

THE PECULIAR PEOPLE



Preached on Thursday Evening, May 13th, 1841,
at Edward Street Chapel, Dorset Square, London

WILLIAM GADSBY

THE PECULIAR PEOPLE

THE PECULIAR PEOPLE



Preached on Thursday Evening, May 13th, 1841,
at Edward Street Chapel, Dorset Square, London

WILLIAM GADSBY
(1773–1844)

~

MADE AVAILABLE AS AN EBOOK BY
SOVEREIGN GRACE CHURCH

THE PECULIAR PEOPLE

INTRODUCTION4
I. A PECULIAR PEOPLE; SET APART FOR HIMSELF6
II. A PECULIAR PEOPLE; PECULIARLY LOVED10
III. VERY PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES16
IV. A PECULIAR STANDING BEFORE GOD24
V. A PECULIAR WALKING BEFORE GOD26

INTRODUCTION

“A peculiar people.” — 1 Peter 2:9.

THE whole verse reads thus: *“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”*¹

There is one little word contained in this verse which includes in it everything that is worthy of our desire. And with this little word, together with its connection, sealed in our consciences, all the devils in hell will never be able to destroy our interest in heavenly things. “Why,” you will say then, “what can this word be?” It is “ye.” “But ye are a chosen generation.” O this little dear ye! If God, in his infinite mercy, applies it to your consciences, with the rich blessings connected with it, it is one of the most valuable gifts that God can possibly bestow on sinners.

“Ye are a chosen generation, ye are a royal priesthood, ye are a holy nation, ye are a peculiar people.” Now turn for a moment and examine individually whether such a sentence belongs to you or not; or are you satisfied with a mere knowledge in your judgment of this truth, namely, that there is a chosen generation, that there is a royal priesthood, a holy nation, that there *is* a peculiar people? Devil’s know this as well as you do; but it does them no good, for they rather take advantage of this knowledge to work more of their devilism and show more enmity to God. But when the poor sinner, under the Divine teachings of God the Spirit, is brought feelingly and experimentally to enter into this “ye,”—this direct “ye,” O what indescribable blessings then follow! May the Lord the Spirit, by the

¹ 1 PETER 2:9

wonders of his grace, make bare his arm and bring some poor dejected rooted-up sinner this night to experience the truth of it in his own bosom, and then he will enter a little sweetly into the mystery of the sentence we have just read as a text: “*A peculiar people.*”

I. From this sentence we shall endeavor, by Divine assistance, to notice that there is *a peculiar people*; that God, in the riches of his grace, has set them in a particular and special way *apart for himself*.

II. That they are *loved with a peculiar love*.

III. That they are brought by the Spirit into *very peculiar circumstances*.

IV. That they have *a peculiar standing before God*.

V. That they find *the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh*.

I. A PECULIAR PEOPLE; SET APART FOR HIMSELF



The Lord has set this peculiar people *apart for himself*, in a particular and special way. Yea, he has so set them apart for himself as to bid defiance to all the roarings and dreadful powers of hell, and all the bubblings and workings-up of sin and pollution both within and without, to separate this people from God's bosom and God's heart. His solemn Majesty has said, when speaking of them, "*This people have I formed for myself.*"² Now God formed all people, they are all the workmanship³ of God; but there are a few characters set especially apart as a little lot, whom God has ordained to glorify; and to them he says, "*This people have I formed for myself, and they shall show forth my praise.*" "O yes," says free-will; "they shall have a chance to do it, if they will." But God says they *shall*; unbelief says you shan't [shall not]; carnal reason says you can't; and inbred corruption says you won't." But when God says "you shall," and when he speaks the Divine "*shall*," it comes with an invincible energy to the conscience, and that blessed truth is made manifest, that "*He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill,*"⁴ God could not possibly do this unless the men were first in the dust and on the dunghill. Now what is this dunghill? Why it is the horrible depravity and the cursed corruption of our filthy nature. And what is the dust? It is the working up and manifestation of the loathsome particles of the guilt and filth of this dunghill. And when God suffers Satan to stir up this dunghill in the conscience of a

² ISAIAH 43:21

³ **workmanship** — creation

⁴ 1 SAMUEL 2:8

poor sinner, he finds the dust so over powering that the poor soul thinks he shall really be suffocated with it and never expects to breathe again. Yet, all the while God has set these humble souls apart for himself; and he will raise them from the dust, and of the dunghill, and will set them among princes, even the princes of his people; and will make them inherit the throne of glory.

