

# SERMONS

ON

IMPORTANT SUBJECTS;

BY THE

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LATE OF PEMBROKE COLLEGE, OXFORD, AND CHAPLAIN TO  
THE RIGHT HON. THE COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON.

WITH A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR,

BY SAMUEL DREW, A. M.

AND A

DISSERTATION ON HIS CHARACTER, PREACHING, &c.

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LONDON

PRINTED BY H. FISHER, SON, AND CO., FOR  
THOMAS TEGG, 73, CHEAPSIDE.

1841.

## SERMON LVIII.

### A FAITHFUL MINISTER'S PARTING BLESSING.

*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, be with you all. Amen. Rev. xxii. 21.*

It is very remarkable that the Old Testament ends with the word *curse*; whereby we are taught, that the law made nothing perfect: but, blessed be God, the New Testament ends otherwise, even a precious blessing, that glorious grace put into the heart, and dropt by the pen of the disciple whom Jesus loved.

My brethren, as the providence of God calls us now to bid each other a long farewell, can I part from you better than in enlarging a little upon this short but glorious prayer? can I wish you, or you me, better in time and eternity, than that the words of our text may be fulfilled in our hearts, *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, Amen?* In opening which,

*First*, It will be proper to explain what we are to understand by the word grace.

*Secondly*, What by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and its being with us all; and then to observe upon the word Amen: showing you why it is that every one of us may wish, that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ may be with us all.

Perhaps there is not a word in the book of God, that has a greater variety of interpretations put upon it than this little, this great word grace. I do not intend to spin out, or waste the time by giving you all. It will be enough in general to observe, that the word grace signifies favour, or may imply the general kindness that God bears to the world; but it signifies *that* here, which I pray God we may all experience, I mean the grace, the special grace of the blessed God communicated to his people; not only his favour displayed to us outwardly, but the work of the blessed Spirit imparted and conveyed inwardly and most powerfully to our souls, and this is what our church in the catechism calls special grace; for though Jesus Christ in one respect is the Saviour of all, and we are to offer Jesus Christ universally to all, yet he is said in a special manner to be the Saviour of them that believe; so that the word grace is a very complex word, and takes in all that the blessed Spirit of God does for a poor sinner, from the moment he first draws his breath, and brings him to Jesus Christ, till he is pleased to call him by death; and as it is begun in grace, it will be swallowed up in an endless eternity of glory hereafter; this is called the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: why so? because it is purchased for us by the Lord Jesus Christ: the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth, in the most emphatical manner, came by Jesus Christ the Son of God. If it were not for the purchase of a Mediator's blood, if it were not that Jesus Christ had bought us with a price, even with the price of his own

blood, you and I should never have had, you and I could never have had, the grace of God manifested at all to our souls. The covenant of works being broken, our first parents stood convicted before God. They were criminals, though they did not care to own it; condemned before God, and in themselves, so that like their children they make excuses for their sin. Man by nature had but one neck, and, if God had pleased to have done it, he might justly have cut it off at one blow; but no sooner had man incurred the curse of the law, but behold a Mediator is provided, under the character of the Seed of the woman, which should bruise the serpent's head: implying what the Redeemer was first to do without, and afterwards to do in the hearts of all his people; well, therefore, are we taught in our church collects to end all our prayers with the words, *through Jesus Christ our Lord*.

Moreover, brethren, this grace may be called the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, because it is not only purchased by him, but it is conveyed into our hearts through Christ; the federal head of his glorious body, is a head of influence to those for whom he shed his blood. Thus his disciples said, he was full of grace and truth, and out of his fulness we, all that are true believers, receive grace for grace; grace upon grace, says Mr. Blackwall, in his Sacred Classics. Grace for grace, that is, says Luther, every grace that is in Christ Jesus, will be by his blessed Spirit transcribed into every believer's heart, even as the warm wax receives the impress of the seal upon it; as there is line upon line upon the seal left upon the wax, so in a degree, though we come greatly short of what the law requires, the grace that is in Jesus Christ is, in a measure, implanted in our souls; but the Lord Jesus Christ, blessed be God, has our stock in his hands. God trusted man once, but never will more. He set Adam up, gave him a blessed stock, placed him in a paradise of love, and he soon became a bankrupt, some think in twenty-four hours, however, all agree it was in six or seven days, and that he never had but one sabbath; but now, blessed be God, we are under a better dispensation, our stock is put into Christ's hands, he knows how to keep it, and us too; so this grace may be said to be the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, secured by his blood, and conveyed to our souls by his being the head of his church and people. This grace has a variety of epithets put to it, and I question whether there is any kind of grace but what the Lord Jesus Christ exercises towards his people some way or other, every hour, every moment of the day.

