

A Few Hints to Them That Are Sanctified

by William Gadsby

William Gadsby's sermon highlights the importance of understanding God's immutable and sovereign nature while emphasizing faith and charity in the life of a believer.

Scripture: Psalm 33:10, Isaiah 57:15, 2 Corinthians 3:18, 2 Corinthians 4:6, Galatians 6:14, Ephesians 1:4, Ephesians 3:18
Topics: "Gods Sovereignty", "Christian Humility"

Description

William Gadsby emphasizes the importance of recognizing the sacredness and perfection of God's Word, cautioning against misinterpreting Scripture to fit personal agendas or diminish the glory of the immutable God. He highlights the folly of those who attempt to limit God's sovereignty and eternal blessings, urging believers to humbly submit to the incomprehensible nature of God's will. Gadsby warns against the dangers of pride and self-exaltation, stressing the need for true Christians to find their glory solely in the cross of Jesus Christ and to seek a deep understanding of God's unfathomable love and glory.

Transcript

Beloved,

In reading the word of God, it becomes us ever to remember that the sacred pages are a transcript of the perfections of the infinite God, who is the "high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy;" (Isa. 57:15) a Being whose omniscient eye beholds the end from the beginning, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, and will do all his pleasure; who "bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought, and maketh the devices of the people of none effect." (Ps. 33:10) Whatever change takes place in our minds, the eternal God knows no change.

Were our minds at all times properly affected with the majestic nature of the Divine Author of the Scriptures, methinks we should tremble at the thought of explaining any part of them in a way that represents the Deity as a mutable, disappointed being; and if a passage comes under our notice that our finite minds cannot comprehend, let our mouths be shut up in everlasting silence, rather than employ them so improperly as to attempt to tarnish the refulgent glory of the immutable God; and, with the greatest resignation, let us acknowledge we are not able to comprehend the meaning of such a passage. And though the self-sufficient pharisee may laugh us to scorn, it is a small matter for us to be accounted poor, little, insignificant fools, not worthy the notice of the great and honourable, whose minds are too ambitious to submit to the sovereign sway of the mighty God. Let them consider us as below their notice, and pour the utmost contempt imaginable upon us; what will it all avail? At most it is but a puff of empty air. We

have to do with a Being whose judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out. And shall we be employed in holding him up to view as a Being not able to accomplish the good pleasure of his will, but constantly living under the painful necessity of seeing his eternal will frustrated, and his purposes overturned? God forbid! May our name and reputation sink in everlasting obscurity, rather than be immortalized upon principles so glaringly blasphemous.

I have often trembled at the awful dexterity of some men, whose minds are set upon exalting self. When they bring forward a passage of Scripture that purely relates to the Jews as a nation, and has to do with the conditional blessings and cursings relating to them as a nation, as in the 18th chapter of Ezekiel, they can see as clear as noon-day that such Scriptures contain things of an eternal nature, and are an address to all the human race. But if, on the other hand, they bring forward a passage that speaks of the absolute sovereignty of Jehovah, as in the 9th chapter to the Romans, these eagle-eyed gentlemen can see, without the least obscurity, that the election and rejection spoken of there are only national. Tell them that God has "chosen his people in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before him in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will," (Eph. 1:4,5) and they will roundly assert that this only means the apostles, and that even they were not predestinated unto eternal life, but only to the apostleship. An Arminian preacher, who called on me not more than a month ago, insisted upon it that the above was the real sense of the Holy Ghost. Lord, what is man! "Surely their turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay; for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?" (Isa. 29:16)

That mind must be awfully bewildered, and that conscience dreadfully hardened, that can presumptuously dare to dictate to the Almighty, and blasphemously arraign him at its puny bar, and condemn him as a monster, not to be equaled by Satan, the father of lies, if he dare to deal out his immortal blessings in a sovereign way. Yet such men there are; and whoever reads Mr. Smyth's performance, entitled, "Paul against Calvin," may soon be satisfied of the truth of this assertion. Well may it be said, "Vain man fain would be wise, though he be born like a wild ass colt." (Job 11:12) A man whose eyes are too tender to bear the light of a candle can never be considered a proper person to look steadfastly at the full blaze of the sun. No, an attempt to do it would almost put out his sight. "The heavens declare God's glory." All his works praise him, and his perfections shine in all his works of creation and providence; nevertheless, these things give but a dim light, compared with that blaze of glory which shines forth in the salvation of his church.

