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C. H. Spurgeon Sermons on Psalms Part 6

Psalm 89:17 The Glory of Our Strength

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“For thou art the glory of their strength.” — Psalm 89:17

THE psalmist Ethan is here speaking of the covenant people; the people of God, the people who know the joyful sound of the; covenant of grace, and who therefore walk in the light of God's countenance. It is said of these persons that God is the glory of their strength. All strength of every sort comes from God. Since he is the Author of all being, it is he who gives strength to every form of existence. Read the remarkable chapters which close the Book of Job, and see how God there claims to have given strength to the eagle in her lofty flight, and to the horse when he paweth in the valley, and leviathan and behemoth, those mighty creatures of the sea and the land. God claims to have given all the strength that there is in any of these members of the inferior creation, and we are certain that he also lays an equally just claim to all the strength that there is in man. The power of arm, the swiftness of foot, the keenness of intellect; all these come from the Most High, who has wrought such wonders in the formation of the human frame! Whatever of vigor and capacity there may be in it, all must be traced to the almighty hand of God. The glory even of man's physical strength, whether he knows it or not, belongs to God. He makes the young man vigorous, and the full-grown man mature in strength, so he ought to have the service of the strength which he has himself created.

Equally is this true of all mental power. The craftsmen learn their art from God. Bezaleel and Aholiab were instructed of the Most High “to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass,” as truly as Moses was taught of God in the writing of the law. The poet receives his power for grand conceptions from God, who is beyond all human conception; and he who is most learned in any particular science, the great discoverer, the man who measures the stars or maps the seas, receives all his mental strength from the Most High. It would be well if this were always remembered, for it often happens that men who are great in wisdom ascribe their greatness to themselves, and then prostitute their native talents and their acquired knowledge to their own ambitious ends, or to some mean and groveling purpose. Oh, that all men would lay out their talents for God, for he is the great Householder who has given to one of his servants one talent, to another two, and to another five talents, and who, will, at his coming, require from them

an account of what they have done with them! Oh, that all who are mentally strong, would ascribe the glory of their strength to God!

But there is a higher and nobler form of strength than either the physical or the mental. We rise into another realm when we come to speak of spiritual things. There are some men whom God has raised up from spiritual death. When they “were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly,” and so he saved them from their death in sin, and they have been made strong spiritually by God through the effectual working of his Son. By grace, they are the sons of the almighty God, and they themselves have become mighty through him, so the glory of their strength is all to be ascribed to God. The psalmist’s declaration, “Thou art the glory of their strength,” is true in reference to the whole of the spiritual seed, the covenant people who are made strong in spiritual things by the grace of God.

I. Now, in trying to lead your thoughts into the meaning of this text, I want you, first of all, by way of contrast, to spend a few minutes in considering the opposite of our text. God is the glory of our strength, but what I want you now to think of is The Shame Of Our Weakness.

This is a very humiliating subject, but it is one that should never be far from our thoughts, for we shall never realize to the full the glory of the strength which comes from God until we are deeply conscious of the shame of the weakness which is in our nature as the result of the Fall and of our own sin. What poor weak creatures we are! It is no shame to us that we have not the strength of the elephant or the lion; it is no shame to us that we have not the wings of eagles or of angels. It is no shame to us that we are often the sport of the elements, so that we shiver in the cold or are blistered in the sun. It is no shame to us that, when the storm sweeps over the sea, it drives our navies before it like so many cockle-shells. It is no shame to us that there are many things in this world which are far more powerful than such a puny creature as man is. Such weakness as that which God intended us to have, is no cause for shame; nay, we turn to God in the full consciousness of it, and remind him that we are but animated dust, and that he made us weak as we are, and intended us to be weak as we are. That is not where the shame lies. The shame lies in the moral weakness which is natural to us in our fallen state.

I mean that, left to ourselves, we are weak enough to allow our baser spirits to be our masters, our meanest capacities to have the sway over our entire nature. God has put the earth under our feet, but we often put ourselves under the earth by permitting that which is earthy to dominate us. We have a nature that, in its origin, was akin to the divine; yet how often we allow the passions of our fallen nature to control our whole being! We let that part of our nature which is worst be supreme over that which; is best, yet it should never be so. Look at the weakness of the strongest man ever born of a woman; see him lying helpless at Delilah’s feet, and there committing suicide for I can call it by no other name — by revealing the secret of his strength, and so delivering himself into the hands of the Philistines. Look at the weakness of the wisest man who ever lived, and see how Solomon’s heart was turned aside from God. Look at the weakness of one, of the best of men who ever lived, the man who, was as great as a saint as he was as a poet, David, the sweet singer of Israel, who was weak as water when left to himself. I need not mention other cases; God grant that we may not ourselves become instances of such weakness! But we have been, I do not doubt, in some way or other, foolish enough to let our baser passions consent to sin while our nobler spiritual nature has hated the evil thing, and fought against it.

Our weakness may also be seen in another way; we are very apt to be carried away by circumstances. We think we are standing very firmly, but a very slight change in our position or condition will affect us very seriously. It is really extraordinary how easily a holy man, who has been truly communing with God, will be, put out of temper by a circumstance so infinitesimal in importance that he would be ashamed to have it known that he had been influenced by it. I think some of you must have known what it has been to have close fellowship with God, and yet, afterwards, the merest trifle in the household has sufficed to rob you of all the good you had gained. Possibly, if God should give you, at this service, a very special manifestation of his presence, and you were to meet with a great trial at home, you would be enabled to bear it with equanimity; yet some little insignificant thing — I shall not conjecture what may cause you to lose your temper, or put you off your guard in some other respect, or cause you to become concerned about other things than the highest and best things, and effectually bring you down from your privileged position as follower of the Lord Jesus Christ to the common level — I was about to say of an ordinary worldling. Oh, how weak we are, how weak we are, in such a case as that!

It is also wonderful to think how good men have been led into sin, and overcome by the very smallest adversary. Look at Peter, for instance, bold, lion-hearted Peter; who was it that led him to deny his Master? If some huge Roman legionary had come up to him with his drawn sword, and said to him, “Thou Galilean, if thou darest to say, ‘I know Jesus’ this sword shall smite off thy head,” I should not wonder but that Peter would have been equal to that emergency, and certainly he would have wished to have in his hand the sword with which he cut off the ear of Malchus, that he might at least defend himself. If the high priest had pointed to Peter, and said, “I believe that yonder stands one of the men who were with Jesus of Galilee,” it may be that he would have been bold enough to confess his Lord. But it was only a damsel, one of the high priest’s maids, who saw him as he was warming himself at the fire, and who said to him, “Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee,” and he denied it, and so the strong man was overcome. It is

thus that little foes have frequently mastered us where great foes could not do so. I think it was Admiral Drake who, in a storm at the Nore, said to his sailors, "Surely we have not braved many tempests out in the open sea to come here to be drowned in a ditch." Yet it has often been so. Men who have done business in great waters, who have encountered huge Atlantic waves of temptation), have nevertheless been allured into sin by a temptation that was utterly contemptible; and perhaps it was just because it seemed to them so contemptible that they became carnally secure, and so it proved to be doubly dangerous to them. But oh, what weak creatures we must be when trifling circumstances can turn us aside, and when little things suffice to conquer us!

One thing in which we all betray our littleness is the readiness with which we fall into the gross sin of idolatry. We are none of us likely to bow down before blocks of wood and stone, as the heathen do; nor are, we likely to worship the god made of bread, which is the god of so many in this country; yet we are all too prone to make unto ourselves gods that are really idols. At one time, it is favourite child who is thus worshipped. "There never was a fairer child than mine, she is more, like an angel than a human being," says the fond and foolish mother, whose heart is wrapped up in her little one. Then comes God's great hammer that breaks all idols, and the dead child is carried to the silent tomb. After such a painful experience as that, will the mother ever make an idol of another child! Yes, there are some who have done that, to their own confusion, time after time. If it has not been a little child who has been thus idolized, it may have been the partner of one's own life; perhaps it has been some cherished idea which we have pursued with such avidity that it has become a god to us. It is very, very easy to put your trust in an arm of flesh, either your own or somebody else's arm; but as soon as ever you do that, you bring yourself under that ancient curse, "Cursed be the man that, trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord;" for all trust in the creature is a subtle form of idolatry. After we have trusted in the creature once, twice, twenty times, and been deceived, will we do it again? Yes, for such is the shame of our weakness that we still turn away from the eternal arm which can never fail us, and cling to that poor puny arm of man that is often as false as it is weak; still do we make gods of things that are no gods, for, like the children of Israel, we are weak as water in this point also.

There is another thing that shows the shame of our weakness, namely, our unbelief. Have you never caught yourself saying, "After this, I shall never have a doubt again?" I have frequently found some such expression as that come to my lips, for I have had such extraordinary deliverances and such proofs of God's gracious lovingkindness that, when I have received them, I have said, "Oh, what a blessed God! Oh what a faithful God! Oh, what a prayer answering God!" And then the thought has come, "The next time I am in trouble, I shall not be so timorous and so unbelieving! Yet I fear that many of you will have to join me in confessing, with deep shame and confusion of face, that, it has only needed a new trial to come to us to cause us to find out that what we thought was strength was utter weakness. Have not you also found it so? Why, we are weaker even than our own children, for our children can and do trust their father; but sometimes we, the loved ones of heaven, cannot and do not trust our Father who never has deceived us. We may well lament the shame of weakness.

If I were to keep on speaking of this part of my theme, I might show you that we are weak everywhere, and weak in every way, — weak to all good, and weak in the presence of all evil if God once withdraws himself from us. You who are most mighty in prayer, are you not sometimes weak when you are upon your knees? You who often bear testimony to Christ with much courage, are you not sometimes weak in holy boldness? You who, can generally rejoice in the Lord, are you not sometimes weak and feeble through despondency? Apart from God, our whole head is sick, our whole heart is faint, and we are a mass of misery, and a heap of weakness.

II. Nor, having spoken thus by way of converse, I hope it is a fitting preparation for our dwelling for a little while upon the second point, which is, according to the text, The Glory Of Our Strength.

True believers, though they are a very feeble folk in themselves, are very strong when God is with them. They are so strong that their strength has a great glory in it, of which we will now speak. The strength of the true Christian is so great that nothing can overcome him, and he is more than a conqueror in every engagement into which he enters.

What strength God gives to us, dear brethren and sisters in Christ, at the very first, when we rise out of the grave of our spiritual death. There we lie, bound hand and foot, in that dark sepulcher, and a great stone is rolled over the mouth of it. The moment the Lord says to us, "Come forth," we open our eyes, and begin to discover the gloomy grave in which we lie. There and then God gives us the power to ungird ourselves, and to remove the stone, and to come forth into liberty. I mean that men, quickened by divine grace, deliver themselves from evil habits, from customs which had bound them as with bands of iron, from inveterate sins which had held them captive as in a net. They become free from all these things in the strength of the Holy Ghost, when he has regenerated them, and brought them up from their spiritual captivity. The achievements of a new-born soul, in its first conflicts with its old sins, are perfectly marvellous. There are many wonders in the Christian life, but I believe that the first stroke he gives when he is but newly born, and therefore weak, has a marvellous degree of power in it. Many men have been swearers, many have been drunkards, many have, been guilty of all manner of evil, but those old sins have been laid dead at their feet by one blow struck in

the power of the ever-blessed Spirit. Truly, the glory of the strength of the new-born child of God must lie in his God.

The man being divinely quickened, we now find him contending for the right; but wherever he contends, he overcomes. The world frowns on him, and he laughs at the frown. Then it fawns on him, and he despises its flattery. Sham faith soon yields to the enemy, but real faith wins the victory over the world. If the whole world should attack a true, believer, the believer would overcome the world, and break through all its toils. Faith also overcomes the flesh, and that is no small victory. He who hath true God-given faith in Christ contends with inbred corruptions, strong passions, and the deceitfulness that is engrained within the human heart. Where the life of God is in the heart, there is strength given to overcome the flesh. Though the man may have been sensual and devilish before conversion, grace is more than a match for the flesh, and grace gains the victory. It is a great thing to be able to overcome the world, the great world without and the little world within; but Satan comes into the field, and sets himself amongst those who are arrayed against the believer; but, blessed be God, the devil fares badly in the fight, for many a time the dread Apollyon, who has stretched himself across the way, and said that he would slay the saint, has himself been pierced by the sword of the Spirit, and has fled away wounded. What strength there must be in the believer when he is able to overcome that accursed trinity of antagonists, the world, the flesh, and the devil!

When God is in him, the Christian finds himself able to do anything. "By thee," says David, "I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall;" and God said, "Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel, I will help thee, saith the Lord" and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth; thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small." Weak as we are, with God's help nothing is impossible to us. What feats of valor some believers have performed! Read the histories of the saints of the olden ages, and think of the apostles and their immediate followers. What strength was theirs, and it was only faith that made them strong. You have read Foxe's Book of Martyrs, perhaps, till you have felt your blood boil with indignation, and you have shut the book up, and said, "I can read no more of the dreadful story lest it should disturb my dreams." But if you cannot even bear to think of the tortures which the saints underwent, what must it have been for them to bear them so heroically as they did? Women and even children defied their tormentors; and there were saints who, in the midst of the fire, bravely quoted verses of Scripture against their persecutors, and with holy joy sang psalms in the midst of the flames. How the saints baffled Nero, and Domitian, and other cruel tyrants! The Inquisition, in its dreary vault, almost rivalled hell in its pains and torments, but it, was not, able to quench the noble spirit of God's faithful servants. The persecutors may do what they will; but only give us a band of men and women who have God's Spirit in them, and even though their foe may tear them limb from limb, they shall not conquer them. It is impossible that God's true saints should be overcome, for they have a glory of strength that nothing can destroy.

Neither persecution, nor tribulation, nor nakedness, nor distress, nor famine, nor peril, nor sword, nay, nor even death itself, has been able to make the saints deny their Master, and we see the same strength upholding them still. I have, in my mind's eye now, one dear sister, a member of this church, in whom I have seen, within the last few days, the matchless way in which the saints can conquer death. When they have been almost worn out by disease and incessant pain, when sleep has been banished from their eye, when their whole body has been only a road for the feet of pain to traverse, even then they have never been impatient, and they have rejoiced in the prospect of departure, not merely because they wished to be free from pain, but because the presence of Christ had already made them so happy that they longed to get to the fountain-head of those sweet streams which were even then making them glad. Death has never yet conquered a saint; the children of God have all been conquerors. Every sepulcher of a saint is but another monument of the victory of faith. "These all died in faith," might be inscribed over the vast mausoleum of believers; and then the palm-branch might be put at the bottom of the inscription, for, dying in faith, they, every one of them, achieved the victory.