*First*, His restraining grace; why, if it were not for this, God's people would be just as weak and wicked as other folks are: remember what David said when Abigail came to him; he was going to kill a neighbour for affronting him, forgot that he was a psalmist, and was only acting as a creature. Blessed be God, says he, that has sent thee to meet, and keep me. My brethren, we may talk what we please, and build upon our own stock. We are just like little children, that will walk by themselves. Well, says the father, walk

alone then,—they tumble down, get a broken brow, and then are glad to take hold of the father. Thus Jesus Christ is always acting in a restraining way to his people. If it were not so, by the blindness of their understandings, the corruptions of their hearts and affections, together with the perverseness of their will, alas! alas! there is not a child of God that would not run away every day, if Christ did not restrain him!

*Secondly*, There is convicting grace, which from the Lord Jesus Christ acts every day and hour. Oh! it is a blessed thing to be under the Redeemer's convicting grace? A man may speak to the ear, but it is the Spirit of God alone can speak to the heart. I am not speaking of convicting grace that wounds before conversion, and gives us a sense of our sin and misery; no, I mean convicting grace, that follows the believer from time to time. If a heathen Socrates could say, that he had always a monitor with him to check him when he did amiss, and direct him when he went right, surely the Christian may say, and blessed be God for it, that he has got a Jesus that kindly shows him when he goes astray, and by his grace puts him into the way of righteousness, that his feet may not slip. This is what the shepherd does to his sheep, when they have wandered. What does the shepherd do, but sends some little cur, his dog, after them, to bring them to the fold again? What does Jesus Christ do in temptations, trials, and afflictions? He fetches his people home, and convinces them that they have done amiss.

Then, *Thirdly*, There is the converting grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Oh! what poor unhappy creatures are they, that think they can turn to God when they please, to which abominable principle it is owing, that they leave it till they cannot turn in their beds. Satan tells them then, it is too late, their consciences are filled with horror, and they go off in a whirlwind. May this be the case of none here! That is a most excellent prayer in our Communion Office, *Turn us, O good Lord, and we shall be turned; we can no more turn our hearts than we can turn the world upside-down.* It is the Redeemer, by his Spirit, must take away the heart of stone, and by the influence of the holy Spirit give us a heart of flesh. I might as well attempt to reach the heavens with my hand. I might as well go to some church-yard, and command the dead to rise. I might as soon shake my handkerchief, and bid the streams divide, and they give way, as to expect a soul to turn to God without the grace of the Mediator. Come, my dear hearers, I am of a good man's opinion, that prayed he might be converted every day. In the divine life, not to go forwards is to go backwards; and it is one great part of the work of the Spirit of God, to convert the soul from something that is wrong to something that is right, every day, hour, and moment of the believer's life, so that in short his life is one continued act of converting grace. There is not a day but there is something wrong. There is something we want to have taken away. We want to get rid of the old man, and to get more of the new man; and so the Spirit of

God works every day. O! my brethren, God give us more of this converting grace!

Then there is establishing grace. David prays, *Create in me a new heart, and renew a right spirit within me*; in the margin, it is, constant spirit. You hear of some that are rooted and grounded in the love of God, and the apostle prays, that they may always abound in the work of the Lord. Again, it is good to have the heart established with grace. There is a good many people have some religion in them, but they are not established, hence they are mere weather-cocks, turned about by every wind of doctrine; and you may as soon measure the moon for a suit of clothes, as some people that are always changing. This is for want of more grace, more of the Spirit of God; and as children grow that are got stronger and riper, so as people grow in grace, and, in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, they will be more settled, more confirmed. On first setting out they prattle, but they will be more manly, more firm, more steady. Young Christians are like little rivulets, that make a great noise, and have shallow water. Old Christians are like deep water, that makes little noise, carries a good load, and gives not way.

What think you, my brethren, of the Redeemer's comforting grace? O! what can you do without it? *In the multitude of my thoughts within me*, says the psalmist, *thy comforts have refreshed my soul*. I believe you will all find what lord Bolinbroke, in spite of all his fine learning and deistical principles, found when under affliction; he sent a letter, which I saw and heard read to me, at least that part of it in which he says, *Now I am under this affliction, I find my philosophy fails me*. With all our philosophy and striving, it is too hard to work ourselves into a passive state. Alas! it is commendable to strive, but we shall never be content, we shall never be cheerful under sufferings, but through the assistance of the Redeemer. Even now, in respect of parting from one another, what can comfort friends when separated, but the Spirit of God? Paul, when going away for Jerusalem, said, *What mean ye to weep, and to break my heart?* He also says, *I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus*, which he could not have said, had he not felt the comforting grace of Jesus Christ. Our Lord, when going away, says, *I will send the Comforter*. I will not leave you comfortless and helpless, I will come again. The Lord helps the believer from time to time. We can easily, my brethren, talk when not under the rod ourselves. There is not a physician or apothecary in London, but can give good advice, yet when they are sick themselves, poor souls! they are just like their patients, and many times are more impatient than those they used to preach patience to. So it is with the greatest Christian, we are all men of like passions, there is not one of us, when under the rod, if left to ourselves, but would curse God, and, Ephraim-like, *be as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke*; and there are many here, I do not doubt, that have said to the Redeemer, *What dost*

