

The Excellency of the Divine Loving Kindness.

by Horatius Bonar

The sermon emphasizes the excellence of God's loving-kindness and its role in fostering human trust and refuge in Him.

Scripture: Psalm 36:7, Psalm 91:1-2, Isaiah 40:11, Lamentations 3:22-23, Matthew 11:28-30, John 3:16, Romans 5:8, Ephesians 2:4-5, Hebrews 4:16, 1 John 4:8

Topics: "Divine Love", "Human Trust"

Description

Horatius Bonar emphasizes the excellence of God's loving-kindness, illustrating how it is genuine, deep, and invaluable, surpassing all earthly treasures. He explains that this divine love is the foundation for human trust, inviting sinners to find refuge under God's protective wings. Bonar highlights the common misconceptions and distance that humanity has from God, urging a return to the understanding of God's true character as a loving and gracious protector. He reassures that through the cross of Christ, God's love is revealed, removing all reasons for distrust. Ultimately, Bonar calls on all to seek shelter in God's loving-kindness, especially those aware of their need for salvation.

Transcript

"How excellent is your loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of your wings." - Psalm 36:7

"How priceless is your unfailing love! Both high and low among men find refuge in the shadow of your wings." - Psalm 36:7

"How precious is your unfailing love, O God! All humanity finds shelter in the shadow of your wings." - Psalm 36:7

There are two special things, fitting in the one to the other, (1.) Divine loving-kindness; (2.) Human trust.

I. DIVINE LOVING-KINDNESS. "How excellent is your loving-kindness, O God!" David speaks as one who had known it, who had tasted that the Lord is gracious. He is here telling his experience to God himself, but in the hearing of man, that he may know it too. He speaks because he believed and felt. His history had been throughout an exhibition of the loving-kindness of the Lord, as indeed is the history of each of us.

And this loving-kindness is genuine, and true, and deep. There is no pretense about it. It is as true as God himself. "God is love," "God is rich in mercy," "God so loved the world." There is nothing more real than the love of God. But it is not of its reality that David here speaks. He takes that for granted. No one who knows Jehovah could doubt it. But it is of its excellence that he speaks. God's love is such an "excellent and glorious thing"! It is "precious" beyond all gems or gold, for that is the meaning of the word. It is the most costly and rare of all things. It is beyond all price and all excellence of earth. What can equal in costliness the love of God! Its preciousness is measured by the gift it gave, and by the innumerable gifts contained in that one- life, pardon, salvation, peace, the glory to be revealed. In this love there are unsearchable riches- exceeding riches of grace. There are no riches to be compared to this great love of God. Having it we are rich indeed. Without it we are poor, life is blank, eternity is dark.

II. HUMAN TRUST. It is of Adam's sons that David speaks. "Therefore shall the children of men put their trust in the shadow of your wing;" that is, betake themselves to you as their refuge. God's character is then the basis of human confidence. That character is the attraction to the sinner, for it is just such a character as suits him- irrespective of his being anything but a man and a sinner. This love which so suits the sinner and calls forth his confidence is that which is exhibited in the cross of Christ. That cross is the revelation of God's love as a righteous thing; and thus appeals both to man's heart and his conscience. The love furnishes the ground for trust, and the cross removes every reason for distrust. Let us here note such points as the following-

(1.) Man's IGNORANCE of God. With the Bible in his hand he yet knows not God, he worships an unknown God. "They know not me," is God's testimony against man. Ignorance of God is a sin of no trivial heinousness.

(2.) Man's MISTAKES as to God. He imagines Him to be such an one as himself. He entertains a bad opinion of Him. He thinks of him as a God yet to be propitiated by work, or prayer, or sacrifice. He mistakes His character, His words, His gospel.

(3.) Man's DISTANCE from God. Departure from God is the sinner's own act. He has fled from God, and he prefers this state of distance. He dislikes the idea of nearness. To get as far from God as possible is his object. And not only does he depart from God, but he says to God, 'Depart from me.'

(4.) Man's DISTRUST of God. He not merely mistakes God, but he thoroughly distrusts Him. He cannot imagine God to be anything but his enemy. He has no confidence in Him. He cannot feel himself safe in the hands of God. To be simply at the mercy of God, without claim, or merit, or recommendation; is a hateful as well as dreadful thought. Let us mark God's remedy for all these. It is a double one- subjective and objective.

(1.) SUBJECTIVE. The subjective is the moral or spiritual rectification of nature and character by the power of the Holy Spirit. "You must be born again." It is the re-begetting, the transforming the whole man, enabling him to love what he hated, and to hate what he loved. It is the renewal of every part of the man's soul and being, creating him in Christ unto good works, for we are his workmanship, we are the clay and he the potter.

(2.) OBJECTIVE. This is the representation given of Himself in His revelation. He shows himself to the sinner in an aspect at once gracious and glorious. He makes Himself be seen as the sinner's friend and not his enemy. He unveils and unfolds his whole character as the God of all grace, the Lord God merciful and gracious, pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin. It is to the overshadowing, protecting wings of

God that David here points us, those wings of which the Lord spoke as stretched out to shelter Jerusalem, those wings under which Israel encamped or marched through the desert.

He stretches out His wings and calls. He tells us of a sure and sufficient shelter, and bids us at once take refuge there. These wings are broad, and large, and strong, fitted to shelter all the sons of Adam. And thus stretched out they themselves invite us. They contain their own invitation. They say, Come and be safe, come and be blest, come and be sheltered from present wrath and from the wrath to come. Come, for all things are ready; the love is ready, the deliverance is ready, the protection is ready. Oh, it is well with those who have taken shelter beneath the shadow of the everlasting wing.

To those who see no danger and desire no security, these expanded wings may be nothing; for what is a Savior to a sinner that knows not his peril. But to those who know what wrath is and what sin is, what condemnation is and what the judgment to come, who know that God is a consuming fire, and that the day of vengeance is coming, and that an unpardoned, unreconciled sinner must then have to face an angry God- that wing, that hiding-place, that covert, that Savior, are of infinite preciousness. And seeing in that outstretched wing the loving-kindness of the Lord, they betake themselves eagerly to its shelter, and as "the children of men," the "sons of Adam," the sinners of humanity, they put their trust beneath its shadow.

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