Let me add that God's servants have a glory of strength which I must not even mention without much humbleness of heart. God's people are, through his grace, so strong that they not only overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, but they overcome God himself. Oh, matchless mystery, that the Omnipotent should yield to the believer's strength! Do you ask, "How is this?" Let me remind you of the brook Jabbok, and the memorable wrestling there when the divine Wrestler said to Jacob, "Let me go" for the day breaketh;" but the brave man of faith replied; "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me:" and so he won the blessing, and with it came that new name, so full of meaning, "Thy name, shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." Truly did Joseph Hart, write, concerning God-given faith, —

"It treads on the world, and on hell;

It vanquishes death and despair

And what is still stranger to tell

It overcomes heaven by prayer."

Surely there is a great glory in the strength of a Christian when even heaven is moved by the pleading voice of a true believer.

III. Now let us notice, in the third place, — and may the Spirit of God give his own unction and power with the thought! — that believers, thus having God-given strength, know that All The Glory Of Their Strength Lies In God.

I hope you have understood this truth even while I have been speaking about it, for it is true that the Christian has no other strength than that which has come from God. It is so in every individual Christian. The glory of any strength that he has must be given to God because God has given that strength to him. Have you all learnt this lesson yet or are any of you proud of anything that you are, or of anything that you have done? Have you not yet learnt the truth of the text, "Thou art the glory of their strength"? Have you been foolish enough to say, "I preach well," or "I work well," or "I suffer well," or "I am growing in grace, so there is some credit due to me?" Dear brother, if you talk like that, may the Lord deliver you from all such delusions! He is the glory of our strength; let us keep to that, and never get away from it, for the Lord our God is a jealous God, and he is specially jealous of his own glory; and if he sees that we give that glory to ourselves, or to any other but himself, he will take away from us the strength that he gave, and make us cry out once again because of our weakness. So do not destroy your own strength by taking the glory of it to yourself. Oh, how many a man has flung himself from the battlements of his pulpit by beginning to feel that he did it, and that he had some strength of his own! How many a professor has marred a life of consistency in one dark hour, and the reason has been that self-sufficiency and carnal security were hidden away in his bosom, and at last betrayed him. When you are strong, then are you weak; but when you are conscious of weakness, then are you truly strong. While you lay the crown at the feet of him who gave you the strength to win it, you will always be made strong; but as soon as you begin putting the crown on your own head, your strength shall be taken from you; and if, like Samson, you go out to shake yourself as at other times, you will find that the Lord has departed from you to chasten you for your pride.

Further, what is true of individual Christians, is true also of a church and I want to impress this truth upon the members of this church, and upon the members of all other churches. When God makes a church strong, it is a very blessed and glorious thing; but the glory and strength of every church must always lie in God. It never lies in the fact that, there are many wealthy persons belonging to it. If God ever sees his people, worshipping the golden calf, he will send a plague upon them to punish them for their idolatry. The glory of a church must never lie in the fact that there are certain persons of intelligence connected with it. I believe that is the worm at the root of many churches, and that it will lead to their decay. Everything is done with the view of pleasing two or three people who are supposed to be very intellectual; yet those very people, if they are they the Lord's people, do not want "intellectual preaching" at all; they have enough work for their intellect on the other six days of the week, and they want the simple gospel, plain spiritual food for their souls to feed upon on the Sabbath day. There are a great many ministers who cause their hearers to break the fourth commandment for the labor involved in hearing them preach is indeed terrible, it must rack the soul instead of resting it. I should like to see a Lord's Day Rest Society established to keep the people's mind at rest, instead of their being tortured with all manner of quibbles and questions. They need to hear of Jesus Christ, for he is the true rest for the soul; and it is the very essence of the divine commandment to leave your own work and to rest in Christ. That is the way to keep the Sabbath day holy, and he who has not done that cannot know the true Sabbath rest which is the portion only of those who are resting in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So it will not do to make the glory of our strength to lie in the wealthy people or the intelligent people; and it will not do to make the glory of our strength to lie in fine elocution. "The wisdom of words" appears to have strength in it; but when it makes the cross of Christ of none effect, it is sheer weakness. It was one of the worst days that ever dawned upon the Church of Christ when it began to cultivate the art of oratory, and turned aside to "enticing words of man's wisdom." But when men speak out of an overflowing soul of what God has done for them, that is the power which the Spirit of God gives to them, and the power which he will bless to their hearers. They do not then try to use out-of-the-way words, and nicely-rounded sentences, nor to pile up perorations, for that is magnifying the preacher, and dishonoring the Word that has come out of the mouth of God.

The glory of our strength must never lie in any of these things; it must lie, in God alone. If it does so lie, then we shall glory in the gospel, which is one of the great supports of our strength; we shall glory in the cross of Christ, which is the main strength of the gospel; and we shall glory in the Holy Spirit, who alone can raise the spiritually dead, who alone can give the eyes that look to Christ upon the cross, and who alone, can make the heart long after its Redeemer. O brethren and sisters in Christ, we have need to pray for God the Holy Ghost to work mightily among us. We have the Holy Ghost still with us, so we have no need to pray that he would come down from heaven. He came down at Pentecost, and he never went back to heaven, so he is still here. He is in all his people; he is in this assembly now; he, dwelleth among us, though we are apt to forget that he does. We reckon that the glory of our strength lies in our ministers, or in our organizations, or in our creeds. We forget that the glory of our strength is spiritual, and lies in the Holy Spirit himself, who is in us, and who shall be in us forever if we are truly the Lord's. Cry mightily in prayer, beloved, that this true glory of our strength may continually be revealed in our midst as a church, for so often we restrain him, and grieve him, and bind him as it were with bonds. He cannot do many mighty works among us because of our unbelief. He withholds his richest blessings because of our sinfulness. Let us turn to him again; O Lord, turn thou us, and we shall be turned, and then we

shall see the glory of our strength among us, and we shall give all the glory to him who gives to us all our strength.

I offered a prayer, this evening, (and I prayed in faith,) that the Lord would, in his mercy, save some souls tonight, and I expect to hear that he has done so. I do not expect that blessed fact to remain concealed until we get to heaven, but I expect to know to-night that some of my hearers have come, and found rest in Jesus.

I think I hear someone say, "I would fain be saved, but I am so weak." But the almighty Savior came to save weak sinners. "Oh, but I am so weak; I do not feel any repentance." But Christ was exalted to give repentance. O poor weak ones, it is to just such as you are that Jesus says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." It is but a look that is needed, and even that the Holy Spirit gives you. He gives it to you now, he enables you now to look to Jesus, the great atoning sacrifice; and as you look, you are saved in a moment, saved through his grace by that simple looking unto Jesus. Oh, to leap out of death into life, out of thick darkness into unutterably glorious light in one moment! I pray that the Holy Spirit may speak to many a soul here through the words that I am now uttering. "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." The Lord grant that it may be so, and to him shall be the glory, for he is the glory of our strength. Amen!

Psalm 89:49 Unparalleled Lovingkindness

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"Lord, where are thy former lovingkindnesses, which thou swarest unto David in thy truth?"-Psalm 89:49.

The Lord had made an everlasting covenant with David, ordered in all things and sure, yet that covenant was not intended to preserve him from trouble. When this Psalm was written, he had been brought very low. His crown had been cast down to the ground, his enemies had rejoiced over him, and he had become a reproach to his neighbors. Then his thoughts drew back to the happier days of the pact, and the covenant which the Lord had made with him, and either David himself, or Ethan writing of his behalf equipped, in the words of our text, "Lord, where, are thy former lovingkindnesses, which thou swarest unto David in thy truth?"

I. Applying this passage to the people of God, I remark, first, that We Brave Received Have Mercies In The Past.

Is that too common a matter for you to think and talk about? If you know, it so well, why do you forget it so often? The mercies of God wake us every morning, so that we are as used to them as we are to the sunlight, yet some of us think but little of them. To follow us till the night, and we get as accustomed to them as we do to our beds, yet perhaps some of us think less of them than we do of our beds. We have providential mercies ever moment of the day, and every day of our lives; we each never tell the number of them, for they are more than the sands upon the seashore. I am going, however, to speak of the spiritual mercies with which God has enriched us, -the blessings of the upper springs; and it will help you to recall them if I take the list of them that is given at the beginning of the 103rd Psalm.

Turn to it, and read, first, "who forgiveth all shine iniquities." All of us to whom these words belong should constantly remember that we are pardoned souls. We were not so once; oh, what would we not have given then to know what we do know now? At that time, our iniquities possessed upon us as a burden that we could not bear, the stings of conscience gave us no rest, and the terrors of hell got hold upon us. Well I was under conviction of sin, I felt that I would willingly have given my eyes, my hands, my all, if I might but be able to say, "I am a forgiven soul." So, now that we are pardoned, let us not forget the Lord's lovingkindness in forgiving all our iniquities. If thou, my hearer, canst forget it, I may well question whether shine iniquities have ever been forgiven, for the pardon of sin is so great a mercy that the song which it evokes from the heart must last for ever.

The next mercy in the psalmist's list is, "who healeth all thy diseases." Bethink thee again, my brother or my sister, what the Lord hath done for thee in this respect. Once, pride possessed thee, like a burning fever, and long prevented thee from submitting to God's simple plan of salvation, but thou hast been cured of that terrible malady, and now thou art sitting humbly at the feet of Jesus rejoicing in being saved by grace. Perhaps thou wast once like the demoniac of old, the chains of morality could not bind thee, and the fetters of human law could not restrain thee; thou didst cut and wound thyself, and thou wast a terror unto others; but, now, thanks be unto God, thou art so completely healed that there is not even a scar left to show where thou wast wounded. Wilt thou not praise the Lord for this unspeakable mercy? What wouldst thou not have given for it once when thy many diseases held thee in their cruel grip? Then cease not to praise Jehovah-Rophi, "the Lord that healeth thee."

The next mercy also demands a song of grateful praise: "who redeemeth thy life from destruction." Thou hast been saved from going down into the pit, the ransom price has been paid for thee, and thou hast been redeemed, not with silver and gold, "but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Remember that, now, there is no wrath against thee in the heart of God, for his righteous anger on account of thy sin was all poured out upon the head of his dear Son, thy Surety and Substitute. The devil has no claim upon thee now, for thou hast been redeemed by Christ unto the last farthing. Then canst thou forget to praise him who has done such great things for thee? What wouldst thou not have given, at one time, to have had half a hope that thou wert a redeemed soul, when thy poor knees were sore through thy long praying, and thy voice was hoarse with crying unto God? Thou wouldst gladly have bartered the light of day, and the comforts of life, and the joys of friendship for the assurance of thy redemption. Well, then, since thou hast now obtained that priceless born, forget not to praise the Lord for all his loving kindness towards thee.

For the not clause in the Psalm is this, "who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies." Think, brother or sister in Christ, what the Lord hath done for thee not content with saving thee from hell, he hath adopted thee into his own family, made thee a son or a daughter of the King of kings, and set a royal crown upon thy head, a crown of "lovingkindness and tender mercies." Thou art made an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ, is not this unparalleled lovingkindness? Is not this indeed the tender mercy of our God towards thee? Then canst thou ever forget such lovingkindness and tender mercy? There have been times, in the past history of some of us, when that ancient prophecy has been most graciously fulfilled in our experience, "Ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." So, as we remember the former lovingkindnesses of the Lord, we rejoice that he still crowneth us with lovingkindnesses and tender mercies.

We must not forget the next verse: "who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." If we are in Christ Jesus, we have all that we want, we are perfectly satisfied. We do not want a better Savior, we do not want a better hope, we do not want a better Bible, we do not want better promises. We do want mere faith, but we do not want a better ground of faith. We do desire to have more love to our Lord, but we do not desire a better object for our love. We desire ever to dive deeper and deeper, but only in the fathomless sea of Jesus' love. Others are roaming hither and thither, vainly seeking satisfaction, but our mouth is so filled with good things that we are satisfied. We asked, and the Lord gave unto us. We prayed for pardon, and the Lord fully forgave us for Jesus' sake. We have received so much mercy from him that our soul is satisfied, and soars aloft as on eagle's wings, leaving all terrestrial cares, and sorrows, and doubts far below us amid the earth-born clouds above which we have mounted by God's grace.

II. Now, having thus briefly recalled the Lord's former lovingkindnesses, I have to remind you, in the second place, that We Are Not Always Conscious Of The Same Flow Of Mercy Toward Us.

The psalmist asks, "Lord, where are thy former lovingkindnesses?" Well, where are they? Why, they are where they used to be, though we do not always realize them. The Lord's mercies have not changed, but our perception of them is not always as vivid as it ought to be. Let us again consider the mercies of which I have already spoken to you.

"Who forgiveth all shine iniquities." There are times when a Christian fears whether his sins are really forgiven. He is saved, yet he has a doubt whether he is saved or not. All his past sins seem to rise up before him, and the foul suggestion of unbelief is,

"Can it be possible that all those sins have been put away? Have all those mountains of iniquity been cast into the Red Sea of the Savior's atoning blood?" Many young believers, who judge themselves too much, by their feelings, are apt to imagine that they have been deceived, and that they are still under condemnation. If I have any brethren or sisters like that here, let me assure them that there are times when the very best of the saints have to cry out in the bitterness of their soul, "Lord, where are thy former lovingkindnesses?" The believer in Christ is always justified so far as the law of God is concerned, but he does not always hear the proclamation of pardon in the court of conscience. God's sun is always shining, but there are clouds that obscure its beams, yet it is only hidden for a while. So is it with the lovingkindness of the Lord with regard to the forgiveness of sin; whether we always realize it or not, the forgiveness that has once been bestowed upon us will never be withdrawn from us world without end.