*thou?* Or, perhaps, with Jonah, *We do well to be angry*; if the Lord does but take away his gourd from us, if he is pleased to balk us in regard to the creatures, how uncomfortable are we! And there are so many afflictions and trials, that if it were not for the Lord Jesus Christ's comfortings, no flesh could bear them.

In a word, what think you, my brethren, of the quickening grace of our Lord Jesus Christ? Remember David says, *Quicken me according to thy word, quicken me in thy way, quicken me in thy righteousness*: God's people want quickening every day. This is trimming our lamps, girding up the loins of our minds, stirring up the gift of God that is in us. It is just with a soul as it is with the plants and trees. How would it be with them, if the Lord did not command quickening life to them after the winter? The believer has his frosty and winter days, and woe be to them that think they have always a summer. The believer at times can say, *The winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land, the fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grapes give a good smell*, Cant. ii. 12. What is all this but God's quickening grace, restoring the believer to his blessed joy. Oh! my brethren, I have not time to show you in how many ways the Redeemer's grace is displayed; but wherever this grace is, what reason have you that are partakers of it, and I, to pray that it may be with us all—the *grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*, says John here, *be with you all*. It is not said all ministers, it is not said all of this or that particular people, but with all believers. O! my friends, remember what Mr. Henry said, he desired to be a Catholic, but not a Roman Catholic. I have often thought since I went to see the water-works, that it was an emblem of Christ. There is a great reservoir of water from which this great city is supplied; but how is it supplied from that reservoir? Why, by hundreds and hundreds of pipes: but where does this water go, does it go only to the dissenters or to the church people, only to this or that people? No, the pipes convey the water to all; and I remember when I saw it, it put me in mind of the great reservoir of grace, that living water that is in Christ Jesus, and the pipes are the ordinances by which his grace is conveyed to all believing souls. God grant we may be of that happy number. O what a mercy it is that Christ has said, *I will be with you always, even to the end of the world*, Matt, xxviii. 20. and therefore we must look upon this prayer to be as efficacious now, as it was the moment the words dropt from the apostle's pen. I believe the most minute philosophers, and those that have the greatest skill in astronomy, cannot perceive there has been any abatement in the heat of the sun since God first commanded it to rule the day. Then surely, if my God can make a sun that for so many thousands of years shall irradiate, enlighten, and warm the world, without losing any of its light and heat, so does the Sun of righteousness, the Son of God,

arise upon the children of God with healing under his wings. He raises, warms, nourishes, and comforts his people, and we have the gospel on the ends of the earth, as well as those who had the honour of conversing with him in the days of his flesh. I mention this in answer to all those who have wrote against the Methodists, and represented them as fanatics. There is no other way of talking against the divine influence, but by allowing it was so formerly, but that it is not so now. They say the primitive Christians had it, but it is not to be so with us now as it was formerly. O my brethren, what fools these great men are when they talk about things they know nothing of. Give them a polyglot, give them a lexicon, give them a geographical text, or the chronological part of the Scripture, they have something to say; but when they come to talk of the Spirit of God, they see the word Spirit, and they read the word grace, but while they read it, their hearts cry, because their knowledge puffs them up, Surely if it were so, we great men that have been in the university should have it, God would give it us; and because they find it not in themselves, their abominable pride will not own it may be in any. Pray what was Peter, James, and John? I do not mean to speak disrespectfully of them—they were as weak, as blind, as obstinate, and worldly-minded as others, till Jesus Christ changed their hearts; and that same grace that changed their hearts, changes now the hearts of God's people; and blessed be God, that same grace is with all his people.