Now if you will look at this, in connection with the text just named, “*This people have I formed for myself,*”⁵ you will find there is nothing very amiable⁶ [pleasant] said about them. If God compares them to animal nature, he calls them “*beasts of the field,*” and “*dragons and owls.*” Who besides God would have said so, “*These beasts, these dragons, and these owls shall honour me?*”⁷ No one else would. They would have fixed upon something more amiable. But this is God’s method. When God compares his people to inanimate nature, he calls them wilderness and a desert; but this desert and this wilderness are to become “*the garden of the Lord;*”⁸ and these beasts, dragons, and owls are to be brought forth manifestively to be a people to praise the Lord; and God says “*They shall glorify me.*” Now I should not wonder but that there are some persons here who would not be called such creatures as these on any account. You think you do good. How dutiful and “pious” [upright] you have always been. Perhaps you have been brought up in piety, and have received a pious education, and hope to continue pious, and do all the pleasure of God. Now I tell you what, if God does not burn up your natural religion, if he does not root up your creature piety, and make you know that you are vile and filthy, you will never know the blessedness of God’s

⁵ ISAIAH 43:21

⁶ **amiable** — pleasant

⁷ ISAIAH 43:20

⁸ ISAIAH 51:3

blessed salvation. You can only know it in the way that his gracious Majesty pleases you should know it; and his way is to show you the horrible state of your own corrupt nature and the ooziings up of that fountain of sin that is within you; and when you feel your own wretchedness and utter incapacity, you are by necessity obliged to place your whole dependence on the Lord. You will then trace something of the matchless wonders of God, who has chosen you as one of his special people, who are formed for himself. *“They shall show forth his praise,”*⁹ and you will then know a little what it is to be *“a peculiar people.”*

The doctrine of God’s discriminating grace is not fashionable among a certain body of professors; but it is nevertheless true. According to their views, Jehovah himself is the only being in existence who is not allowed to make a choice. To talk of God’s making a choice, and setting apart a people for himself,—they say he is an unjust God and [say he is to be blamed if someone is damned]; he is not a holy and just God in that case. According to them God is unjust because he chooses; yet you find these very characters vindicate their own right to make a choice, in almost every instance. They think they have a right to choose a companion for life; to choose their own food; to choose or reject God; and yet Jehovah has no right to make a choice. He, is the only being without that right, [they say]. Consequently they sink God lower than the lowest beggar in existence, they make him lower in their estimation than the poorest sinner under the heavens. But when they have used all their arguments and spent all their pride and enmity against God’s right to make a choice, he still chooses as he sits on his unshaken throne; and, in his electing, immortal, and everlasting love, chooses a people for himself; a people that shall glorify him and be his portion for ever. “The Lord’s portion is his people, and Jacob is the lot of his

⁹ ISAIAH 43:21

inheritance.” God did not find Jacob full of “pious” cultivation with which some persons wish to recommend themselves to God: but he found him in a desert land, where no one but the Lord would have looked for him. No one else would ever expect to find God’s gems and jewels and the crown of his rejoicing in a desert land! O what a mercy it is that the Lord comes to seek and to save his own. If it had not been his work, they would never have been found. No one else would ever look for them there. They would never expect to find them in that low situation in which sin has plunged them. But God knows where to look, and he finds them in a desert land and a howling wilderness. And after he has found them, what does he [do] with them? He leads them forth and instructs them in his glorious dispensations; he teaches them fresh lessons as long as they shall live; and, amidst all the bewildering and dangerous parts of their journey, he keeps them as “*the apple of his eye.*”¹⁰ O what a text that is! The apple of the eye is considered to be the most tender part of the human body. And what is the apple of God’s eye? It is his own glory! And where is that secured? In the Person of the Son of God. There the glory of God is secured. So that the Lord keeps those whom he has consecrated and set apart for himself, to be a peculiar people, as sacred and secure as his own glory, in the Person of the God-man Mediator; for he keeps them “*as the apple of his eye.*” What a blessing it is to be among the number of this peculiar people.