It is the same with the next mercy: "who healeth all thy diseases." It may be that there are some of us here who know that the great Physician has healed our soul maladies, yet at times unbelief and other evil diseases cause us sore pain and agony of spirit. It is with us as it was in the days of Noah when the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and happy are we if we can now float in the ark of our faith above the awful sea of our depravity which threatens to drown every spiritual comfort and cover every hope. If I were to look within my own heart for comfort and hope, I should often be in despair; but when I look away to my Lord alone, then I realize what he has done and is still doing for me, for he still "healeth" all my diseases. Marvel not, dear friends, if you cannot see yourselves growing in grace as you would like to do. When a farmer goes to look at his root-crops, he is not so much concerned as

to the appearance of the part that is above, ground, he wants to know how that part is flourishing that is out of sight. So, very often, a Christian is growing under ground, as it were, -growing in grace, and knowledge, and love, and humility, though he may not have so many virtues and graces that are visible to other people, or even to himself. Sanctification is being wrought in the saints according to the will of God, but it, is a secret work; yet, in due time, the fruit of it will be manifest, even as the farmer at the proper season digs up his roots, and rejoices that his labor has not been expended upon them in vain.

Notice too that next mercy: "who redeemeth thy life from destruction." Now mark this, those who are once redeemed are always redeemed. The price of their redemption was paid upon Calvary, and that great transaction can never be reversed. I dare to put it very strongly, and to say that they were as fully redeemed when they were dead in trespasses and sins as they will be when they stand in the full blaze of Jehovah's presence before the eternal throne. They were not the conscious of their redemption, but their unconsciousness did not alter the fact of their redemption.

So is it with the believer; there are dark days and cloudy days in his experience, but he is just as truly saved in the dark and cloudy day as when the sun is shining brightly, and the clouds have all been blown away. In the old days of slavery, when a slave's freedom had been purchased, there may have been times when he had not much to eat, or when he had many aches and pains, but such things did not affect the fact that, he was a free man. Suppose someone had said to him, "My poor fellow, you have nothing in the cupboard, you are very sick and ill, you are still a slave," he, would have replied, "That is not good reasoning. I know that I was redeemed, for I saw the price paid for my ransom I have, my free papers, and I shall never again be a slave." So is it with believers, the Son of God hath made them free by giving himself as a ransom for them, so they shall be "free indeed." Their redemption does not depend upon their realization of it, but upon their Redeemer who has made it, effective for them.

The same principle applies to the next mercy: "who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies." There may be some Christians here who need to learn a lesson that one good Methodist tried to teach another whom he meet at the classmeeting. It grieved him as he heard over and over again the story of his brother's trials and troubles, but nothing about the multitudes of mercies with which he was continually being crowned; so one day he said to him, "My brother, I wish you would change your residence; you do not live in the right part of the town." "How is that?" enquired the other. "Why, you live where I used to live, down in Murmuring Street. It is very dark and narrow, the chimneys always smoke, the lamps never burn brightly there, and all sorts of diseases abound in that unhealthy quarter. I got tired of living in Murmuring Street, so I took a new house in Content Street. It is a fine, wide, open street, where the breezes of heaven can freely blow, so the people who dwell there are healthy and happy; and though all the houses in the street are of different sizes, it is a very remarkable thing that, they are all of them just the right size for the people, who live in them. The apostle Paul used to live in that street, for he said, 'I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content; so I would advise you, my brother, to move into Content Street as soon as you can.' That was very good advice, and we may pass it, on to any murmurers or grumblers whom we know. Think, beloved, how the Lord is still crowning you with lovingkindness; and tender mercies. I know you are not strong, but then you have not that acute pain you used to have. I know that you are growing old, but that only means that you are getting so much nearer heaven. I know your friends are fewer than they used to be, but then those who are left are true friends. So you see that you are still crowned with lovingkindness and tender mercies.

So is it with the last mercy in the list: "who satisfieth thy mouth with good things." I will venture to say that the Christian has not one real want that is not satisfied with the good things that God has provided for him. If he has any other want, or thinks he has, it is better for him not to have that want supplied. If we want the pleasures of sin, it is a great mercy that God will not give them to us, for the supply of such a want would be our soul's damnation. If we could gather any comfort through following that which is evil, it is of the Lord's mercy that such comfort is not our portion.

"This world is ours and worlds to come;

Earth is our lodge, and heaven our home;"

so what can we want beside?

III. Now, thirdly, Why Are We Not Always Conscious Of The Same Flow Of Mercy Toward Us?

Sometimes we miss our former comforts as the result of sin. Sin indulged is a certain barrier to happiness. No one can enjoy communion with Christ while turning aside to crooked ways. To the extent to which a believer is inconsistent with his profession to that extent will he be unhappy; and it will be no cause for surprise if he has to cry, "Lord, where are thy former lovingkindnesses?" We must always distinguish between the punishment of sin which Christ endured on his people's behalf and the fatherly chastisement with which God's visits upon them their wrong-doing. Though he will not condemn them as a Judge, he will chastise them as a Father; and they cannot expect to enjoy the lovingkindnesses of the Lord while they are enduring the strokes of his rod because of their transgressions.

We may also lose a comfortable sense of God's mercy through neglecting to use the means of grace. Leave off the regular reading of your Bible, and then you will be like the man who misses his meals, and so grows weak and languid. Neglect private prayer, and then see whether you will not have to cry, with Job, " Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness " Stop away from the prayer-meeting, and then, if your soul is not and, it ought to be. If a man will not come where there is a fire, is it surprising that he cries that he cannot get warm? The neglect of the means of grace causes many to enquire, " Lord, where are thy former lovingkindnesses?"

The same result follows when any idol is set up in our heart. While we worship the Lord alone, the temple of our heart will be filled with his glory; but if we set up an idol upon his throne, we shall soon hear the rushing of wings, and the divine voice saying, "Let us go hence." God and mammon cannot, abide in the same house. Remember that you serve a jealous God, and be very careful not to provoke him to jealousy. Every idol must be cast down, or his comfortable presence cannot be enjoyed.

Coldness of heart towards God is another cause of the loss of enjoyment of his favor. When the heart grows spiritually cold, the whole being soon gets out of order. If the heart be warm and vigorous, the pulsations throughout the entire frame will be kept strong and healthy; but when the heart is cold, the blood will be chilled in the veins, and all the powers will be benumbed and paralyzed. So, beloved, see to it that, in the power of the Holy Spirit, you maintain the love of your espousals, that pristine warmth of holy affection which you delighted to manifest when first you knew the Lord; or else you will soon have to cry, "Lord, where are thy former lovingkindnesses?" Live near to God, and this shall not often be your cry; but if you backslide from, him, this shall soon be your sorrowful enquiry. If you have to mourn an absent God, seek to know the reason why he has withdrawn himself from you, and repent of the sin that has separated you from him.

IV. Now, Lastly, Let Us Remember That The Divine Covenant Remains Firm And Steadfast Under All Changing Circumstances.

The covenant made with David was established by the oath of God, and Paul, writing to the Hebrews, says that "God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us."

For our consolation, let us remember, first, that the parties to the covenant are always the same. God has not one set of chosen ones to-day, and another set to-morrow. In the Lamb's book of life, there are not erasures of certain names, and the insertion of others in their place. No, beloved, that is not the way in which the Lord deals with his elect; he does not play fast and loose with them like that. He does not love them one day, and hate them the next. Oh, no!

**"Whom ones he loves, he never leaves,
But loves them to the end."**

And, next, the seal of the covenant is always the same. It is sealed with the precious blood of Jesus; his one great sacrifice on Calvary made the covenant for ever sure.

**"'Tis signed, and sealed, and ratified,
In all things ordered well."**

We do not seal the covenant, Christ himself has done that; it is his blood that makes the covenant sure to all for whom he stood as Surety and Substitute. This is our consolation even when we have no present enjoyment of the blessings that are secured to us by the covenant. Even the sealing of the Spirit is not the seal of the covenant, though it is to us the certain evidence of our interest in the covenant; it is like a seal to our copy of the covenant, the great deed itself, sealed with the blood of Jesus, is safely preserved in the archives of heaven where none can mutilate or steal or destroy it.

Further, the efficacy of the covenant is always the same. It is not like human covenants, which may or may not be fulfilled, or which may become void through lapse of time. This covenant is eternal, covering past, present, and future, and it shall be fulfilled to the last jot and tittle, for he who swore unto David will certainly perform all that he has promised to his own chosen people.

**"The voice that rolls the stars along
Speaks all the promises."**

When God said, "Let there be light," there was light; and when that same God says, "Let there be light in that dark soul," the light at

once enters the heart, and it is divinely illuminated. Thus it has come to pass that we, who were sometimes darkness, now are light in the Lord; and to us comes the apostolic injunction, "Walk as children of light." The efficacy of the covenant does not depend upon us; if it did, it would be a, poor, feeble, fickle thing that would fail us just when we needed it most. There would be, no hope of our ever getting to heaven if we had to depend upon our own efforts, or our own merits, or anything of our own; our comfort arises from the fact that the covenant is made on our behalf by our great Representative and Redeemer, what will himself see that all that is guaranteed to us in the covenant is fulfilled in due season. There rolls the glorious chariot of salvation, in which all believes are riding to heaven. Death and hell cannot stop it, all the fears of any who are in it will not affect their eternal safety, and not one of them shall be found to be missing in the day when the rail of the redeemed is called in glory. Be of good courage, believer, for thou art saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation. Even though thou hast, for a, while to mourn the loss of the Lord's former lovingkindnesses, search thine heart to see how far that loss has been caused by thine own sin, and then return unto the Lord with all thine heart, and he will renew to thee his former favors, and give to thee new mercies of which thou hast not as yet even dreamed.

As for those here who have no former lovingkindnesses of the Lord to which they can look back, I pray that this may be the beginning of better days to them. May they think of the mercies which the Lord has bestowed upon others, and may they cry unto him, "Lord, do to us as thou hast done, to them; adopt us also into thy family as thy sons and thy daughters, and let us share in all the blessings that thou givest unto thy children!" Remember, dear friends, that it is by simple and sincere faith in the crucified Christ of Calvary that sinners are eternally saved; it is by his blood that we, who once were afar off, are now made nigh. Whosoever believeth in him shall not be ashamed or confounded; therefore, my hearer, believe thou on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and God shall be glorified. So may it be, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

Psalm 90:14 The Beau Ideal' of Life

NO. 2987

**A SERMON SPECIALLY TO YOUNG MEN, PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 10TH, 1906,
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"O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days." — Psalm 90:14.

Moses saw, with deep regret, that the great host which came out of Egypt would have to die in the wilderness. Every day there were many funerals, for a vast multitude of men and women, and children, had to be buried in the wilderness; and tears of sorrow and sympathy must continually have stood in the eyes of the great leader of the children of Israel. After speaking about their days being passed away in God's wrath, Moses offered a prayer which, under the circumstances, was most natural and most wise. It was in substance this: "Lord, if we must die in this desert, if this whole generation (except Caleb and Joshua) must pass away in the wildness, then, at any rate, give us the fullness of my favor now, that we may spend all our remaining days, whether they are be too few or many, in gladness and rejoicing." Now, seeing that we also are all passing away, and that, whether young or old, we too must be carried to the grave unless the Lord should first return, this seem to me to be a very wise prayer for us to put up: "Lord, satisfy us with my mercy now, that we may waste no more of our life in sinful dissatisfaction; but that, from this hour to the last moment of our life, we may be filled with thy favor, and may rejoice and be glad all our days.

I. Just for a minute or two, I want, in the first place, to show you that Moses has here set before us The "Beau Ideal" Of Life.

If one could have just such a life as he desired, could he desire anything better than to be satisfied early with God's favor? Would it not be a very delightful thing if the whole of his life could be spent exactly as it ought to be, and could be spent in the enjoyment of the highest degree of happiness of which we are capable? "O satisfy us," is the prayer of the text: "O satisfy us early with thy mercy." If the young man — instead of seeking after something which he will still continue to seek after if he is spared to reach the prime of life, and will still seek after even when he grows grey, could get that which would content him at once, if he could get something which would immediately fill his soul, and make it run over with thankfulness and joy, would it not to a great blessing to him, especially if he could get it, as Moses says, "early," — soon, — in the very beginning of his life's day! Many men, even good men, have wasted the early morning of their days; and some have had the painful experience of looking back, in the afternoon of life, upon the best part of their day, and even the noontide, all gone; and there has been for them only the evening, and sometimes only a very short evening, to spend in complete satisfaction and real joy. It is a pity that so many Christians lives should, for all practical purposes, be only the fag-ends of lives, — that, so far as their influence upon others is concerned, they should be merely like the candle-ends that we put upon the save-alls; but the whole candle has never been consumed in giving light in the sanctuary of God. It is a thing to be desired beyond measure that, from the first to the last of life, God's blessing should rest upon us, and that

we should enjoy peace and happiness without any intermingling of the distress which is caused by sin. This, as I have said, seems to me to be the beau ideal of life, and I think that all Christians at least will agree with me.

It is a poor way of building a house to have a flaw in the foundation; for, however carefully we may build the superstructure, we can never make a satisfactory building because of the flaw down below. It is poor weaving on the part of the man at the loom, when he has a flaw at the beginning of his work; however carefully he may weave the latter portion of it, he will always know that he cannot get that old flaw out; that the piece of cloth will never be perfect. In contrast to this kind of building and weaving, it would be a blessed thing to have such grace and such wisdom given that the very first course of the foundation of the house of life should be well and truly laid, and that the whole building should be to the praise and glory of God; and it would be equally blessed that the very first throws of the shuttle of the web of life should be in accordance with the right rules for weaving, so that the whole piece of cloth might be pronounced perfect after its kind. I think this is the meaning of the prayer of the text:

“O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.”

II. Secondly, as we judge this satisfaction to be the beau ideal of life, let us consider How Some People Have Sought To Attain To It.

I do not hesitate to say that the first part of the text is the cry of all men: “O satisfy us, satisfy us, satisfy us! “But there is a kind of horse-leech in every man’s soul that is not easily satisfied. It is like death, and the grave, and the sea. Whatever may be cast into the maw of death, it is as hungry as it was before, and the sepulcher is never satisfied; and throw what you will into the sea, it is always ready to receive more. So is it with the hearts of men. “O satisfy us,” is the world’s cry as the heathens shout to their idol gods, and as the priests of Baal cried to their lifeless image. “O satisfy us,” is the world’s cry today, for man’s hunger is insatiable, though he disdains the only food which would satisfy his cravings. “O satisfy us,” is the cry which is heard in every quarter of the globe; — alas! not ascending to heaven, as it should, but going out to the things of time and sense. Still do men seek satisfaction in that which Solomon calls “vanity of vanities.”