It is so in his ordinances. Here is the difference between a formalist and a Christian: the formalist goes to ordinances, but then he does not feel the God of ordinances, and that is the reason most formal people do not care to go to church very often. Who cares to go to the house of a person he does not love? They will only just knock at the door, and ask if such a person is at home, and are very glad to hear the servants say their master or mistress is not at home. The visit is paid. So it is with many people that go to church and meeting, and I do not doubt but there are many Methodists, hundreds and hundreds, that have been at the ordinances, who never felt the God of ordinances converting them to this day.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is with his people in prayer. Who can pray without grace? They may laugh at it as they will, but God give you and I a spirit of prayer. Let them laugh as they please. What profit will it be to us to read this book, without the grace of God? What a horrid blunder has the bishop of G—r been guilty of! What do you think his lordship says, in order to expose the fanaticism of the Methodists? Why, says he, they say they cannot understand the Scriptures without the Spirit of God.—Can any man understand the Scriptures without the Spirit of God helps him? Jesus Christ must open our understanding to understand the Scriptures, and the Spirit of God must take of the things of Christ, and show them unto us. As we are taught to pray, *O Lord, thou hast caused thy holy Scriptures to be written,*

&c. as in the second Sunday in Advent; and here the bishop pretends to tell us, there is no need of it. Here our collect and bishop disagree very much. So, with respect to all ordinances, it is the same. What signifies my preaching, and your hearing, if the Spirit of God does not enlighten? Formal ministers can steal a sermon, and add a little out of their own heads, but a minister of the gospel cannot preach to purpose without the assistance of the Spirit of God, no more than a ship can sail without wind. As for a carnal man, he may take his sermon in his pocket, and you will find his sermons always the same, but spiritual preachers are seldom so. Sometimes they are in darkness, so as to speak to those that are in darkness. Sometimes they are tempted, so as to speak to those that are tempted.. Sometimes they have a full gale, and go before the wind, and this is all by the assistance of the Spirit of God, and without this, a man may preach like an angel, and do no good at all. So, in respect to hearing the word of God, I declare I would not preach again, if I did not think that God would accompany the word by his Spirit. What are we but *sounding brass and tinkling cymbals*? If the word is preached in the strength of the Spirit, it will be attended with convictions and conversions, and the grace of God will be both with preacher and hearer.

*The grace of God* is with his people in *his providence*. Oh! says bishop Hall, a little aid is not enough for me.—My going on the waters puts me in mind of what I have seen many times: if the sailors perceive a storm coming, they do not choose to speak to the passengers, for fear of frightening them. They will go quietly on deck, and give orders for proper care to be taken, and if a sailor can tell of storms approaching by the clouds, why cannot God's people tell why God does so and so with them? The people of God eye him in his providence. The very hairs of their heads are all numbered, and the grace of God is with them in the common business of life. Some people think that the Methodists preach so and so, to make them neglect their business, and we preach at unseasonable times. We would not preach at this time, but that we are going to part from one another. No, we preach that the grace of God may attend them in their counting-houses, and woe be to those persons that do not take the grace of God with them into their counting-houses, and in their common business! O what blessed times would it be, if every one made the grace of God their employ, that when the Lord comes he may say, Lord, here I am waiting for thee.

*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ* is with his people when *sick* and when *dying*,—O my dear souls, what shall we do when death comes? What a mercy it is that we have got a good Master to carry us through that time! As a poor converted negro that saw a believer who was dying in comfort, said, Master, do not fear, Jesus Christ will carry you safe through the dark valley of the shadow of death.—But the time would fail, if I were to show you in how many respects *the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ* helps us; but what I have



said will show, that we need all join in a hearty Amen. Amen, I pray God it may be so, so it is, so may it be! May be what? Why, that *the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, convicting, restraining, converting, establishing and comforting grace*, may be with us in his ordinances, in his providences, in sickness, and when dying. Then, blessed be God, we shall carry it with us after time. And now, my dear hearers, by the help of my God, in whose strength I desire once more to go upon the waters, I shall pray, wherever I am, that this *grace of the Lord Jesus Christ may be with you all*.

To whom shall I speak first by way of improvement? Are there any of you here unconverted? No doubt, too many. Are there any of you here this morning come out of curiosity to hear what the babbler has to say? Many, perhaps, are glad it is my last sermon, and that London is to be rid of such a monster. I do not doubt but it has been a pleasant paragraph for many to read, but whoever there are of you that are unconverted, or whatever you may think, sure you cannot be angry for my wishing that the *grace of God may be with you*. O that it may be with every unconverted soul. O pray for me, my dear friends, that the Lord may bless me to some unconverted soul. What wilt thou do, if the grace of God is not with thee? What wilt thou do with the favour of man, if thou hast not got the grace of God? You will find, my brethren, it will not do. You cannot do without the grace of God when you come to die. There was a nobleman that kept a deistical chaplain, and his lady a Christian one. When he was dying, he says to his chaplain, I liked you very well when I was in health, but it is my lady's chaplain I must have when I am sick.—Do you know that you are nothing but devils incarnate? Do you know that every moment you are liable to eternal pains? The Lord help thee to awake, O sinner, awake, awake, thou stupid soul, if the grace of God was never with thee before, God grant it may now. Do not say I part with you in an ill humour. Do not say that a madman left you with a curse. Blessed be God, that when first I entered into the field, (and blessed be God that honoured me with being a field preacher,) I proclaimed the grace of God to the worst of sinners, and I proclaim it now to the vilest sinner under heaven. Could I speak so loud as that the whole world might hear me, I would declare that the grace of God is free for all poor souls that are willing to accept of it by Christ. God make you all willing this day!

