

On the Divine Sovereignty

by Thomas Reade

The sermon emphasizes the importance of trusting in God's sovereignty and promises, and finding rest in His power to calm the mind and still the tempest, in order to live a life of peace and joy.

Scripture: Job 34:29, Psalm 37:7, Psalm 46:1, Psalm 46:10, Proverbs 16:4, Isaiah 26:3, Romans 8:28, Philippians 4:7, Revelation 1:8

Topics: "Divine Sovereignty", "Faith And Trust"

Description

Thomas Reade preaches on the divine sovereignty of God, emphasizing how God's power and authority are displayed in creation, in calming storms, and in bringing peace to troubled souls. He encourages believers to find rest and trust in God amidst the ever-changing world, where there is a struggle between light and darkness. Reade highlights the blessedness of knowing God, trusting in His unchanging nature, and finding peace in His eternal plans. He contrasts the peace and joy of a faithful Christian with the uncertainty and lack of true happiness experienced by those who do not believe in God's promises.

Transcript

11. ON THE DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY

At the creation, amid the darkness of chaos, Jehovah said, "Let there be light, and there was light." When veiled in human flesh, he commanded the raging wind and waves, saying, "Peace, be still: and immediately there was a great calm." To his tempest-tossed people he now speaks these composing words: "Be still, and know that I am God"--and they find rest unto their souls. In violent public commotions, God can "still the madness of the people;" and in inward mental agonies, he can calm the agitated spirit.

"When he gives quietness, who then can make trouble? and when he hides his face, who then can behold him--whether it be done against a nation, or against a man only?" (Job 34:29). When we read the history of past ages, and consider the ever-changing scene before us; when we study man, and perceive though but a small portion of the passions and contending interests, which shake the fabric of society; how delightful, how composing to the mind, is this all-gracious declaration, "Be still, and know that I am God!"

The political world, like the air and sea which surround us, is ever in motion; but the happy believer finds his rest in God. In the present day, the human mind seems to be acted upon in a most remarkable manner. Knowledge is diffusing its light in every direction; and the intellectual powers are acquiring an expansion, which their ancient boundaries can neither limit nor control. The Christian world is all awake to

the spiritual and moral degradation of mankind, and is laboring to disseminate the sacred truths of revelation, which alone can raise our fallen race.

The enemies of the Gospel and of social order are alike awake to their deeds of darkness. There is, therefore, at the present eventful period, an evident struggle between light and darkness. The struggle may be violent, but the believer hears the cheering voice from heaven, which dissipates every rising fear: "Be still, and know that I am God." Oh my soul, rejoice that the Lord reigns. He can calm the rough surges of the mind. He can bid the inward tempest cease. He can pour an enlivening ray upon the drooping heart; and cause a sweet serenity and peace to reign within.

Trust in the Lord at all times. Be still, and know that he is God. There is something peculiarly soothing to the heart of a pious Christian, to know that he who rules over all worlds, in whose hands are the destinies of nations, and who guides the minutest concerns of families and individuals, is his Father and his friend. The more we know of God, of his power, wisdom, love, faithfulness, and truth; the more we shall bow before his throne in humble adoration, and filial confidence and love.

To know God in Christ; to know him as a covenant God; to know him as our God; is to possess all the sources and secrets of true peace, in the midst of surrounding storms and tempests. This knowledge will raise us above the agitated elements of the world, and place us in that pure region where the soul can breathe more freely, and expand her powers more fully. Faith views with admiration the perfections of Jehovah. Hope rests the fulfillment of her expectations on these perfections.

Love delights in them, and gradually assimilates the soul to them. While patience calmly waits, under every changing dispensation, for that abundant harvest of rich blessings, which the God of truth has promised, and which his faithfulness will perform. Come, then, Oh, my soul, and learn, from this view of your privileges, the blessedness of trusting in God. "He changes not, nor knows the shadow of a turn." All his promises are yes and amen. All his ways are righteous and true.

Cast your care upon him who cares for you; and, under every trying event, be still, and know that he is God. It is truly animating to reflect, that, while every thing seems given to change, the Almighty has declared, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." "I change not." The purposes of God are moving steadily and directly towards their fulfillment. Many things, according to our short-sightedness, appear to thwart his designs. Persecutors arise, and cut off his most zealous servants.

Death seizes eminent laborers in his vineyard. Unforeseen circumstances spring up, and appear to check the progress of the Gospel. Hence we are ready to exclaim with David, "Lord, let no man have the upper hand." But is not this the language of despondency; the language of a soul looking through a dark and gloomy medium? Man never had, and never shall have, the upper hand. David was in a right frame when he sang, "The Lord reigns." This is the triumphant song of the redeemed above.