Wise young men pray, in the words of the text, “O satisfy us early.” They want to get that which is to be, the source of their joy, not when they can no longer enjoy it, but now, so they cry, “satisfy us early.” They do not ask for God’s mercy merely as a sort of pension for their old age, but they want to have it now. At any rate, I know that I did, for I wished to obtain whatever of gladness and joy could be had even in my youthful days. There is nothing wrong in desiring to be happy; there is nothing wrong in offering the prayer, “O satisfy us early,” so long as that prayer is completed in the way in which my text completes it: “O satisfy us early with thy mercy.”

Many have tried to satisfy themselves by gaining money. This is a pursuit in which a man may lawfully engage if it be not the chief object of his life, as so many make it. They believed that they would be satisfied when they had acquired a certain amount, but they were not. I might confidently ask every man of wealth, now in this world, whether he was satisfied when he reached the amount which he had himself fixed as the limit of his desire. Did he not then feel that he must have more than that amount? Of course he did, so he set before him another sum; and he said that when he had accumulated that amount, he would be content. But was he? Is not the desire for wealth a thing which grows with that it feeds upon, so that, the more a man has, the more he still wants? There never did live, and there never could live, a man whose entire nature could be satisfied with his worldly possessions. You know that we call the man, who delights in hoarding up riches, a miser. Why do we call him by that name unless it is because he is truly miserable? The very name for the man who is engrossed with avarice signifies unhappiness; and when you want to describe somebody who is both aged and wretched, you say, “He is like an old miser.” Yes, so it is. Men may amass as much wealth as they will, but if, with the money, they have not acquired something better than the best metal that ever came from the mine or the mind, they will still go on crying, “O satisfy us! O satisfy us! “The Indians of South America believed that the Spaniards’ god was made of gold, and well they might when they saw the strangers’ devotion to their idol. They once poured molten gold down a Spaniard’s throat, saying, “Thou hast thirsted for it, now thou shalt have enough of it.” But if a man could eat gold, and drink gold, and sleep with gold, and walk with gold, and be robed in gold, yet, still, what is there in that metal which could satisfy the cravings of the highest part of man’s nature, — that mysterious spiritual thing which is called the soul? No, there is no solid satisfaction for the soul in all the wealth in the world.

Others have despised this gross pursuit, and they have said that satisfaction is to be found in fame. We all of us like respect, esteem, honor; it is false for any man to say that he does not like praise, for he does; and if anyone is pleased at being told that he does not like flattery, he is there being more highly flattered than at any other time of his life, and he is enjoying the sensation! Some men, to gain honors and distinction in various ways, have made complete slaves of themselves. They have supposed that, if they could but get the honors, — perhaps the honor of a degree at the university, or the honor of a certain rank in the profession of the law, or even in the church, they would be satisfied; but no man was even yet satisfied with honors. They are but as a puff of wind, which can never fill an immortal soul. If you read the histories of those statesman who have risen to the greatest heights of fame,

you will, as a rule, find that the most famous man in the kingdom is generally the greatest slave. He has, from the very weight of his honors, the heavier burden of responsibility to bear. As "uneasy lies the head that wears a crown," so, in its degree, uneasy lies the head that wears the laurel or the bay. There is no contentment to be found in fame, as those have proved who have won the most of it. There was a time when the flattery of two or three poor people in a village would have satisfied them; but, now, the plaudits of a whole nation seem as nothing to them; and when the whole world is ringing with their renown, they sit down in despondency, wringing their hands in misery, and cry, with Solomon, "Vanity of rarities; all is vanity."

Others have said, "But surely there is something solid and satisfying in learning." Well, there is more to be said for this than for either of the other two things that I have mentioned; and, as far as I am concerned, I would sooner seek satisfaction in my library than in the marble halls of the wealthy or in the courts of kings. To study, to read, to make discoveries, to furnish the brain, to enrich the mind, — there is something worth doing in all this; yet Solomon, who carried out this idea as far as it could be carried out in his day, recorded his very emphatic verdict concerning it, "Much study is a weariness of the flesh." "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity," is very apt to be your utterance also with regard to study, for you always have the dreary thought that, even if you could know more than all other men in the world, when your turn came to sleep in the grave, there would be no difference between you and the peasant of whom Wordsworth wrote, —

"A primrose by a river's brim

A yellow primrose was to him,

And it was nothing more."

If the peasant rises no higher than that, however learned any of us may be, we have only risen a little above him for a time, and in the common dust we too shall sleep with him. If there were no eternal futures, what would all the joys of earthly knowledge be worth to us?

Others seek satisfaction in pleasure. I may be addressing some young man who says, "I do not care for wealth; I shall never trouble myself to hoard it. On the contrary, I love to do it. I do not want to use a rake; give me a shovel, and I will soon scatter all my father's substance." There are some men who are very proficient in scattering what others have with great diligence gathered. These people say concerning study, "Let us get out of these crowded rooms into the pure, fresh air; we mean to go in for pleasure, and to enjoy ourselves while we can." This looks, at first sight, as if it were a prudent thing to do; and, certainly, there is a deal more sense in enjoying ourselves in a rational fashion than there can be in pinching and starving ourselves in order to hoard up money for heirs who will ridicule if they do not actually curse those who have provided so bountifully for them. Remember what Solomon says about others who seek what they call pleasure: "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? That they tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine." There is no satisfaction there; the merriest man who ever lived, the man who drained the wine-cup of mirth even to its dregs, has dashed it to the ground in his fierce indignation, and cursed the day in which he tried to find satisfaction there. Look at those who have gone to the house of the strange woman, and see what comes of their sinful sojourning there; even if it be only for a little while. Does not dissipation bring disease and decay upon nature sooner than need be there is no satisfaction there, young man; so, if you want really to enjoy yourself, there is a nobler and a surer way of doing so. The way of so-called "pleasure" is a delusion and a snare, and the end thereof is sorrow, suffering, and woe. Alas, that so many should continue to walk in a way which has such a sad end!

When a man plays the fool, let him do it for something that is worth having. Some time ago, when we were looking for a place for Messrs. Moody and Sankey to preach and sing in, two of our brethren went to see whether a certain building could be hired, and while they were waiting there, a man came up to them, and presented his card, — "Mr. So-and-so, clown." He thought our brethren had gone to engage the place for some amusements. They told him that they had come to engage it for religious services; and one of them said to him, "What a pity it is that you should play the fool for money!" "I think the clown made a very sensible remark in reply, for he said, "You had better go and talk to those who play the fool, and make nothing by it; for there is some sense in playing the fool for money," To play the fool, and make nothing by it, is a very mild description of the folly of which I have been speaking; but how many play the fool, and lose money by it! What is it that clothes so many people in rags? "What is it that makes so many have red eyes, and trembling limbs, and even delirium tremens? What is that but playing the fool, and losing by it, And what will it be when such a man comes to die, — a man who has lived without God, and without Christ, and who will be without hope in his death? That will be playing the fool with a vengeance, and the truth will come home to him that the eternal ruin of his soul is the cost of his folly."

If you were to realize what this kind of "pleasure" means, you would have nothing to do with it. When Mount Vesuvius suddenly began pouring forth its lava upon Pompeii, most of the inhabitants were assembled in the amphitheatre; I have seen the ruins of the place where they were gathered. I do not know what spectacle was on at the time; but however interesting it may have been, there was not a man, or woman, or child, who did not run, as fast as ever they could, wherever they hoped they might find a place

of refuge. A few persons remained in their habitations, or were unable to escape, and there they are to this day. Some of their bodies have been lately discovered in the very positions in which they were overtaken by the eruption. If men were wise, the merriest play that ever was acted upon the face of the earth, the richest golden gains that ever lay before a merchant, the choicest pleasures that ever tempted the human heart, would never induce them to tarry till they were lost for ever; but they would be up and away, and never rest till they had escaped from the wrath to come.

Some seem to have no real object in life. I think I hear someone say, "Well, I have cared for none of those things that you have mentioned." Where then, my friend, have you tried to end satisfaction? "Oh, I have not troubled my head about that; I just plod along from day to day, working hard to earn my daily bread; I do not know that I have any ambition, in this world, except to pay my way, have enough to eat, and to drink, and raiment to put on, and bring up my children as well as I can. "Rest assured, my friend, that I do not despise you for having such desires; at the same time, I do think that, it is a pity for an immortal soul not to have some aim and object higher and brighter than that, for it is pretty nearly the object of a mill-horse that goes round and round in its daily course, and never aims at anything higher. Your object is very like that of a swallow, or a sparrow, which builds its nest, and lays its eggs and hatches them, and sees it is young flying off on their own account. Your ambition might be suitable for a dog, or a horse, or a cab, but it is not worthy of you, a being of a higher order. When I look at you, and remember that you were made in the image of God, I think that, surely, there must be something worth living for something nobler than this poor ambition of yours. I ask you honestly to say whether you have found satisfaction there, and I am fully persuaded that you have not.

There are some who argue that the gospel cannot bless them. I frequently hear this kind of talk from poor working people. One says, "Well, sir, if I were well-to-do, then I think I ought to be a Christian; but religion is not for the poor." That is in direct opposition to the declaration of Christ himself, that "the poor have the gospel preached unto them;" and to the inspired question, "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith?" "Yet many people will have it that the gospel is not for them because they are so poor.

I have also heard some say that they are so ignorant that they cannot be saved. One says, "I cannot read," and another says, "I can read, but I cannot understand what I do read in the Bible; and when I go to hear a sermon, I cannot make out what is meant by it." They make out that they are almost idiots with regard to spiritual matters; yet, on any other subject, they would stick up for themselves, and try to prove that they are almost philosophers. Yet their plea that ignorance prevents them from being saved is directly contrary to Scripture; for the apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote to the Corinthians, "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence."

Then, again, others say that they are too busy to be saved; at least, that is the practical meaning of their excuse. One says, "Now, do not bother me about religion, for I really have not time to think about such things as that. See, I have to be up early in the morning, and to work hard till late at night." Another says, "My business cares are so numerous that I cannot get away from the counting-house to go to a prayer-meeting." Ah, dear friends, but how many people, who have not been able to find time to pray, have had to find time to die; and how very frequently do we see that the very people, who say that they have not had time to think about the things of God, have found plenty of time for indulgence in vice and sinful pleasures! That excuse, like the others I have mentioned, will not avail any of those who make it. There is time enough for the most hard-worked man to, lift his eye to heaven, and to cry, "O Lord, for Jesus Christ's sake, accept me, for I come to thee trusting in his aborting sacrifice!" With many, the excuse is only an excuse, for they do not want Christ, and they do not believe that there is anything for them in Christ, and therefore they make these vain excuses.

I have known some even say that they are too sinful to come to Christ, — other people may be saved, but they could never be; — they have gone too far into sin, and they are too much involved in sin, they are so old, and they have so many friends and connections on the side of evil. Perhaps they are in a business that is not honest, and they are so interlaced with bad men that they cannot get out of it, — so they say; and they will say anything so as to hide that which is really at the bottom of their hearts, — which it, that they do not want Jesus Christ to save them. They would rather that he should let them alone, to go quietly on their own way, even although that way will inevitably lead them to everlasting destruction.

III. Now, in closing my discourse, I want to tell you Where Real Satisfaction Can Be Found. It came in answer to the prayer of the text: "O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days."

Let me try and teach you, as plainly as I can, the way to find solid satisfaction. Friend, thou art young, and life is before thee. Thou wouldst fain make it a whole life, altogether happy. Begin, then, by realizing that there is need for thee to seek satisfaction from God. If thou wert a mere animal, thou couldst be easily satisfied. Sheep and oxen are perfectly satisfied if you turn them into a field where there is plenty of grass; they never stand and cry, "O satisfy us," but they eat as much as they want, and then they are

perfectly content. But you, though placed in a world of wondrous beauty, and though, as a man, you are made capable of great happiness, have not obtained it, and you may as well begin your search for it by the confession that you are a fallen creature. You have lost the peerless jewel of innocence. Your first father, Adam, lost it as your representative; and you have also lost it on your own account. If you had not lost it, you would not need to pray to God, "O satisfy us early with thy mercy," for you would be satisfied already. Adam was satisfied so long as he kept from sinning against God, and you also would be satisfied if there were no sin in you. Let this confession be made by each one of you, "Lord, I am unsatisfied because I am unholy; I have not attained to satisfaction because I have not attained to perfection."

Then, remember that, if you are ever to get satisfaction, you will have to get it from God, and it must come from him as the gift of his mercy. The text says, "O satisfy us early with thy mercy," God has so made us that we cannot get on without him. It is both a blessing and a curse that it is so; — it is a blessing that we cannot be satisfied without God, for that necessity helps to draw us to him; but it is a curse if we continue to try to be satisfied without God. As the planet needs the sun, so man needs his God. As the eye is nothing without light, so your spirit is nothing without God. You must have God; yet, up till now, some of you have not even thought of him. Getting what you needed here below has occupied all your attention; but as for God, perhaps you have not thought of him, or if you have thought of him, you have only done so to wish that there were no God. The thought of God has been a troublesome subject to you; you wished you could dismiss it altogether from your mind. But, my friend, if you are ever to get satisfaction, this state of things must be altered. You must recognize that, as a creature, you must be at peace with your Creator. I do not ask you to take my word for this assertion, but I do urge you to search the Scriptures to see whether it is not so. There you will learn that, until the quarrel between you and God is ended, until you submit to God, and are at peace with him, your soul cannot find rest any more than Noah's dove could find rest as she flew over the wild waste of waters, and discovered no place for the sole of her foot to rest upon. Do not forget that you cannot come back to God unless God shall display his mercy to you! If you appeal to divine justice, you will find that it must punish you, for, young as you are, you have broken God's holy law. You have committed sins which have provoked the Lord to anger and jealousy; and ere you can be reconciled to him, and have his love shed abroad in your heart, these sins of yours must be forgiven. They can be forgiven, for God delighteth in mercy. They can be forgiven now, for he waiteth to be gracious. They can be forgiven without money and without price, for he freely pardons all those who put their trust in Jesus Christ his Son.