There are many of you, I doubt not, but have got this grace, and I believe there are many of you that can say that this poor despised place was that which God honoured first with giving it you, but whether you were converted here or elsewhere, if you have got the grace of God, the Lord grant you more grace. *Grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied unto you all*. My brethren, they that have got Christ never have enough of him. You want more grace every day, and hour, and moment. I see for my part more of my want of grace than I did ten or twenty years ago. May be that is because I do not grow in grace.

Those that grow in grace will grow every day more sensible of their want of grace, they will feel their weakness more and more every day. Some who are called Christians are a most foul-mouth people. They abuse their neighbours. Real believers abuse themselves most, and call themselves, that is, what is in themselves, the worst of neighbours. O my brethren, may the Lord Jesus Christ's grace be with you more and more, that you may be transformed into the divine likeness, and pass from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord. May God grant that this grace may be with you all, particularly those young men that have given up their souls to Christ. It delights my soul when I go round the communion table, to see how many young souls have given themselves to Christ. The Lord grant that you may not return again unto folly. O young men, flee youthful lusts. O young women, the Lord Jesus Christ grant that grace may be with you all, that you may study the beauties of the mind, shine in the beauties of holiness, and be wise to everlasting salvation.

*May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all* that are in the marriage state. It needs much grace to bear with heavy trials, much grace to deal with servants, children, and under disappointments in trade, to walk with God with a pure heart. Some people think it clever to have wives and children, but they want a thousand times more grace than they had when they were single. You have need of much grace to honour God in your houses, much grace to teach you to be prophets, much grace to teach you to be kings in the family, to know, when to be pleased, to know, when to be silent, to know, when to be angry. The greatest grace is, to be angry when called to it, to be angry without sin. O! may the grace of God be with you all in your closets, every time you pray, every time you come to an ordinance. O! may the grace of God be with you all when you frequent this despised place! Blessed be God, some may say, that ever it was built: though as soon as it was built I was called away. As soon also as the chapel was built, I was then called away, and so am now; and when I came out of my chamber, I could hardly support it. I would as lieve go to an execution, if my way were not very clear. What in dying? that is but for a moment. O may the grace of God be with all that preach the gospel here. Blessed be God, his grace has been with them. Do not let the world say, he is gone, and all the people are gone now. Do not weaken the hands of those that shall labour here. I should not mention such a word, if I were not going away. The Lord Jesus Christ grant that you may keep steady, and honour the preachers more and more. There will be good Mr. Adams, blessed be God, from time to time, with Mr. Berridge, and so there will be a blessed change. May the Spirit of God be with them and you, more and more! and O my dear friends, if the Lord God has vouchsafed to own these labours to any of you, do remember me in a particular manner, when gone, for though my body has been weak, yet I thank God that he has enabled me to speak when called to it.

And so I must go, whether well or ill. Pray, that if it should please God to spare me, that I may speak more effectually to you, when I come back again. Pray, that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ may be with me, in a restraining, comforting, supporting, and transforming way, that it may be with me when I am sick, and when I die. O my brethren, I see I want the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in every one of these respects, every moment. O may the Lord God bless you all that have been kind to me, and forgive every thing that I have done amiss. I am ashamed of myself, so much of the man comes up with me, though I humbly hope, and dare to say, that at the bottom my heart is upright towards God. I would employ it to his praise. There is so much sin mixed with all I do, that were not the blood of Christ constantly applied to my soul, and the grace of God continually manifested to me, I could not preach any more. You may see a thousand things wrong in me, but I see ten thousand more. O may *the grace of God be with you all*.—Now, dear friends, farewell! dear tabernacle, farewell! if I never preach here any more, O that we may meet in a better tabernacle, when these tabernacles are taken down, when these bodies shall drop, when we shall be for ever with the Lord. I must have done, I cannot bear it; *the Lord bless you, the Lord God cause his face to shine upon you*, I cannot say more, I dare not: *The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you all. Amen,*