¹⁰ DEUTERONOMY 32:10

II. A PECULIAR PEOPLE; PECULIARLY LOVED

But I notice further, that this people are *loved with a peculiar love*. When God created the heavens and the earth, and all things visible and invisible, he saw that it was all very good. After this, some of the angels, and the whole of man, fell from their original purity; but such is the special and peculiar love fixed on this people, whom God has formed for himself, that they have never fallen from God's love. I know there is a kind of doctrine abroad, which is this—that Christ has purchased the love of God. “Why,” some will say, “do you not believe it?” No; not a tittle¹¹ of it. But does not the Scripture say something about it? No. I find Scripture language is quite contrary to this. It says, “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son,” not the Son purchased. And again: “Here in is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us; and has given his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.” So that it was the love of the eternal Jehovah alone which was the spring-head and fountain cause of Christ in his mediatorial capacity as our Surety; dying the just for the unjust. And therefore peculiar, special, unmoved, and unalterable is the love with which God has loved his own, before the foundation of the world. Is not this peculiar love? Now, if you or I know anything about our own selves, we know the love which we possess in nature is not very special or peculiar. Let us bring the matter home to our consciences. I do not mean you who have a seared conscience; but you who have a tender conscience. Just bring the matter home to yourself. How often have you insulted the love of God, the kindness of God, the blessings which God bestows on you naturally? You eat and drink, and sometimes feel as if you could almost declare vengeance against the Lord, for not letting you have more, for not

¹¹ **tittle** — tiny amount

increasing your stock. Now, have you not, at times, felt something like this? And is it not a wonder that such insulting and ungrateful conduct has not caused the Lord to swear in his wrath that you should not enter into his rest? And how often have you been led to experience greater mercies than eating and drinking! Some of you have enjoyed a little intimation of an interest in this love; have felt a little melting down of your hard hearts, a little of the joys of salvation; a little of going out in faith towards Christ; a little bringing home of the blessings of Christ to the conscience, by the influence of the Holy Spirit; and have felt, in some measure, that you have fed on the bread of God. You then thought that surely you could never insult the Lord again, or be so hard hearted as you have been. But in a little time the world gets hold of you, sin gets hold of you, and you become as hardhearted, as dead, as cold, as frozen as before. The enemy of souls has tempted you, and you join in the temptation, abuse the constant kindness of God, and exhibit all the evils of your sinful corrupt nature against manifest mercies. It is no use your hiding the secret. Some of you well know this is too often the case. Yet such is the love of God, notwithstanding all this rebellion, that it continues as strong and unshaken as ever. Then is not this peculiar love? Are you able to describe its peculiarity? No. It is love which wraps up the sinner in God's own heart. It is love which, in spite of all within and all without, is determined to bring the poor, vile, helpless wretch to the immortal enjoyment of God, in a world of ineffable felicity¹² [indescribable joy]. Was ever love like this? They are loved, than, with a peculiar love.

How manifest will this love appear if we look at its openings, its various forms, and watch its operations, in the condescension and matchless work, as exhibited in the Person of the dear Redeemer. What was it that brought the Son of God to take our nature into union

¹² **ineffable felicity** — indescribable or inexpressible joy

with his Godhead? What induced him to be despised and dishonored, to be without a home, to travel through the desert, to be the butt and enmity of both devils and men, to be spit upon, scorned, despised, and set at nought? What induced him to suffer the malice and rage of the powers of hell? What induced him to pick up the miseries, the filth, the wretchedness, the loathsomeness, the horrible scum of our hateful nature,—to bear it in his own body and to suffer the vengeance due to a lost world; while, at the same time, the characters for whom he did all this hated him, abhorred him, set him at nought, scorned his counsels, and despised his love? What induced him to do all this? Love, everlasting love, unparalleled love. It lay deeper than our miseries, was higher than our rebellion, was more extensive than the wanderings of our hearts. From everlasting to everlasting, this special, this peculiar love is always the same; nor can all the overwhelming waters of the dreadful deluges of sin ever quench this immortal flame, which is put forth by God the Father. It shall forever burn with undiminished luster, in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here is love which can never, never be fully entered into whilst we are in this vale of tears. But the people of God are thus loved with this peculiar love.

When the great apostle of the Gentiles was brought, by the special power of God's grace, to know something of this for himself, this is one part of his song: "*He loved me, and gave himself for me.*" Now Christ died for the sins of the elect, and it is only those who have grace given them to realize and enjoy this love who can truly sing this glorious song. But some will say he loved all men, and gave himself for all men. If that be true, the damned in hell might rise up and say, "He loved me, and gave himself for me, and yet we are damned!" Does not such a thought as this horrify the soul, after having been brought to see the wonders of the love of Christ? But this love was never fixed upon devils and damned spirits. It was locked up in the heart of God the Father, and God the Son, and was made manifest

through the atonement of God's dear Son; and the blessed Spirit, as the Great Teacher, comes down from heaven, for the special purpose of teaching rebels this love,—to lead poor vile wretches to know something of the nature of this great, this amazing, this peculiar love. Well, then, herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us! Does this love suit you? Perhaps you do not believe you want so much of it, but think you can manage a little for yourselves. Well; the Lord knows, after fifty years' experience, I have been brought to have all my creature doings rooted up, and burnt before my eyes; and I have stood and looked on, like a ruined fool. I have nothing to stand on in self but emptiness before God; and what is not empty is worse, for it is guilt and confusion. I would not stand upon anything short of Christ for ten thousand worlds; now that all my guilty pretenses are made manifest by the love of Christ, brought into my conscience by the blessed power of the Holy Spirit. It sets my soul solemnly going out after God, and brings me to wonder at and adore the riches of God's peculiar love, to such a poor, vile, and wretched sinner.