But suppose your past sins were all forgiven, you could not even then get satisfaction, because there would still be in you a natural tendency to sin. You can all of you sin without being taught to do it. There is no need to found an institution for the purpose of teaching the practice of vice, or to employ agents to excite men to commit crime, because the natural bias of the human heart is all in that direction. Now, as long as you love sin, and your heart has a bias towards evil, God send you cannot walk together. Thousands of years ago, he asked the question, "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" It is needful, therefore, that, there should be a complete change in your nature, for it can never be contented as it is. Whatever God might give it, even if he were to give it heaven itself, — your nature would never be satisfied while it remained as it now is. Your nature is diseased, and must be healed, else it will be with you as it would be with a sick man if you piled up his room with gold, or heaped up learned volumes all round him, and bade him study them. They would not take away his pains; it is the disease itself that needs to be cured.

So is it with the malady of your spirit. You must be made right with God; or, as Christ himself put it, you must be born again. Now, if you could be made a new creature, with a will perfectly conformed to God's will, with a heart that loved what God loved, and hated what God hated, with a spirit within you pure as God himself is, with a mind which sought only after purity, and abhorred everything that was evil, since if, in addition to that, all your past sin could be forgiven, would not that be a grand and a blessed thing. There is many a man who has lived a life of crime and shame, who, when he sees a little curly-headed boy kneel down to say his prayers at his mother's knees, remembers when he did the same and wishes that he could be put into a mill, and be ground young again. That is the kind of thing that would give you satisfaction, and that is just what Jesus Christ came to do for those that believe in him, for he has come into the world to "save his people from their sins;" that is, not merely to save them from being punished for sin, but to deliver them from the sin itself. He can give you, my brother, a new heart and a right spirit. He says, "Behold, I make all things new," and those who believe in him are made new creatures in Christ Jesus.

"Oh!" says one, "I wish I were a new creature in Christ." Why should you not be? He that believeth in Jesus hath the witness of the Spirit within his head, and this is a sure sign that he is a new creature in Christ Jesus, for the first result of regeneration is true saving faith; so, if you trust in Jesus, that is a positive proof that you are born again. Then see what will come of this great change. You will begin your new life with a new nature, a nature that loves God, and hates evil, a nature that longs for conformity with the will of God. You will begin your new career "accepted in the Beloved," with a life within you that can never die, and with a pardon granted to you that can never be reversed. You shall be so completely saved that you shall never return to the old follies and sins in which you formerly lived, because you will not be saved because somebody has persuaded you to live in a different fashion, but because you have been made a new creature altogether.

"What!" asks someone, "shall I be perfect when this change comes?" "No, there is a nature in you which will still remain, and with which you will have to fight, and wrestle; but the new life, which Christ will give you, will enable you to overcome it." "Well," says one,

"I do not see, how that is to bring me satisfaction." But it will; this is a great mystery, but it is a great truth. Possibly you are dissatisfied because you cannot bring the contents of your pocket up to the height of your wishes; but if you bring your wishes down to the level of the contents of your pocket, you will be satisfied with what you now have. You cannot get all that you want, but suppose that your wants are reduced to your actual needs, how will it be, them? You cannot, at present, expect to have all that your heart desires; but suppose your heart is renewed by grace, so that you do not desire what God does not see fit to give you, will not that be the way for you to obtain satisfaction? If the mountain cannot come to Mahomet, Mahomet had better go to the mountain; and if we cannot change our outward circumstances, we had better be content with such things as we have. We have been born into a world where there is much sin and much sorrow, where no man can have all that he wishes; and it is a grand thing when our wishes get changed, our desires get altered, and we become altogether different from what we used to be. This is the path that leads to satisfaction. Some people seem to think that, if they had what I have, they would be perfectly content; but I am quite certain that, if they had it, they would be utterly dissatisfied with my portion. Yet I am perfectly satisfied with it; — not perfectly satisfied with myself, for that I never shall be while I am, down here; but I am perfectly satisfied with what God does for me and with me. That satisfaction is what every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ has a right to enjoy; and when he lives as a believer should live, he does enjoy it, and he can, sing, with good Mr. Watts, —

"I would not change my blest estate

For all that earth calls good or great;

And while my faith can keep her hold,

I envy not the sinner's gold."

The garden of such a man as I am just now describing is a very little one, but he walks in his rich neighbour's park, and he thanks God that it does not belong to him, for he has not the trouble and expense of keeping it in order, yet he can enjoy it probably quite as much as its owner can. He goes to the top of a hill, and he knows that all he can see is in a certain king's dominions; but he is glad that he is not the king, for he does not want the trouble of ruling a kingdom; He thanks God for the beauties of nature, which are all his; he knows that the mountains and the valleys, the sea and the sky, are all his because they are his Father's, so he may enjoy them to the full. He thanks God that he does not want to put the sun into his pocket, nor to keep the moon in a cupboard all to himself; all things in the world are his as much as he needs them, but he rejoices to know that his fellow-creatures may also enjoy them as much as he does. He is brought, by the grace of God, into such a state of mind that the joy of other's is his joy, and that the sorrow of others is his sorrow; and he would not wish to forego this enlargement and expansion of his mind. The grace of God has put him into such a condition of heart and soul that, on the land or on the sea, on a bed of sickness or walking about with the elasticity of health, he says, "It is all right, for my Father has ordained it all. He gives or he takes away, he kills or he makes alive; and as he does it, all is well, and; I am perfectly satisfied with it; and as long as I live, I will bless his holy name." Now, that is the truly happy man, and this is the only way to be really happy. Trust in Jesus, rest wholly upon him; and he will renew your spirit, and change your heart, and with that change of heart he will give you capacities for happiness which you never can have in any other way.

My dear young friends, I want to speak these last few words specially to you. If my older friends here are not yet converted, I pray that they may soon be saved, and I thank God that we have seen many such saved. No old man or old woman has any need or reason to despair; I have seen people of seventy and eighty years of age, and more than that, converted to Christ. He does not limit his grace to any age. If you were five thousand years old, I should be bound to preach the same gospel to you as if you were a little child; — whatever your age, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. But, at the same time, we cannot make you old people begin life again, we cannot take you back to the years of youth; possibly, you wish that we could; but as for you young people, we long for you to be early satisfied with God's mercy, that you may rejoice and be glad all your days. Are you fifteen, or sixteen years of age? There was a time, I daresay, when you thought your brother was wonderfully old because he had got into his teens; but you do not feel very old now, do you? But you think you will have reached a great age when you get to be forty; perhaps, then, you will think that it is the people of sixty, or seventy, or eighty, or ninety years of age, who are getting old, and not you; but let me assure you that now, now, NOW is your time.

I would not, God knoweth, deceive you about this matter for all the wealth: there is in the world. I have known the Lord, blessed be his name, since I was fifteen years of age, and there has never been a moment, since then, in which I have regretted putting my trust in him. A great many times I have mourned that I did not trust him sooner, and that I have not trusted him better; but never once have I wished to go back to my former condition, and leave my dear Lord and Master. You know that we sometimes hear servants speak well of their master before other people's faces, when they think their master will hear of it; but when they get together, a lot of them round the fire, I do not know what they say about their master then. But when you gather round the fire, or when you meet with any of my particular friends, ask them whether they ever heard me say a word, in public or in private, against my Master. On the contrary, I love to tell everybody how kind and good he has been to me, and to my most intimate friends I delight

to relate all that I know about him. I can tell you one thing; if a man serves a master who treats him badly, he will not be likely to bring his boy to that place of business; but it is my greatest delight to see my two boys serving my dear Lord and Master. If he had been a bad Master to me, I should have said to them, "Now, boys, do not, either of you, make the mistake that I have made in serving the Lord Jesus Christ as I have done." Oh, no! they have never heard me talk like that. They know how I rejoiced when I found them believing in Jesus Christ, and afterwards beginning to do what they could in his service. Young people, your godly mothers and fathers would not be anxious to make you miserable; you have no idea that they want you to be wretched and sad, have you? No; but it is because they have found such supreme delight in the service of God that they want you to find your delight in it too. I have gone up and down this country, and traveled a good deal in other countries too; and I think I may say, without exaggeration, that I have talked with many thousands of Christians, and I have heard some strange things from some of them; but, up to this moment, I have never met with any Christians who have said to me, "We are all mistaken, after all; there is no solid satisfaction to be found in Jesus Christ." I have seen some of these Christian people at the time when men's hearts speak out, if ever they do; I have seen them die. I have visited the dear consumptive girl in her last hours; and I have been with the gray-headed saint, who has passed his fourscore years, when the time came for him to die. It has been my lot to stand by many death beds, and I can honestly say that, if I wanted to enjoy the most intense pleasure that is possible on earth, I would seek out some dying saint, that I might witness his rapturous joy, and hear his gladsome and cheering testimony to his Lord and Savior. A man usually speaks the truth when he comes face to face with death, and eternity is opening before him. Most men put off their masquerading then, and appear in their true colors; and it is them that Christians speak best concerning Christ; and, often, the loudest songs and the sweetest praise that they have ever given to him, they lay at his feet then, just before they came away from earth to go to be with him forever. Dear young friends, the way of the highest happiness is the way of absolute trust in Jesus, giving up yourself to the renewing of the Holy Ghost that you may become new creatures in Christ Jesus. May God, in his infinite mercy, grant that this great work of grace may be wrought in every unsaved soul in this assembly, ere you leave this building; and it will be if you simply rely upon the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, who will then take you by the hand, and make all things new to you. God grant it, for his dear Son's sake! Amen.

Psalm 95:5 The Sea! The Sea! The Wide and Open Sea!

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ON BEHALF OF THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN SAILORS' SOCIETY

"The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land." — Psalm 95:5.

THIS Psalm exhorts us to sing joyfully unto God. Whether we contemplate the land or the sea there will be found upon them both abundant rains for adoring the great Creator. I know, as they walk upon the land, can no more praise him that if it were on vast desert of Sahara; and yet the earth is full of his goodness; it is as a garden yielding, not only food for man and beast, but flowers lovely and fragrant. Forest and field, mountain and plain alike sing out the praises of the Lord. Nor is the sea less rich in excitements to worship the Lord our Maker. Ignorant persons regard the sea as a dreary waste of waters. In the olden times, our home-loving forefathers were desperately afraid of the sea and looked upon it as a devouring monster. It was a "melancholy ocean" to them, a place of constant sorrow, and sudden death; they shuddered as they thought of it. But, indeed, to him who is rightly taught, the sea is full of beauty, its every wave is lit up with splendour: the sea is the Lord's, and he made it. You are then, that both on the land and on the sea adoration is in its place. Praise is never one of season at any time and worship is never foreign in any land. It matt not whether we travel over sand or snow, or how we are tossed about, on Arctic or tropical sea we are still in the pasture of the great Shepherd, and within the palace of the great King. Praise the Lord from the earth, and let dragons and all deeps join in the psalm. "Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein."

At this time I shall ask you only to think of the sea I could far more easily preach upon this text if I were standing in one of my delightful haunts by the Mediterranean, Looking over its blue water, hidden away in the cleft of rock, with the spray at my feet; then, I think, I should not coldly read the words, but clap my hand, as I cried with my heart, "The sea is his, and he made it." Where we are, however, stranded on this white-cliffed island, and banished from the fresh sea breezes to this huge Babylon of bricks, where men appear to forget God, since they see so little of his world and so much of their own. Let us try, if we can, to transport ourselves to the wide and open sea and as we gaze all around, and see nothing but the rolling waves, let us sing,

"He formed the deeps unknown,

He gave the seas their bound

The watery worlds are all his own,

And all the solid ground.”

There is no need for any labored division in our sermon tonight: our first one will be that God made the sea; and the second will be that therefore it is his; and the third shall come out of the next verse, he is therefore to be adored: “O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.”

I. Our first thought is that God Made The Sea.

Somebody made it, and who else could have made it but God? It is not often that you find a seafaring man who is an atheist. Addison tells us of a time when he was aboard ship, and there was a passenger on deck who was an infidel. He was reported to the captain as an atheist, and neither he nor the sailors could make out what sort of a strange fish that might be, and asked him what he meant. They were told that he did not believe in a God. A storm coming on, the men proposed that they should pitch him overboard seeing he did not believe in God Almighty; but he was soon cured of his unbelief, for, when things looked threatening, the first person who was down on his knees crying for mercy in great terror, was the precious atheist, who soon got rid of his atheism when he felt in danger of his life. A little while ago, a Christian minister crossing to America was walking the deck with a gentleman who called himself an atheist. It was a very bad night, and the vessel had to steam on in the teeth of a head wind. It would have been fatal to let her drift. The captain said, “We cannot keep any watch, we must drive ahead, and if we dare run into an iceberg, there’s an end of us.” Our friend, who believed in a God, hearing this, said that he should turn in, and go to sleep; his companion declared that he could not think of doing any such thing, he should not like to die in his sleep, and so he would walk the deck, rough as it was. All night long he who had no God was cold and wet with watching, and fretting, and worrying, because he was afraid he should die; we let my friend sleep sweetly, and rose in the morning fresh as a lark. Coming on deck, he boasted the philosopher, “What! have you not turned it?” “No, no.” He was miserable, he was unhappy. “Why,” said the believer, “I trust in my heavenly Father, and I fell asleep, and I feel quite refreshed. What good have you got by staying here?” “I must confess,” said the other, “you believers have the best of it when you get to sea.” Yes, and assuredly we have the best of it on land, too. We have the best of it in health, in sickness, in death, and we shall have the best of it for ever.

God made the sea, and the spirits of his hands are still to be seen. Skillful persons can tell that a picture is by a certain artist by its style. It is not everybody that can judge well; but a man skilled in art knows the touch of each painter’s brush. “That is Rembrandt,” cries the artist, “he alone could produce such lights and shadows; and the other is by Salvator Rosa; I know the master’s hand.” He also who has sought out the works of the Lord, and hath pleasure therein, knows the great Father’s style. The same sublime mind which gave us the Holy Scriptures also ordained the channels of the deep. I am absolutely sure that he who reveals the secrets of the soul is he in whose hands are the deep places of the sea; his commandment is exceeding broad, even as the main ocean; and of his grace we are compelled to cry, “O the depth!” even as when we sound the Atlantic.