"Here the whole Deity is known,

Nor dares a creature guess

Which of the glories brightest shone,

The justice or the grace."

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." (1 Cor. 2:14) "Such is fallen man, that the wisest philosopher in the world is not in possession of rational light sufficient to comprehend and look steadfastly at the glory of God, as shining in the works of nature; his sight is too tender to bear that light. Then what madness it must be to suppose that the natural man is able to gaze upon the full blaze of God's immortal glory, as shining forth in the redemption of his church. The very moment carnal reason attempts to look upon this immortally brilliant light, its sight is so dazzled and confounded that it is obliged to shut

itself up in the dark chamber of imagery, (Ezek. 8:12) "having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of their heart;" (Eph. 4:18) and having seated itself in this dark chamber, it takes a view of the supposed glory it contains, and forms its views of Deity according thereunto; the result of which is, it supposes itself almost, if not altogether, capable of comprehending the eternal God; and with unblushing confidence declares, that if he has not given the whole human race a chance of obtaining eternal felicity, he is an unjust tyrant; nay, it has fortified the minds of some of its pupils with sufficient courage to declare, that if the doctrine of unconditional election be true, they had rather dwell with devils in hell than with such a God in heaven.

But, beloved, ye have not so learned Christ; "for God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in your hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Cor. 4:6) I am persuaded, that just in proportion as God unveils his matchless glory to poor souls, so they will sink to nothing at his feet; and to glorify him will be the height of their ambition. With Paul they will exclaim, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Gal. 6:14)

Real Christians charity is swallowed up in the will of God, nor is it in its nature to extend itself one step beyond, nor desire one thing contrary to, the glory of Jehovah. All the charity we possess beyond this may be properly called fleshly charity. May God the Spirit lead you and me more and more into the deep things of God, that we "may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fullness of God." (Eph. 3;18,19) Here we shall find an immeasurable field of immortal felicity and delight, a field that abounds with joys the most substantial, with superlative beauties, and brightness the most transcendent,--glories too refulgent for carnal reason to gaze upon.

Mortals below can only trace and enjoy these beauties by that faith which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen; but as this faith is drawn forth into exercise, we gaze, we wonder, we adore, we admire, and are ready to say, "Here let us stay and gaze till we die." In this soul-transforming, sin-subduing world-overcoming, Satan-vanquishing, fear-dispelling, heart-ravishing, mind-satisfying, God-glorifying field, rebellion against God's sovereign decrees can never stand. Should it dare to breathe or lisp one word, all the powers of the better part would be up in arms against it, and, fired with immortal love to the God of gods, would treat it as an implacable enemy to their God and King, O the sweetness, the power, and the glory of that precious truth, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory." (2 Cor. 3:18) Just in proportion as the soul enjoys these truths, so it sits loose to the world, with all its delusive charms and terrific frowns; but as faith loses sight of these sublime subjects, so unbelief, guilt, fear, wrath, and rebellion prevail, and we soon find the needs be of standing fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free; and we are well convinced that we can only stand while God is graciously pleased to hold us up, and are therefore brought to cry, "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe."

I shall make no apology for publishing the epistle, more than what it contains in itself. I am not so vain as to expect to be applauded for my pains; but into the hands of a covenant God I commit it. That God may bless it to his children; that grace, mercy, and peace may be with you all; and that God may make and keep you steadfast in the truth, as it is in Jesus Christ, is the prayer of,

Yours to serve in the gospel of God

William Gadsby

The preceding remarks formed the preface to the original "Everlasting Task."

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/william-gadsby/a-few-hints-to-them-that-are-sanctified/>

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