"Alleluia--the Lord God omnipotent reigns." Nothing can happen without the divine will and permission. The Almighty sees the end from the beginning. Unto him are known all his works, and all events from eternal ages. He has firmly laid his eternal plans of goodness, justice, and mercy. All things serve him. He has made even the wicked for the day of evil. (Prov. 16:4). Can any thing, then, unforeseen, strike across his purposes, or derange his plans? Can any man who is crushed before the moth, the creature of a day, turn aside the grand machine of providence, whose constant wheels revolve their everlasting rounds?

Ah! no! As every thing respecting the eternal purposes of Jehovah springs from his own will, so every thing shall terminate in his own glory. Higher and farther than this, we cannot go. "He is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end; the first and the last." Clouds and darkness may surround the throne of the Eternal, and veil his bright designs: but faith can pierce the veil, and view, beyond this darkening scene, the rising glories of Emanuel's kingdom. How great, then, is the blessedness of true religion!

How highly privileged is the child of God! As nothing can happen without the divine permission, so everything shall work together for good to those who love God; to those who are called according to his purpose. Satan may rage, the world may frown, the flesh may rebel, and providence may seem to cross the humble believer; but yet, notwithstanding all this tempest, his soul is safe, being hid with Christ in God. He may groan, being burdened; yet still he can rejoice. He looks through the curtain of time, which hangs over the glories of eternity: and, in joyful expectation of soon entering within the veil, he endures, with much patience, the trials of this transitory state.

Not so the worldling. He knows no joys but those of sense, or those perhaps of a more refined nature, flowing from intellectual pursuits. But in respect of heavenly pleasures, arising from communion with his Savior, and a delightful foretaste of future bliss, he is an utter stranger. To him, "the future is a dark unknown." His views are indistinct and dim, when he reads or hears of joys forever flowing from those sources which are now the objects of his unvarying dislike. What happiness can arise from the contemplation of being eternally with Jesus, when prayer and meditation are now irksome and insipid to him?

What happiness, from the idea of being made like Jesus, when holiness is offensive to him? or from the consideration of beholding his glory, when the splendors of this world have far more powerful attractions to him? It is true, he prefers heaven to hell, as a choice of two evils; but he secretly disbelieves the word of revelation, and therefore hopes that hell has no existence, and that death is an eternal sleep. If he is not thus far advanced in infidelity, yet he flatters himself that God will be more lenient and merciful than his own word declares him to be.

Thus he ventures upon the dreadful step of putting the truth of God to its most awful test, and passes through death to learn by tremendous experience the madness of his unbelief! Happy, thrice happy, is the man who receives with childlike simplicity the word of God, and acts upon it. He sees God in everything, and can feed upon the hidden manna. He finds the promises to be full of truth and comfort. On them, as on a rock, he rests in safety. With wonder he beholds the raging tempest, which, sweeping over the nations of the earth, clears away deep-rooted prejudices, and prepares a smoother path for the chariot of the everlasting Gospel.

He knows that glorious days are hastening on, and therefore is not discouraged, though they be preceded by a stormy night. He hears the voice of his Almighty Father, speaking in gracious accents to allay his fears: "Be still, and know that I am God;" and is kept in perfect peace. Come, then, Oh my soul! and take courage. Fear not the face, nor the frown, of man. The Lord reigns, be the earth ever so unquiet. Sing with David--unite with Luther, and say, "God is our refuge and strength; a present help in trouble."

Do not be dismayed at the troubles of the earth. Tremble not at the convulsions of empires. Only, fear God; only believe in his promises; only love and serve him; and all things shall work together for your good, as they assuredly will for his glory. Life is hastening quickly away. Eternity is at the door. Live, then, for eternity, and leave with God the concerns of time. Leave in his hands the safety of his church, and the

security of his cause. Cleave to him with childlike simplicity.

Seek his glory. Aim at perfection. Look high, and look forward; and soon you shall be removed out of the reach of evil, and be placed securely in the paradise above! In times which are gloomy and sad, When nations are trembling with fears, The Christian, in confidence clad, Serene amid dangers appears. He knows that the black lowering sky, Whose bosom destruction contain; In a moment will vanish and fly, When God his dread vengeance restrains. In him, whom archangels adore, In him, whom the cherubs obey, While thunders tremendously roar, He trusts without fear and dismay.

It is Jesus who reigns in his heart, While Satan is raging around; It is faith quenches every dart, As pointless they fall to the ground. The peace he enjoys in his breast, Descends from a reconciled God: While sinners, those strangers to rest, Groan under the stroke of his rod. When troubles invade and oppress, When death rips his comforts away He still, in the midst of distress, Has God for his comfort and stay. Thrice blessed, you saint of the Lord; In Jesus your refuge is found; Oh! trust to his promise and word, And joys shall increase and abound. Yes! joy shall increase like a stream; Your peace, like the waves of the sea; Your grace into glory shall beam; And Jesus your portion shall be.

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