I will not go into the question to-night, but there are wonderful points of likeness between the Word and the work of the Almighty. The sea is a mystery of waters, and Scripture is sometimes obscure; but yet the sea shineth like a mirror, and in Scripture we see the Lord as in a glass. The Bible has its storms most terrible, and its calms most restful; it is full of life, even as the sea nourisheth creeping things innumerable, both small and great beasts; it is full of power, even as the sea moveth in the fulness of its strength; there is a captain peculiar light of its own within the Word, as if it were all sun and flame, even as at times the waters are a liquid light, and the waves shine as with ten thousand stars. The wisdom, goodness, power, and infinity of God are all to be seen in the ocean by those who have opened eyes. He who knows God can see his hand in the scales of every little fish. If he takes up a five-finger or a crab, he perceives a master hand in the fashioning of its smallest members. If you take a beautiful needle, however admirably polished, and put it under the microscope, you say to yourself, “A man made this,” for it looks like a rough bar of iron, the microscope finds out its want of finish; but if you take a frill of seaweed, or the eye of a shrimp, and put these under the glass, you exclaim at once, “No man ever made this, no man could have made it. It is perfection.” I shall not go into further details; but I am sure that he who is acquainted with the works of God sees at once that the sea is God’s creature, and in its ever-changing sameness, in its awe-inspiring majesty, in its tremendous force, and unsearchable mystery, its waves and caverns, its calms and storms it tells of a hand invincible, a mind unsearchable. God made the sea: you can mark his wisdom there. Philosophers tell us there is just as much water in the sea as there ought to be, and no more. Perhaps, if there were twice as much sea as we now have, we should not be able to live; and if there were any less, the world would become too dry for human habitation; the land and water balance each other to an ounce and a drop; there can be neither more nor less. Permanent and fixed are the relations and proportions of matter; substances may change their combinations, but of the elements the same amount must abide till all things pass away. That the sea is salt, and therefore does not erupt, that it is moved with tides, and therefore does not stagnate, that it evaporates, and therefore does not increase so as to drown the earth, are all instances of divine wisdom. If its waters were more or less salt than they are, many fishes would die, and the floating power of the ocean would change. There is a relation between the size of the ocean and the

balancing of a dewdrop upon its blade of grass, a proportion between a hurricane and the dancing of a gnat in the summer's sun. The more we study the sea the more shall we say, "Thy way, O Lord, is in the sea and thy path in the great waters."

And certainly no man can deny the power which thunders across the billows. What tremendous forge is there displayed! "The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea than the mighty waves of the sea." When one has seen the damage the sea has wrought upon our coasts, the way in which the hardest rock has been worn away; when one has sadly watched a huge barque tossed to and fro like a plaything, and when one has heard how the hugest vessels are caught in a cyclone, and whirled away like feathers; one bows upon his face before the almighty Lord who rules the sea And yet God's goodness is there as well. The sea is a great benefactor! Where were the clouds, and where the rains, and where our harvests, if it were not for the ocean? The sea feeds myriads with its fish, and enriches many more by its commerce. It was once thought to divide nations, but now it has been the highway by which they communicate, a silver belt by which all lands are bound to one another. England, above all nations, has reason to see the goodness of God in the sea. Perhaps we had not even remained a nation if the silver streak had not separated us from the continent. Most probably we had not been a free nation, or a Protestant nation, if the Lord had not bidden the waters encompass us.

**"O Britain, praise thy mighty God,
And make his honour known abroad;
He bade the ocean round thee flow,
Not bars of brass could guard thee so."**

May God inspire British hearts with gratitude to him for setting old England like a queen in the midst of the sea where she laughs at the tyrant's power.

Every attribute of God shines in the sea although the more spiritual and precious are but dimly seen, these being reserved to be manifested in Christ Jesus the Lord, before whose feet the sea crouched in reverence. Perhaps e'en those attributes will be discovered to be there in same degree when our eyes shall be strengthened to see the glory of the Lord in all his works. Till then who will listen to the sea, and think of it as an —

**"Impassioned orator with lips sublime,
Whose waves are arguments which prove a God."**

God made the sea. I delight to reflect upon this fact, for it brings us so very near to God. Yonder at our feet are the blue waves which he has created. You have certain treasures which you value greatly because they were made by a dear friend, and you say, "Whenever I look at them I seem to feel him near." Thus do God's works make us feel that he is not far from us. Mungo Park, in the deserts of Africa, had his heart cheered by taking up a little bit of mass, and reflecting that God made it, and that the Creator had been there, and was there, watching over the tiny green thing. Come, then, my friend, and stand by the sea and say to yourself, "The sea is his, and he made it. Here is something that my heavenly Father made. He has left his footprints on these waves; he is here still, and his power worketh ever." The palpitating heart of the sea with its perpetual tide, tells of God's present life. Its alternate advance and retreat at his bidding prove his present majesty, for he says, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further."

I trust many of my seafaring friends have often felt near to God when alone upon the vasty deep. God is in Ratcliff Highway, but it is uncommonly hard to find him. We could find fifty devils there in five minutes sooner than find a trace of God; for there is the den of the drunkard, and there is the foul haunt in which men are robbed and ruined, the house of the strange woman, of which Solomon says, "the dead are there, and her guests are in the depths of hell." Far out at sea the sailor is free from the danger of falling tiles and chimney-pots, when the wind is blowing, and he is free also from many a temptation which besets him on shore. Often, I have no doubt, when you have been alone, watching at night, pacing the deck to and fro, and looking up to the bright stem, you have thought, "God is very near me now." I remember, when going to Hamburg, I stood at night with the captain upon the quarter-deck, and suddenly a light seemed to rush down the mast, and light up the rigging and the whole ship such a manner as I never saw before. For an instant the vessel seemed to be on fire, and then the light was gone. "What is that?" I said. "What is that?" said he, for neither of us knew; but we felt awe-struck. Seafaring men meet with them often strange things that we "land lubbers" never dream about. "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep." God seems to come very near to those who are on the waters. When the wind howls, and the sea booms, the noise would suffice to drown a thousand volleys of artillery. "The voice of the Lord is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the Lord is upon, many waters." When men mount up to heaven, and go down again to the deep, then is God present to them, and they cry unto him in their trouble. The sea has often, forged men to exclaim,

"Great God, how infinite art thou!

What worthless worms are we!"

The fact that God made the sea should make us feel more confidence in venturing upon it. We may trust ourselves upon the King's highway: we may go when Jesus went, and where the Lord reigneth: "The Lord sitteth upon the flood; yea the Lord sitteth King for ever." As "all things work together for good to them that love God," there is nothing left to work for evil. The sea cannot destroy these whom God would preserve Even if the sea in its tempestuous mood should take away our lives, what will it do but waft us to the gates of heaven? It is as well to go to glory by water as by land; perchance drowning is an easier death than expiring with broken bones or torturing pains. You who are about to emigrate to Australia or to America and are feeling dreadfully troubled tonight at the thought of the terrible sea should be of good courage. Your Master went to sea and a disciples went with him: they too, were tossed with tempest, and yet their vessel and the other little ships which sailed on the billows of dark Galilee were safe. Our Master, who is Lord High Admiral on the seas, brought all the fleet into harbour safe and sound. He has not given up his rank, or lost his power, and he will save all who sail under a convoy. No tempest or tornado shall wreck a soul that is in his charge.

This ought to make us feel at rest and to those who lie buried beneath the waves. I have heard it said by one or two whom I have known, "I would not have minded, sir, if they could have found the body." I suppose there is something natural about that regret, but I do not greatly sympathize with it. The sea is God's own, and blessed are they who lie in God's most sacred sleeping-place, where no spade of sexton shall ever disturb their bones. Where can any of us lie better than where "pearls lie deep"? What myriads are there already ! When the trump of the resurrection sounds, the sea must give up her dead, and myriads will stand upon the waves, as on a sea of glass, to be judged; and full many of them will rise to their eternal thrones from the caverns of the mighty main. God has but to speak it, and though the bodies may have been devoured by fish, or dissolved into their separate atoms by the perpetual beating of the surf, yet when he speaks it, frames shall be refashioned, life shall come back at his call and our dead men shall live, and in their flesh shall they see God, who, ere they died, had learned to say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

Do not be distressed by the fear of dying at sea. You must die somewhere. Do you know the old story of the man who asked a captain if he was afraid to go to sea ? "I am not," said the mariner, "why should I be?" "Look at the danger," said the landsman. "How did your father die?" "He died at sea" "How did your grandfather die?" "He was lost at sea" "And your great-grandfather?" "Yes," he replied, "I have heard that he, too was drowned at sea" "Surly then, you are afraid to go to sea?" "No," said the captain, "I am not. Where did your father die?" "He died in his bed" "And where did your grandfather die?" "He died in his bed." "And where did your great-grandfather die?" "as far as I know, he also died in his bed." "And yet you are not afraid to go to bed!" There is good, sound reason in such a view of the matter. We shall not die before our time. Our lives are in the divine hands. You may well smile at my tale, and I hope you will keep a gleam of that pleasant look for the next time death stares you in the face, and then say to yourself, "Be still, my heart. If my time has come, I will commit my spirit into the hands of a faithful Creator, and feel that, if I sink, I shall drop into my Father's hand, for he holdeth the waters in the hallow of his hand." Thus much upon that first point, God made the sea

II. Our second point is, God Owns The Sea: "The sea is his, and he made it;" he owns it his right of creation.

It just not everything that a man makes that is his own. Many tradesmen are occupied in making divers articles which, when they have made them, belong to their masters; but that is because the materials are found for them. God made the sea out of nothing, there were no materials ready to his hand to make this world of but his own omnipotence spake it into existence. He filled the sea from his own treasury, the liquid stores were his own. There is not in the sea at this moment a single wave that anybody made but God, and all the constituent elements of it were created by him, and by him only. Therefore he claims the sea from shore to shore, and who shall question his title? Not only did he own it once, but he owns it now; he has never handed over the ocean to any people or nation. David said, "The sea is his," and it is Gods still, and it always will be his sea

But the sea is man's. God evidently meant us to go to sea because, when he made man, almost the first thing he said was that he made him to have dominion over the fish of the sea and I do not see how we can have dominion over the fish of the sea if we never go to sea at all. There are the fish, thousands of miles from the shore, and if no mariner shall ever cross the deep, what dominion can we be said to have over "the fish of the sea and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas."? He made man to be a fisherman as well as to be a farmer; he meant him to plough the waves as well as the plough the shore; in fact, our present race all sprang from one whose huge vessel was the cradle of the new race. Man owns the sea but still the sea is God's. Man is God's viceroy, but God is the true King. Man is tenant under God, and should pay the quit-rent of reverential gratitude and adoration, for the freehold of the sea remaineth with the Lord. There may be a victory in India or in Ireland, but India and Ireland are still the Queen's; and so man may have dominion over the fish of the sea but it is a delegated sovereignty, the sea is still the Lord's.

Old ocean does not belong to Neptune, as the heathen used to say; Father Neptune is an idle dream. The idolaters parcelled out the various kingdoms among their deities: one should rule the heavens, another the clouds, another the earth, and another the sea; but we know that there is one God alone. The sea is Jehovah's, and not Neptune's.

Though we sometimes sing, "Rule Britannia Britannia rules the waves," the words are not true; Jehovah rules the waves, and not Britannia. There is a sense in which the patriotic song expresses a great truth, and I have not a word to say against it; but we all know that we may be on board Britannia's biggest ship of war, but the Union Jack cannot save us in the time of tempest. Jehovah must then; intence, and bid the billows sleep. "The sea is his, and he made it."

I sometimes feel very glad when I look at the sea and think that it belongs to the great and generous God, and not to greedy man. Here upon land every foot of earth is enclosed by somebody, and jealously guarded from trespassers. The village had a breezy common, upon which a poor man might at least keep a goose; but the great folks could never rest till every inch was put within hedges, and made their own. You can scarcely walk anywhere without being met by "Trespassers, Beware." Mountains and hills, which everybody ought to be allowed to climb without leave, are fenced in and kept from all intruders. Men fight for years over a yard of ground that is my lord's, and this is my lady's, and this is copyhold of the manor. "The heaven, even the heaven of heavens, is the Lord's, but the earth hath he given to the children of men," and they scramble for it, and divide it among themselves. No such greed can appropriate the sea. The free sea cannot be paralleled out, nor hedged, nor ditched, nor dyked, nor walled. It has no lords of the manor, but remains free and unappropriated for ever. "The sea is his, and he made it." According to law, a few miles from the shore the sea belongs to the country which borders on it; but once reach the main ocean, and nationalities are forgotten. The sea is neither English nor French, Dutch nor American. No baroque is a trespasser there. No one ever thought of impounding stray whales for going out of their owner's fields. The pastures of the deep are for all fish; they may feed where they will, from shore to shore.

"The sea is his," and this begets in you a joyous sense of liberty, as though for once you were beyond bounds, and, like a sea-bird, feared no cage or fowler's snare. Oh, for a bound from billow to billow of the unpolluted main, where sail of man has never been seen, or voice of blasphemy ever heard! Who can hinder our liberated spirit as it dances on the wave, or dives beneath it? May we always wear that free spirit about us, even in these huddled homes and narrow streets! Let us not be grasping, mean, narrow; let us not hedge in all things unto ourselves, but desire that others may share in our blessings. May who have largeness of heart as the sand which is on the seashore, and greatness of love comparable to the immeasurable sea!