The love which God manifests towards his people is also peculiar in another respect; that is, no other creatures can realize the blessedness of this love. Angels cannot enter into the glories of this love; for Christ never took on himself the nature of angels, but took on him the seed of Abraham, and died the just for the unjust, to bring us unto God; and this *us* must and shall be brought to God. It does not matter where the sinner is. When the appointed time is come to make this love manifest, wherever the poor sinner happens to be, he seeks him out, and finds him. If it is the Zacchaeus in the tree, down he must come. If it is the Philippian jailer, putting the apostles' feet in the stocks, he finds him out. If it is a Magdalene with seven devils, she is made to go to the feet of the Lord, with brokenness of heart and contrition of soul.

Some of you in this assembly, I dare say, recollect how strange a thing it was when the Holy Ghost sought out you. I know how strange

it was with me. When young, I gave myself up to profane swearing and hardness of heart, though often horrified in my conscience, for I used solemnly to declare I would never think about religion, except I was forced. Is it not a wonder that God stooped to make known and manifest his love to such a vile wretch? The natural conscience will terrify a man to distraction, but will never bring him to feel that all his sins have been against a holy just, and good God; that he stands guilty at the bar¹³ of God; and that all the faults of our hearts, the whole loathsome evil workings of our minds, have been high treason against a holy God. Few, perhaps, have felt more heart-rending, in the workings of the natural conscience, than I have. I was in that terrible state for years; and when alone, I expected hell to open and let me in; and I thought the devil was ready to drag me to hell. I verily believe that this was all nature [flesh]. But when God the Spirit came and manifested sin in my conscience, and opened a little of the mystery of iniquity, I then found that all my nature and practice had been nothing less than one constant heaving up of rebellion against a holy, just, and good God. And there I was, with all my sin and guilt torturing my mind; feeling myself as an accountable being to a holy God, whose mercy I had abused, whose goodness I had despised. If the blessed Spirit had not loved me with a peculiar love, he would never have taken so much pains with so hard-hearted and vile a youth as I was. No. He would have said, “Let him alone; let him seal his own damnation and reap the wages due to his sin.” But O the mercy, the special mercy and love of our covenant God! When the set time came, he arrested me, broke my heart, and brought me to stand and bow before his throne as a guilty criminal; brought me to sign my own death warrant. I felt that God had a right to damn me. I had nothing to offer, and I could do nothing to save myself. I felt that God would be perfectly just, in cutting me off and sending me to hell. But

¹³ **bar** — judgment bar

O! God's peculiar love, that was shed abroad in my heart by his blessed Spirit; which brought me to feel the love and blood of Christ, led me to trace something of the wondrous work of his wonder-working grace. Then, how my hard heart was melted! I was brought to his footstool, with all humility, simplicity, and godly sincerity; filled with gratitude and love for God's unspeakable mercies, in opening these great mysteries to my poor soul. I was then solemnly and blessedly led to believe in God's free mercy and pardon, and could look up and say, "He loved me and gave himself for me." Oh! These little words, this "me," this "ye," this "I," may we all know the preciousness of them; and may the Lord the Spirit bring our hearts to enjoy the blessings they convey. We shall then know something of those glorious blessings of God's pardoning mercy and love which cannot be described and which belong to his peculiar people.

