I have quoted it for. "I have made a vow." Well, what is your vow worth since all your rebellion and runaway tricks? What have you vowed? "Salvation belongeth unto God." Salvation originates with God; salvation is effected by God

in sacred desires, in ardent longings, in close fellowship, in habitual communion with the Persons and perfections of Deity.

Thus, I think I have shown you that the work of God is honourable and glorious. So far as the Father's ordering, arranging, and settling the covenant transactions, all is safe and secure. So far as the union manifests itself between Christ and His Church, as Head and members of one body; and so far as the regenerating operations of the Holy Ghost are felt and experienced, God's designs are made plain, the man is made a new creature, and he shall never perish, neither shall any pluck him out of His hand.

2. Well, now let us say a word or two, in the next place, about the opposition to this glorious statement of the honour and glory of God's work. God has no rival on His throne, and He will not have any in the matter of salvation. You will recollect, when Solomon was building an altar for God upon which the offerings and sacrifices were laid, he was told, "If thou lift up a tool upon it, thou hast polluted it." I should like to write that Scripture in large characters between every preacher's pulpit and people. "If thou lift up a tool upon God's work, thou hast polluted it." One touch from a contaminated sinner is enough to spoil all; therefore God won't let him touch it. Some wicked writers have said that sin could mar God's work, frustrate His great design, and destroy it in type and model. I believe a more foul libel upon Jehovah's glory never was uttered or written than that. Instead of which, I am sure that His work, with all the honour and glory connected with it, shall be preserved and maintained by Himself; for we are confident, as we have before cited that "He who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Pray, did

Jehovah ask any of His creatures to assist Him in the seven days' work of creation? Did He ask Adam's help? Did He ask any of His creatures to make one another? Has He anywhere given part of that glory to created persons? Verily not. It was Jehovah's work from first to last. In all the battles fought and victories gained by His Israel of old, did He ever allow them to take the credit and honour to themselves? No. For reasons which we referred to last Lord's day morning, He would not let the twenty thousand men of Israel go against the Midianites; for "Israel will vaunt themselves, and say, mine own hand hath gotten the victory." He would not allow creature strength to be put forth. Twenty thousand people were to be drilled and sent back home; and even then there were too many, in order that the battle might be the Lord's. King Asa knew this in great distress and danger. Jehoshaphat knew it was the Lord's own work, when he said, "Our eyes are upon thee for help." Well, shall all that pertains to creation and providence, and the movements of God's hand relative to the peace and prosperity of His holy nation be ascribed to Him, and salvation be halved between God and the creature? My hearer, you must bear with me now in a little severity. All rival interference with God's work in salvation is in opposition to all the Person of the Trinity, and amounts, in fact, to Atheism. It says that God the Father cannot carry out His purposes and decrees, though He has so ordered and arranged it; that God the Son has done His best towards saving us, but He must leave it with us to give the turning point or the final veto; that He must leave it to creatures to finish after all; and if they cannot do it, virgins, saints, and priests, must be called to help them - Christ cannot do it all Himself. So with the work of regeneration: if it is put into the hands of man, we want no Holy Ghost at all - He is undefied. The principle of man's interference in any way efficiently or meritoriously

in the business of salvation undefies Deity, and ranks us all among Atheists. There are a great many more practical Atheists in the world than we suppose. The Father's purposes and decrees are denied, the Son's perfect work rejected, for man's caprice to be put forth and the Spirit's power reviled, and all put into the filthy channel of man's proud free-will.

My hearer, I am surprised that men, with the Bible in their hands, even if it has no place in their hearts, can read the plain, literal word of God, and yet stoop to such vile insults offered to the Most High. Yet, further, it is a wicked deception of mankind, but it is just such a deception as man likes. Would you believe it, now, that with all men's simplicity, anxiety, and the like, most men like to be deceived? But in nothing is man so fond of being deceived as about his soul. You deceive man by telling him that he has mighty powers, that there is a native efficiency left in the wreck and ruin of human nature that he is capable of putting forth, that he really is in possession of those powers and faculties which he can cultivate and call into use, constituting a Christianity that God will accept of. There are millions at this day deceived by what I have often called a material religion. Multitudes imagine that, by repeating a few prayers, or counting a few beads, or saying a few masses, or telling a few lies at the confessional, and then paying the fees, they will be sure to go to heaven. Now really, beloved, all this amounts to nothing less than positive Atheism; it sets God at naught, and ranks man among those whom the Psalmist calls fools - "The fool hath said in his heart, No God." If there be nothing of omnipotence required - if there be nothing of omniscience requisite to look into the sinner's heart - if there be nothing of immutability to be attached to Jehovah's designs of love and His operations of grace, then the word of God deceives me; and, I