"The sea is his," then: this sentence puts all other claimants out of court. The sea is the Lord's, and therefore he ought to be revered on it. Hush! hush! What are you at man? Swearing at God on his own sea! Stop till you get on land, and when you reach the shore, stop till you can find a place where God is not near you, for to swear at him to his face is madness. Will you insult God on his own sea? No, surely. If the sea is his, you will mind what you are at. When a man is out in the street, when he wanders about as he pleases, he may often take many liberties; but if he is invited to a friend's house, he does not like to be too boisterous and noisy, but minds his manners. If any of us were invited to dinner with the Queen, I am sure we should feel quite nervous, and ask of our friends, "Jack, how do you behave when you go into a palace? What is the way of doing it?" You would all be anxious to be proper and wellbehaved. On the sea it seems to me that you should be particularly careful of what you say and do for you are on God's premises. In as much as he can hear you think, mind what you think about. On the sea you are inside God's house; be holy then, "for holyness becometh his house for ever." There is the throng of the great King, and around it is a pavement of crystal, I mean, the glassy sea and you sailors should think of yourselves as God's courtiers; permitted to come very near him, and to behold men of his glory than any other men. Oh, that you may be led to think of your position in this light!

I wish you would think highly of your honourable calling. When a man thinks that his calling necessitates his big wicked, he is sure to be wicked; but when he judges that he is under obligation to be holy, peradventure he will desire to be so, and God's grace will help him to be so. He you who do business on God's own sea fly away from his royal domain if you resolve to rebel against him. Do not dare to sin to his face. But where shall you go? If you take the wings of the morning, and fly to the urmb ps of the sea you are still within his courts.

There is yet another view of the matter; the sea is the Lord's, and therefore I may confess my sin to him when I am out on the ocean, and he will hear me, for he is there; I may weep the tear of penitence, and he will see me, for God is there. Out at sea I may cry, "My Father," and he will hear his child. Brother, you may find Jesus at sea for he was at home on the wave, and a companion of seafaring men. The lake of Galilee was familiar with his voice, and saw his answer to the prayer, "Lord, save, or I perish." The sea around you waits to hear you pray, and to sea God's wonders on the deep.

Something calls for a repetition of that "hush" which I gave just now, in the thought that "the sea is his," for God reveals himself through the sea, therefore gaze with awe. I have not the slightest doubt that many a man has learned much of God on the ocean, although as yet he knows not the Redeemer and his salvation wish every sailor would daily read the Bible, which is our chart to heaven; but many, who have neglected that blessed Book, have found lessons of warning, ay, and lessons of hope, in the rolling wave. O hear the voice of God in the storm! Be warned as you escape from the jaws of death! Have hope as you cling to the rock! The sea is God's; take care that, when you fly over its hallowed surface, you read Jehovah's Book, bow before his throne, trust in his Son, and offer to him continual thanksgiving.

It seems to me that, as the sea is God's, then sailors should be his too, or they are trespassers. A man feeds his own sheep in his own pastures, and would not God have his own mariners on his own sea? Moreover, if God owns the sea because he made it, he owns you, because he made you too. You are his creature, and by all the rights of creatorship you belong to him. He claims you; will you dispute the claim? I would not like to think of you as a blot upon the fair face of ocean. God is looking over all the waters, and seeing the white sails and the smoking funnels that even now are passing from shore to shore, and he is saying, "The sea is all mine, but those men who breast the storm are not mine. I preserve them, but they never think of me. I have sent salvation to them, but they will not hear it. The fish and the bird know their seasons, but man rebels against me." I cannot bear to think that it should be so. I long for the day when every ship upon the sea shall be an ark, and every sailor a Noah.

What are some of you sailors at? Why, there are many of you whom I would trust with anything: I would not count my gold, but trust you with my purse, I am so sure that you would bring it back safely. You hate dishonesty, and would not tell a lie. You speak out bravely, and fear no man, and yet some of you rob God. You pay your debt to everybody most freely, but not to your Maker. You owe him most, and yet think of him least. Is not this wrong? See that child! They say he is very good to the servants and to strangers, but he always puts on a show he sees his father, for he cannot bear him. Would you like to be the father of such a child? Yet you are like him. You are capital fellows on board a ship, capital man on shore too when you get among your families, and yet reward God you act shamefully. May the Spirit of God lead you to feel that you are wrong, and when you feel it, may you have grace to talk about, and or prove another point!

A little while ago, a vessel picked up a man far out at sea in an open boat; he was unconscious; the oars were lying by his side, and he had evidently drifted from off the beach, carried by a current right away from help. I wonder whether any man here is drifting right away; out of sight of land, drifting on and on! Ah, Jack, when you were a boy, you went with your mother to the little chapel in the village. Do you recollect that you were in the Sunday-school? You loved to worship with your mother, who is now in heaven; but you went away from home, and you went away from God too! You have been pretty nearly round the world; do you remember the places where you have landed only to plunge into sin? Oh, you forget, do you? I must tell you then, that God did not forget, and your own conscience does not forget, for the sin is on your soul today. You have drifted, drifted, drifted. How long is it since you read a chapter of the Bible? How long since you bowed your knee in prayer? You have drifted very far out. To wish this full-rigged ship of mine, which has just come within sight of you, might pick you up. At any rate, I hail you from this quarterdeck, and if you are not quite unconscious, I hope you will hear the call. Poor shipmate, we would like to get you up the ship's side! Some of my men will be better you in the boats directly, for there are true hearts here that love to rescue the perishing. If one of them comes all, just know that he is a friend, and that he comes in the name of Jesus, "mighty to save." May the Lord Jesus come himself and put out his hand to so sinking Peter, and save him from a watery grave! Amen.

I wonder where the training ship "Atalanta" now is! Where are the other vessels which have been missed so long? We have reason to fear that they are lost! Fine vessels, and yet lost! Hundreds on board, and all lost! We cannot bear to think of it. If they are lost, it will be of no use to go after them; the swiftest vessel cannot overtake them, and the sharpest lookout will never see them. They are beyond hope; but what a mercy it is that you are not! If it had not been for the mighty hand of God last voyage, you would not only have been lost at sea my friend, but lost for ever. To be lost at sea, if the soul is safe, is but a small calamity; but to lose the soul is to lose all. It were good for that man that he had never been born. Blessed be God, you are not in hell yet! You are not shut out from mercy yet; Jesus Christ still flies the mercy-signed, and his servant still cries to you, "Come, come, come to Jesus. Come and welcome, come and put your trust in the Saviour." May his gracious Spirit lead you to do so! Recollect, wherever you are, on whatever sea you may sail, the sea is his. His grace reaches to the uttermost. The shipwrecked soul is still within the reach of mercy; if God do but lead it to cry to him out of the lowest depths, he will hear the voice of supplication.

III. I now invite you to the third and concluding point, "O Come, Let Us Worship And Bow Down."

You of the land, and you of the sea, let us together worship the Lord our God. It is no new work for one of us, for our life is spent in worship; but oh, if it be a new thing with any man here, I would gently take him by the hand, and say, "Come, friend, let us worship and bow down, let us do it together. You are a sinner, so am I; you have no merits, and I have none; if ever you are saved, it will be by grace alone, and so it will be in my case. Jesus must be your only hope, and he is mine. 'O come, let us worship.'"

Have you never worshipped God? Then, sit still in the pew, and do it. Say, "My God, thou hast made me, teach me how to worship thee." Shall I stop a minute while you ask pardon for Jesus' sake? (Pause.)

This is the last thing I have to say. I recollect a man, an old sailor, who had been a great blasphemer; he was a regular old salt; but there was no salt of grace in him, for he hated religion. He heard the gospel, the Lord brought him to his knees, broke his heart, gave him deep conviction of sin, and afterwards led him to look to Christ, and trust him, and find salvation. When this weather-beaten mariner came forward to join the church, he said, "I am come to get on the register, for I have got a new Owner; I used to

carry the black flag at the masthead, and there was not a timber in me but what belonged to the devil. I carried many a cargo and sailed over many a sea for him; but now I belong to Jesus from stern to stern, and I want to run up the blood-red flag of Christ, what has bought me for his own. I want you to register me under my new Owner, and let me sail with those who belong to him." We were glad enough to register him in the church-book. The first point is to get the Owner, the Lord Jesus and then to own him before all the world.

You Christian sailors, wherever you go, show your flag! A dear man of God, a captain, was baptized here last Thursday night, and he told me that twenty or more of his crew were converted on the last voyage out. He said, "We cannot make Christians of them, but we give them an opportunity every day of hearing the gospel, and, blessed be God, many have found the Saviour." Captains, mind you look to your crews, and don't have their blood on your skirts through your neglect. If you are not captain, if you have any influence at all, carry the gospel wherever you go. I believe if you are nothing but a cabin boy you can speak a word for Jesus Christ, if you have Jesus Christ in your hearts; and then others will say, "Why, that boy shames us, for he loves the Saviour." Though they may scoff at you, and pretend to despise you, it will make a hole in their consciences, depend upon it. If you drop a lighted match down anybody's neck, he may say it is a small bit of timber, and laugh at it, but he will know it is there before long. If you get on fire with the love of God, if you are placed in the company of others, you may be very small and despised, but they will soon discover the heavenly flame. Only you must mind that you are really alight, and that the true fire is in your spirit; for an empty profession will only make religion a mockery. God bless you and bless the Society ! (A voice: "Amen.") You said, "Amen." Well, there is to be a collection, and so I hope you will carry out your amen in a practical way, and bless the Society by contributing to it as you are able.

Psalm 96:1-3 The New Song and the Old Story

NO. 2850

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"O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the earth. Sing unto the LORD, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people." — Psalm 116:1-3.

There are mighty passions of the human soul which seek vent, and can get no relief until they find it in expression. Grief, acute, but silent, has often destroyed the mind, because it has not been able to weep itself away in tears. The glow of passion, fond of enterprise and full of enthusiasm, has often seemed to rend the very fabric of manhood when unable either to attain its end or to utter its strong desires. So it is in true religion. It not only lays hold upon our intellectual nature with appeals to our judgment and our understanding, but, at the same time, it engages our affections, brings our passions into play, and fires them with a holy zeal, producing a mighty furor; so that, when this spell is on a man, and the Spirit of God thoroughly possesses him, he must express his vehement emotions.

Some professors of religion are ingenious enough to conceal whatever grace they possess. Little enough they have, I warrant you, or it would soon be discovered. Have you never seen the brooks that were wont to come down the hillsides, filled up with stones through the greater part of the summer? You wonder whether there is any streamlet there at all. You may go and search among the rounded stones, and scarcely find a trace of water. How different after the snows have melted, or the mists upon the mountain brows have turned to showers! Then the water comes rushing down like a mighty torrent, nor is there any question about its being a genuine stream. It shows itself as it rolls the great stones along, peradventure breaking down the banks, and overflowing the country. So there is a religion a poor, miserable, ordinary Christianity which is not worth the name it bears, that can hide itself; but vital godliness must assert itself, it must speak plainly, it must act vigorously, it must appear conspicuously. The cross reveals the hearts of men, it unveils their true character. Till the cross was set up, Joseph of Arimathaea was scarcely known to be a disciple, and Nicodemus continued to do habitually what he once did literally, resort to Jesus by night. Openly he remained in the Sanhedrim, though secretly he was a profound admirer of the great Redeemer. But when the cross was lifted up, Joseph went boldly in, with senatorial authority, and obtained the body of Jesus for burial, and Nicodemus came out with well-timed liberality to provide his hundred pounds of spices, and his fair white linen. Thus the cross reveals the thoughts of many hearts. If you have real grace and true love to Jesus in your soul, you will want some way of expressing yourselves. Our purpose therefore now is, to suggest to you two modes of expressing your consecration to God, and your devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ. These two methods are to sing about and to talk about the good things the Lord has done for you, and the great things he has made known to you. Let sacred song take the lead: "O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless his name." Then let gracious discourse follow; be it in public sermons or in private conversations: "Shew forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people."

All ye, who love the Lord, give vent to your heart's emotion by holy song, and take care that it be sung to the Lord alone. What a noble instrument the human voice is! What a compass it has! Its low, soft whispers, how they can hold us spellbound; its full volume, as it peals forth like thunder, how it can startle and produce dismay! What profanity, then, to use such an instrument in the service of sin! Is not our tongue the glory of our frame? Had I no conscientious objection to instrumental music in worship, I should still, I think, be compelled to admit that all the instruments that were ever devised by men, however sweetly attuned, are harsh and grating compared with the unparalleled sweetness of the human voice. When it is naturally melodious and skilfully trained, (and every true worshipper should be zealous to dedicate his richest talent and his highest acquirement to this sacred service,) there can be no music under heaven that can equal the combination of voices which belong to men, women, and children whose hearts really love the Savior. So sweet, so enchanting is the melody of song, that, surely, its best efforts should not be put forth to celebrate martial victories or national jublations, much less should it lend its potent charm to aught that is trivial or lascivious. By sacred right, its highest beauties should be consecrated to Jehovah. If thou canst sing, sing the songs of Zion. If God has gifted thee with a sweet, liquid voice, be sure and use it to render homage unto him who cried out for thee upon the cross, "It is finished." "Sing unto the Lord."

How much public singing, even in the house of God, is of no account! How little of it is singing unto the Lord! Does not the conscience of full many among you bear witness that you sing a hymn because others are singing it? You go right straight through with it by a kind of mechanical action. You cannot pretend that you are singing unto the Lord. He is not in all your thoughts. Have you not been at places of worship where there is a trained choir evidently singing to the congregation? Tunes and tones are alike arranged for popular effect. There is an artistic appeal to human passions. Harmony is attended to; homage is neglected. That is not what God approves of. I recollect a criticism upon a certain minister's prayers. It was reported, in the newspaper, that he uttered the finest prayer that had ever been offered to a Boston audience! I am afraid there is a good deal of vocal and instrumental music of the same species. It may be the finest praise ever offered to a congregation; but, surely, that is not what we come together for. If you want the sensual gratification of music's melting, mystic lay, let me commend to you the concert-room, there you will get the enchanting ravishment; but when ye come to the house of God, let it be to "sing unto the Lord." As ye stand up to sing, there should be a fixed intent of the soul, a positive volition of the mind, an absolute determination of the heart, that all the flame which kindles in your breast, and all the melody that breaks from your tongue, and all the sacred swell of grateful song shall be unto the Lord, and unto the Lord alone.

And if you would sing unto the Lord, let me recommend you to flavour your mouth with the gospel doctrines which savor most of grace unmerited and free. Any other form of theology would tempt us more or less to chant the praise of men. Gratitude has full play when we come to know that salvation is of the Lord alone, and that mercy is divinely free. He, who hath once heard the echo of that awful thunder, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy; and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion," will learn to rejoice with trembling, to sing with deep feeling, and to adore, with lowliest reverence, the great Supreme, to whom might and majesty belong, and from whom grace and goodness flow. Human counsels and conceits sink into insignificance, for thoughts of lovingkindness and deeds of renown belong unto the Lord alone.