III. VERY PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES

This peculiar people are the special choice of God,—they are loved with this peculiar love; and are brought by the blessed Spirit into *very peculiar circumstances*. God works as a sovereign, in his manifestations of mercy to them. Though his gracious Majesty varies in the methods he takes with his people, he brings them all, in a discriminating way, to know and abhor their own vileness, and to know and feel something of the blessedness of his rich love and grace. It maybe there are some sinners here, not like such a wretch as I was,—profane and openly wicked; but who think themselves very “pious,” and are very holy in their own estimation. They go to church or chapel, read “pious” books; when they go to bed at night say their prayers, and then think themselves quite safe. If they should happen to go to sleep before they have said their prayers, they will get up again, if sufficiently roused to say them; then they think they have made all straight between God and conscience; and if they sometimes do that which conscience tells them is not quite right, they make some kind of confession to God; but it is more of promise than confession. Now the blessed Spirit will, perhaps, take a step and discover to them the hypocrisy of their religion, the vainness of their prayers; and bring them to feel that all they had been building on is nothing but hypocrisy before God. The sinner determines with himself to be more sincere and to try to make up the breach. He begins to mortify the deeds of the body, shuts himself up from all society, that he may increase in the divine life; eats little, drinks little, and tries to be more sincere in his professions of “piety;” so that, by and by, he maybe able to appear before God with a little hope of glory. The blessed Spirit suffers him to go on a little, and he begins to think he has conquered his sin, or nearly so; and with a little more exertion, a little more of his own help, he shall conquer it altogether; and he shall then have

something to bring before God. But there comes another touch of pain in the conscience. The blessed Spirit gives him another cut in the heart, and discovers to him more iniquity, more of the evil of his own nature. He feels a fresh oozing up of sin in the conscience, which brings his mind to a state of despair. Now his fleshly religion is gone far away; and he is ready to conclude there never was such a wretch as he under the sun. He is left completely bare, and all his fancied good works are rooted up.

“Well,” say you, “I have felt something like this. I know my case is very bad; but I hope to be better.” I hope you never will in yourself, of yourself, and by yourself. “Why,” say you, “you will almost drive me crazy; if I never do better, what can I do?” Do nothing, but sigh, groan, and cry for the pardoning mercy of the Lord, and wait till God takes you in hand; and when the Holy Ghost touches your conscience, giving light, life, and love, communicating the grace and power of Christ, bringing the light of God’s glorious countenance to shine upon your conscience, you will then know how vain is every attempt of yours to make up the breach; for the blessed Spirit comes and roots up all hope grounded on self, and you will only know yourself as a poor, ruined, lost, sinner. This is a peculiar fact, is it not? Many professors are the reverse of all this; they offer up thanks giving for the good they accomplish. Many young ladies and gentlemen think what “pious” acts, what mighty wonders they are doing; but when God the Spirit comes into the conscience, he sets fire to all this, roots up all this; and all this heap of “pious” wonder becomes a heap of impious lumber. All supports then are gone, and the poor soul stands before God as a guilty, perishing sinner, deserving of nothing but wrath and indignation from a justly-offended God. I tell you what, poor soul, if God has really brought you to have these feelings in your heart, you are one of his peculiar people; for he does not take such pains with any one else. You are one of God’s own. He takes these pains with his elect, but the rest are blinded and cannot see, and feel, their own

detestable state before a holy God. The blessed Spirit will bring the elect help, in his own time. He will bring peculiar mercies to the heart, and all shall go on according to the blessed appointment of the Lord. The Redeemer says, when the Holy Spirit comes “*he shall glorify me.*”¹⁴ Now, some of you want to glorify yourselves; but when the Spirit comes, you will only want to glorify Christ; for, says he, “*He shall take of the things of mine and show them unto you.*”¹⁵ God does this to the sinner because he loves him, and delights in him; so he points out his vileness, pollution, and wretchedness; he throws all in confusion; and then his blessed Majesty comes with peculiar love, and brings home Christ to the conscience; fills the mind with the love of Christ, the holiness of Christ, the fulness of Christ, the compassion of Christ; gives peculiar faith to believe all this, receive all this; not merely as a religious fact, but to receive it with vital faith, feeling are a real entering into it, and the unctuous power of it in the conscience. The shell of religion is broken and God brings you to the kernel. You stand before God purified by the blood of Christ, which has cleansed away all your sins. What peculiar blessings these are for God to bestow upon such wretched monsters as we are in ourselves. But this is God’s method, and there is nothing under heaven like it.

Now sin is not what some people think it is, a mere empty thing. Some persons talk of sin as if it were a thing of little moment; but when a man is brought to know its bitterness,—to feel that it is a horrible evil against a holy and righteous God, the man then feels that it is a soul-damning and God-dishonouring evil, and he abhors himself for this vileness and wretchedness, because he is the subject of it. He feels he is mined and lost for anything he can do; but it is then the blessed Spirit comes and manifests his mercy; reveals Christ; brings salvation which is more deep than the miseries; glorifies

¹⁴ JOHN 16:14

¹⁵ JOHN 16:15

Christ; reveals him to the conscience; and gives him vital faith in the mysteries of his love and glory. Now do you not see the necessity of all this? “Yes,” say you, “I do; but there is one thing I cannot make out. I really cannot make out myself, for I find such contrary workings within.” I don’t wonder at it. Such peculiar people cannot be made out; none but God can make them out. Paul could not make it out; he found one thing contrary to another. But I was going to say, me thinks I see some poor creature going to say, “I have sometimes felt a kind of rejoicing in my heart, that there was really such a blessed salvation, and which just suits the condition of perishing sinners, just suited to man; yet I dare not say it is mine, dare not say it is particularly my own; yet I have felt it in my soul, a kind of rejoicing that it was such a salvation.” Have you been there? “Yes,” says some poor soul, “I have.” Then you have this faith working in you, and which shows you the suitableness of this salvation; but there wants another lift in your conscience to set all matters right, to show you the willingness and determination of God to make known this salvation to you. You can say sometimes in your feelings, “Lord, I feel and see there is enough; if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean; but, I am afraid after all, thou wilt not.” Some people will say, “Never mind; simply believe, and then you are all right.” This is the devil’s high road to destruction, to make men satisfied without feeling a life-giving power, a vital godliness in their conscience. Rest assured of this, if you have the peculiar life which the apostle enjoyed, if you have the Spirit of God in your hearts, you will never be satisfied, short of a feeling sense of interest in the Lord Jesus Christ. You will want to feel what Paul felt when he said, “He loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*.” Is not that what you want? Anything, short of this blessedness, and you are left unsatisfied; you are thirsting, panting, groaning after it in your souls. This, poor sinner, is what I want, this is what I thirst for; and if you are one of God’s peculiar people, his Holy Spirit will bring you to have it. This blessed love of God will bring you to know

this his method; will seek you out, and show you the life, power, glory, holiness, blessedness, of the Three-One God. The Lord the Spirit will make all this manifest to your souls, and you shall feel and see a measure of the glorious suitableness and preciousness of God's salvation.

But some poor child of God is ready to say. "If I could once realize this, that he loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*,—if I could once enter into this, I would never doubt again, never murmur again; I would bear anything the Lord pleased to lay on me; and I would tell him so too." Well, poor soul, you had better not tell the Lord too much. He may try you. I will tell you how it has been with me. I was led to tell the Lord that if his blessed Majesty would guide me through present troubles, would give me a lift by the way, would give me some precious gleams of glory, fresh manifestations of my interest in him, I would give his blessed Majesty leave to do what he pleased with me. But I have had so many lessons on things of this nature that, when I am on my knees, I leave off this address to the Lord,—to give him leave; for I soon began to tremble. I soon saw something coming to try me, that I would try to get off the bargain. But no. God keeps to it; he will let you know that what you said to him he will abide by. He will bring you into some peculiar trial and conflict to try your faith, to try his people's sincerity; just to see how they can manage it. Not that *he* wants information; but for *our* spiritual information, and for the glory of Christ who saves to the uttermost. Thus he brings his peculiar people on their way, and to have no might of their own, from time to time.

I recollect about forty years ago, a particular friend of mine was very wretched in his conscience, and seemed so peevish [irritable] and fretful, so rebellious against God, that my heart was grieved for him. I knew something of it for myself; yet I thought at that time I could bear it better than he. I went to the throne of grace, and prayed to God that he would be pleased to take some of my friend's trouble

and lay it on me. I said I thought I could bear it, if God would let him have less; but I have had plenty of my own since. The Lord brought me to know what a poor fool I was. I had no more power to bear up under trouble than my weak brother. Perhaps some of you have been there. Perhaps some poor child of God is there now. Very well; make the best of it while you have it; but know this, the blessed Spirit does not play with his people. He brings them real trials of faith. They must be tried by fire; for God himself declares that every man's work shall be tried by fire. However, this peculiar people shall come out of the fire, kept alive by the life-giving power of the Holy Ghost, in the midst of the fiercest flames, and themselves gloved, though their lumber shall be burnt up, yet "*so as by fire;*"¹⁶ In the midst of the fire they shall glorify God. This peculiar people shall be brought through all their troubles by the blessed Spirit; for he takes peculiar methods with them. He will lead them forth in spiritual life; he will lead them to God, and to know something of the preciousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. When a child of God is first brought to know Christ, if the blessed Spirit gives him faith to realize him as a Saviour, the poor sinner thinks he has got all, and he says, "This is my God; I have waited for him. How richly I am laden now!" And he thinks he shall always go on cheerfully.

Now, I tell you what the Lord will do. It was the case with me when I enjoyed a sweet sense of pardon of sin and reconciliation with God in my soul. I felt, in some measure, the power of the love and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ; but I knew vast little of the glorious offices and characters of the Lord Jesus Christ by vital faith and feeling. Men are prone to look upon them as mere ornaments or titles of honour; but in the Lord's time I was brought to feel and see that they were blessed branches of the glorious riches of God's grace suited to my case. His offices are not mere titles like our nobility, who are called by various

¹⁶ 1 CORINTHIANS 3:15

titles of honour, which are nothing but baubles [trinkets]; this is not the case with the Lord Jesus Christ. There is not a name he sustains; not an office he fills; not a character he bears; not a relationship in which he stands; but what he fully supports. On him devolve the promises. The blood, the obedience, the righteousness, the wisdom, the strength, all he is, and all he has done, is just suited to a sinner, just what a sinner needs, and God designed. And his “*peculiar people*” are brought to see the necessity of his offices; they feel that they cannot do without them. The riches of God’s grace are manifested to their consciences; they are brought to experience and to handle and feel the Word of life; and to know that there is a glorious reality in all the mysterious openings of the love of God in the gift of his Son and the blessedness of free salvation. But none but God’s peculiar people enter into these things, and they can only enter into these things, as these things enter into them. I have found by experience that when my judgment went into these things and my heart has not felt them, they have rather made me giddy [stagger]; they have brought me into some giddy [staggering] step or another. My brethren, brain religion will not do; and I sometimes tell my people that brain religion breeds a brain fever; but God brings us down a step, and so we are brought to a proper feeling before a heart-searching God. Don’t you be satisfied with the knowledge of truth in the judgment. If any one wants to persuade you so, hold such a one as a vagabond, as a man who wants to deceive you. “*The kingdom of God is within you.*”¹⁷ It stands in God’s power, and must be maintained in the soul by the power of God. Don’t you suffer yourself, if you can help it, to be satisfied with mere judgmental knowledge; but be resolved to have the vital power of it. If you have to go through ten thousand hells, and wade deep in them a thousand times, never mind; the blessed Spirit will bring you through, and eventually enable you to bless God for his manifold

¹⁷ LUKE 17:21

mercies, in making known to you the offices of Christ, and the fulness of Christ; he will bring you in your consciences near to him, and cause you to pour out your souls and glorify him as the covenant God of his peculiar people.

Now, people who are thus taught and led, are God's special and peculiar people.

IV. A PECULIAR STANDING BEFORE GOD

But we now observe further, that this peculiar people have *a peculiar standing before God*. They do not stand before God on the ground of their own obedience, on the ground of their own holiness. Paul tells us that “*being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, an herein we stand.*”¹⁸ “What? Stand in this grace justified by faith?” say you. No; not justified by faith, only experimentally, but justified by the personal obedience of the dear Redeemer. Yes, in the sight of God this is our exclusive justification to acquit us. But, in the court of conscience, we have faith given to receive that obedience into our hearts, and that faith brings pardon into the conscience. We have not peace with God, we cannot have peace with God in our souls, till the blessed Spirit reveals to us that God is the Author of our peace and perfect righteousness; and then we are brought to feel that we really stand before God in the spotless obedience of the blessed Redeemer. Thus God’s peculiar people will have his blessed revelation brought unctuously [anointed] to their feelings; and they are made to stand in Christ, to love Christ, to press on Christ, to have Christ’s righteousness applied to their conscience; they are found “*not having their own righteousness, which is of the law, but that righteousness which is of God, by faith.*”¹⁹ When the child of God is brought to these feelings, the great enemy of souls will ask him in all the malice of his infernal nature, “What! You righteous,—a poor, polluted wretch like you? Look at your prayers; look at your vain thoughts; remember how you wander in hearing; look at your practices; how can such a wretch as you stand holy and spotless before a heart-searching God? Can you venture?

¹⁸ ROMANS 5:1

¹⁹ PHILIPPIANS 3:9

No, no. You would stand condemned. Can you challenge, ‘Who shall lay any thing to your charge?’”²⁰ Now, if God the Spirit does not give the soul, at that time, a peculiar faith, a putting forth of faith, faith in its various branches, with peculiar power to realize Christ, the poor soul will stagger to and fro like a drunken man, and he will think he has been deceived. But, if the blessed Spirit puts faith in exercise, upon Christ’s finished work, in Christ, as having brought grace and glory in his Mediatorial capacity, then the poor soul can stand before God in Christ; and is enabled to say, “I know I am a poor sinner; I know I have a thousand short comings; but God’s rich grace has supplied all my necessities by his Divine power, and has made me to stand in Christ. Is there any lack there, is there any want there? No. There I will live or die, on the ground of God’s rich grace, made manifest to me. I am in Christ, and Christ is in me. This is my standing, this is the glory and boast of my heart.” When the Lord the Spirit brings us to this point, by vital experience, there is a peculiar solidity [assurance] felt in the conscience, which enables the sinner to rest entirely on the Lord; and if he has to press through ten thousand troubles, the Lord will bring him through them all, by the manifestations of his peculiar love and grace and mercy. The Lord will bless with peculiar blessings his peculiar people, who are the favorites of God.

²⁰ ROMANS 8:33

V. A PECULIAR WALKING BEFORE GOD

V. But I might notice further, that this peculiar people, when engaged in this peculiar work, find that “*the flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh,*”²¹ and these are contrary the one to the other. And I believe, in my heart and soul, that what the Holy Ghost calls the flesh is not our body, but that principle of sin that is in us, and which we feel to work in a variety of ways, in our various members and powers of the mind; so that, when Paul takes a survey of it, he says, “It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.”²² That is the flesh, that is the old man of sin, in its spring fountain, and oozing up in the old man; but mind, it is his dead body, and it is too had ever to be mended; it will never be mended; there will be always this work oozing up in the minds of God’s people, more or less, to their dying moment, waging war. But, then, there is the blessed image of God, the new man. This new creature stands in the glorious image of Christ, in the light of Christ, in the life of Christ, in the power of Christ, in the truth of Christ, in the love of Christ, in the various branches of the Divine members; and this wars against the flesh in every vessel of mercy. While the children of God are in this wilderness, there will ever be this war carried on,—whether grace shall reign, or whether grace shall not reign. Should the Riot Act of Moses be read in the conscience, the riot is made worse. But when Christ comes with the power of the Holy Ghost, grace is made manifest. The Holy Ghost comes and lifts us into Christ, in his love, blood, and obedience. The grace of God sweeps all before it, and brings in signal victories by the blood of the Lamb, makes the poor sinner to sing victoriously that he has overcome by the blood of the

²¹ GALATIANS 5:17

²² ROMANS 7:17,20

Son of God; and this shall be his immortal song, and the testimony of God's peculiar people, for ever and ever.

While you are feelingly in the sweet enjoyment of Christ, all appears well; but in all were there is a bone of contention. Now, what is the bone of contention in the real Christian's warfare? This I believe to be the great bone of contention—whether Christ or the creature shall have praise. The old man will exalt the creature in some shape or other; he does not care about the purposes of the Creator. But the new man, the man formed in God's image, has made up his mind that, “the he strong man shall not glory in his strength, neither the wise man in his wisdom, but he that glories shall glory in the Lord.” *No flesh* shall be the object of glory, but the good man shall glory in God alone. Now, this is the bone of contention; consequently, while the creature stands opposed to Christ, warfare lies in the bosom. But, then, Jesus assures us that grace shall reign triumphant; and by and by the child of God shall have deliverance and shall enter into the presence of God, in the holiness of Christ, at the great resurrection morn. There will then be a peculiar rising. First the saints shall rise, with bodies like the glorious body of the Son of God, and they shall appear with him in glory. They will then fully enter into the mystery of that truth, “*I in them, and thou in me.*”²³

Do you know anything of these things? Has God ever cut up your false hopes? Has he ever upset your creature religion? Has he ever brought you to feel the plague of your own hearts? Has God ever pulled down what you have built up? Has the blessed Spirit revealed Christ to your souls, the hope of glory, and brought you to rest in him alone? If he has, bless God for his peculiar mercies. And may the Lord bless us all with the sweet enjoyment of his peculiar love, for his mercy's sake. Amen.

²³ JOHN 17:23

PUBLISHED BY

SOVEREIGN GRACE CHURCH

sovereigngracechurch.us

When it appeared to the publisher of this ebook that a word was not commonly used in the modern lexicon [vocabulary] of English, a suitable alternative word or phrase was included in square brackets to assist the readers comprehension [understanding]. Additionally through out this ebook we have endeavored to use the American spelling of English words.

A few websites worth visiting

freegraceradio.com

Showcases the messages of pastors who declare that CHRIST's sheep are "*complete in Him.*"

grace-ebooks.com

Free eBooks for your study of God's only book, THE BIBLE

mensajedegracia.com

Do you speak Spanish? Please visit the website of
Iglesia Bautista Emanuel