Kindly glance your eye down the Psalm from which our text is taken, and note how the exhortation to sing is given three times. I draw no absolute inference from this peculiar construction; but, to say the least, it is remarkable that the number three is so continually employed. Further down in the same Psalm it is written, "Give unto the Lord," "Give unto the Lord," "Give unto the Lord," three times. Is there not here some kind of allusion to the wondrous doctrine of the Trinity, At any rate, I make bold to use the threefold cord to express the homage with which it behoves us to adore the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. As for Unitarianism, it is a religion of units, and I suppose it always will be. There is no danger of its ever spreading very widely. It is cold as a moonlight night, though scarcely as clear. It has not enough of power in it to fire men's heart to land and magnify the Lord. It produces now and then a hymn, but it cannot kindle the passions of men to sing it with fervor and devout enthusiasm. Certainly, it cannot gather a crowd of grateful people, who will make a joyful noise unto the Lord, and with all their heart and voice shout the chorus of gratitude. O beloved, I beseech you to let your souls have vent in praise! Sing, often, such a verse as this,

"Bless'd be the Father, and his love,

To whose celestial source we owe

Rivers of endless joy above,

And rills of comfort here below."

Praise the God of glory, who loved you before the foundation of the world. Praise the God of grace, who called you when you sought him not. Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, our Heavenly Father, who provides for us, educates us, instructs us, leads and guides us, and will bring us, by-and-by, to the many mansions in his own house.

Sing ye also unto the Son. Never fail to adore the Son of God, who left the royalties of heaven to bear the indignities of earth. Adore the Lamb slain. Kneel at the cross-foot, and praise each wound, and magnify the Immortal who became mortal for our sakes.

“Glory to thee, great Son of God! From whose dear wounded body rolls A precious stream of vital blood Pardon and life for dying souls.”

And, then, sing ye to the Holy Spirit Let us never fail in praising him; I am afraid we often do. We forget him too much in our sermons, our prayers, and our hymns; or we mention him, perhaps, as a matter of course, with formal expressions rather than with feelings of the most intense fervor. Oh, how our hearts are bound reverently to worship the Divine Indweller who, according to his abundant mercy, hath made our bodies to be his temple wherein he deigns to dwell!

“We give thee, saved Spirit, praise,

Who in our hearts of sin and woe

Makes living springs of grace arise,

And into boundless glory flow.”

Praise ye, with your songs, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the Triune God of Israel. Have you understood this? To Jehovah let your song be addressed. Thrice be his holy name repeated.

Then, be careful of the psalmist’s instructions; let the song that you sing be a new song. “O sing unto the Lord a new song!” Not the song of your old legal bondage, which you used to sing so tremblingly, with the dread of a slave; a new and nobler song becomes you who are the Lord’s children, his sons and daughters: O sing unto the Lord a new song!” To some of you the song of redemption is quite new. Once, you sang the songs of Bacchus or of Venus, or else you hummed over some light air, without meaning or motive, unless to while away your time, and drive away all serious thoughts. O you, who used so readily to sing the songs of Babylon, sing now the songs of Zion quite as freely and earnestly!” Sing unto the Lord a new song.”

By a “new” song, is meant the best song. It is put for that which is most elegant, most exquisite, and best composed. Pindar says, “Give me old wine, but give me a new song.” So may we say, “Give us the old wines of the kingdom of God, but let us sing unto the Lord a new song,” the best that we can find, no borrowed air, no hackneyed lyric; and let our spirits sing unto the Lord that which wells up fresh out of the quickened heart. A new song, always new; keep up the freshness of your praise. Do not drivel down into dull routine. The drowsy old clerks in the dreary old churches used always to say, “Let us sing to the praise and glory of God such-and-such a psalm,” till I should think the poor old Tate and Brady version was pretty well used up. We have new mercies to celebrate, therefore we must have new songs.

“Blest be his love who now hath set

New time upon the score.”

With “new time upon the score,” let there be new notes for him who renews the face of nature. And have not we, dear brethren and sisters, new graces? Then let us sing with our new faith, and our new love, and our new hope. Some of you have very lately been made new creatures in Christ Jesus; sing ye unto the Lord a new song. Surely he hath done great things for you, whereof you are glad. Others of you have been converted for years; yet, if your inward man be renewed day by day, your praises shall be always new. Luther used to say that the wounds of Christ seemed to him to bleed to-day as if they had never bled before, for he found such freshness in his Master. You pluck a flower, and it soon loses its scent, and begins to wither; but our sweet Lord Jesus has a savor about his name that never departs. We take his name to lie like a bundle of camphire all night betwixt our breasts, and in the morning it smells as sweet as when we laid us down to sleep; and when we come to die, that Lily of the valleys will drop with the same profusion as it did when, with our youthful hand, we first plucked it, and came to Jesus, and gave him all our trust. “Sing unto the Lord a new song.” Let the freshness of your joy and the fullness of your thanks be perennial as the days of heaven.

This song, according to our text, is designed to be universal: “Sing unto the Lord all the earth.” Let sires and sons mingle in its strains. Let not the aged among you say, “Our voices are cracked;” but sing to the Lord with all the voice you have, and all the compass you can. And you young people, give the Lord the highest notes you are able to reach Still sing unto the Lord, ye that are rich; sing unto the Lord who has saved you, for it is not many of your sort that he saves.

“Gold and the gospel seem to ill agree:

Religion always sides with poverty,”

said John Bunyan, and he spoke the truth Sing unto the Lord, ye poor ones whom the Lord has favored, for still does it happen that “the poor have the gospel preached unto them.” Sing unto him, ye who are learned in many matters. Let your talents make your

song more full of understanding. And you who are unlearned, if you cannot put so much of understanding into the song, put more of the spirit, and sing with all the more heartiness. All the earth should sing. There is not one of us but has cause for song, and certainly not one saint but ought specially to praise the name of the Lord. You remember that passage in the hundred and seventh Psalm (it is worth noticing), where the psalmist says, "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy," as if they, above all others, ought to say, "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever."

In addition to its being a new song, and a universal one, it is to be a very inspiration of gratitude: "Sing unto the Lord: bless his name." How apt you are, in speaking of anyone who has been kind to you, to say, "God bless him!" The expression comes right up from your heart. And although you cannot invoke any blessing on God, you can desire for his name every blessing and every tribute of homage. You can desire for his cause that it may be established, and may be triumphant. You may desire for his people that they may be helped, made holy, and guided to their eternal rest. You may desire for mankind that they may hallow God's holy name, and all because you feel you owe so much to the Lord that you cannot help praising, and cannot help wishing that your praise should be fruitful on earth and acceptable in heaven.

In two ways, methinks, it becomes us to sing God's praises. We ought to sing with the voice. I do not consider we sing enough to God. The poet speaks of "angel harp and human voice." If the angel harp be more skillful, surely the human voice is more grateful. For my part, I like to hear sacred songs in all sorts of places. The maidservant can sing at her work, and the carter as he drives his team. The occupations are few which could not be enlivened by repeating the words, and running over the tune of a hymn. If it were only in a faint whisper, the habit might be cultivated. You might expose yourselves, it is true, to a taunt, and be upbraided as "a psalm-singing Methodist," but that would not do you any hurt, better that than make a ribald jest or utter an impious blasphemy. Those who lend their tongues to such vile uses have something to be ashamed of. Lovers of pleasure sing their songs; and poor trash, for the most part, they are. If the snatches we catch in the streets are the echoes of the saloon and the music-hall, little credit is due to those who cater for public amusement. Lacking alike in sense and sentiment, they betray the degeneracy of the times, and the depravity of popular taste. There is a literature of song in which peasants may rejoice, of which patriots may be proud, and to which poets may turn with envious eyes. Why wed your pretty tunes to paltry words. The higher the art, the more the pity to debase it. If you cull over our hymn-books for samples of bad poetry, loose-rhyme, and puerile thoughts, that reviewers like to revile, and libertines like to laugh at, we can only say, "Well, we cannot always vindicate the culture of those whose sincerity we hold in the highest esteem; but ye will dare to confront you on equal terms — the sanctuary versus the saloon — our vocalists against your vocalists, from the sacred oratorios of Handel to the choicest of your operas, from the cant of our revival hymns to the catch of your last sensational songs. Yes, indeed, the people of God should sing more. Were we to try the exercise, we should find no small degree of pleasure in the practice. It would do us good to praise God more day by day. When we get together, two or three of us, we are in the habit of saying, "Let us pray." Might we not sometimes say, "Let us sing." We have our regular prayer-meetings, why do we not have praise-meetings just as often?

"Prayer and praise for sins forgiven

Make up on earth the bliss of heaven."

We are like a bird that has only one wing. There is much prayer, but there is little praise.

"Sing unto the Lord. Sing unto the Lord."

To sing with the heart, is the very essence of song.

"In the heavenly Lamb thrice happy I am

And my heart it doth leap at the sound of his name.

Though the tongue may not be able to express the language of the soul, the heart is glad. Some persons seem never to sing with their heart. Their lips move, but their heart does not beat. In their common daily life, they move about as if they had been born on a dark winter's night, and carried the cold chill into all their concerns. The lamentation they constantly utter is this, "All these things are against me." Their experience is comprised in this sentence, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." They never get into the harbour. "In me ye shall have peace," is a secret they have never realized. They are fond of calling this world a howling wilderness, and they are utterly oblivious of its orchards and vineyards. Were God to put them in the garden of Eden, they would not take any notice of the fruit or the flowers. They would go straight away to the serpent, and begin saying, "Ah, there's a snake here!" Their harp is hung on the willows; they never can sing, for their heart is unstrung.

Well, dear friends, a Christian man ought to be like a horse that has bells on his head, so that he cannot go anywhere without ringing them, and making music. His whole life should be a psalm; every step should be in harmony; every thought should constitute a note; every word he utters should be a component part of the joyful strain. It is a blessed thing to see a Christian going

about his business like the high priest of old who, wherever he went, made music with the golden bells. Oh, to have a cheerful spirit, not the levity of the thoughtless, nor the gaiety of the foolish, nor c-yen the mirth of the healthy, there is a cheerful spirit, which is the gift of grace, that can and does rejoice evermore. Then, when troubles come we bear them cheerfully; let fortune smile, we receive it with equanimity; or let losses befall us, we endure them with resignation, being willing, so long as God is glorified, to accept anything at his hands. These are the people to recommend Christianity. Their cheerful conversation attracts others to Christ. As for those people who are morose or morbid, sullen or severe, harsh in their judgment of their fellow-men, or rebellious against the will of God, people of a covetous disposition, a peevish temper, and a quarrelsome character, unto them it is of no use to say, "O sing unto the Lord," for they will never do it. They have not any bells in the tower of their heart; what chimes can they ring? Their harps have lost their strings; how can they magnify the Most High? But genuine piety finds expression in jubilant song; this is the initiative, though it is far from exhausting its resources.

II. Now, in the second place, let me stir you up, especially you who are members of this church, to such Daily Conversation and such Habitual Discourse as shall be fitted to spread the gospel which you love.

Our text admonishes you to "show forth his salvation." You believe in the salvation of God, — a salvation all of grace from first to last. You have seen it; you have received it; you have experienced it. Well, now, show it forth. Explain it to others, and with the explanation let there be an illustration; exemplify it by your lives. God has shone upon you with the light of his countenance, that you may reflect his brightness, and irradiate others. Every Christian here is like the moon, which shines with borrowed light. But the sun lends not his bright rays to be hoarded up. It is that they may scatter beams of brightness over this world of night. Take care, then, that you are faithful to your trust. Show forth his salvation. God knows that I try to do so from the pulpit; I wish that you would all try and do so from the pews. Are you lacking in opportunities? I trow not. Before and after service, especially to strangers and such as may have been induced to come and hear the gospel, speak a word in season; thoughtfully, prayerfully, softly, talk with them.

Show forth this salvation, too, in your own houses, or on your visits, or wherever your lot may happen in God's providence to be cast. It is wonderful how God blesses little efforts, very little efforts. I have sometimes I am sorry to say not as often as I ought, scattered seed by the wayside. Only a few nights ago, I had been driven by a cabman, and after I had alighted, and given him the fare, he took a little Testament out of his pocket, and said, "It is about fifteen years ago since you gave me that, and said a word to me about my soul, and it has stuck by me, and I have not let a day pass since without reading it." I felt glad. I know that, if Christian people would try and show forth God's salvation, they would often be surprised to find how many hearts would gladly receive it.

Beloved, show forth this salvation from day to day. Let it not be merely on a Sunday. While you hold that day as specially sacred, let no other day be common or unclean. We are thankful for the kindly efforts put forth, in the Sunday-school and elsewhere, on our Sabbaths; but we want Christian activity to be put forth from day to day. Let your zeal for the conversion of your fellow-creatures be continuous. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good." The result of the Sabbath work may, perhaps, not be seen by you, when the result of Monday's work may very speedily appear.

"Show forth his salvation from day to day." This admonition is enforced in three clauses; so let us notice the second. "Declare his glory among the heathen;" It is the same thing in another form. When you are telling out the gospel, point especially to the glory of it. Show them the justice of the great substitution, and the mercy of it. Show them the wisdom which devised the plan whereby, without a violation of the law, God could yet pardon rebellious sinners. Impress upon those, whom you talk with, that the gospel you have to tell them of is no common-place system of expediency, but really it is a glorious revelation of divinity. You know men are very much attracted by aught of glory and renown. They will even rush to the cannon's mouth for so-called glory. Now, be sure, when you are talking to others about the salvation you have received at the hands of your dear Lord and Master, that you tell them about the glory thereof, what a glory it brings to Christ, and to what a glory it will bring every sinner by-and-by. Tell them of the glory of being pardoned, the glory of being accepted, the glory of being justified, the glory of being sanctified. Is it not all "according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus"? Methinks you might relate some scenes from the death-beds of the saints you have known, on which rays of glory have fallen; but I am sure you might anticipate the glory, which words cannot picture, or imagination realize, in the second advent of the Lord Jesus, the resurrection of the just, and the establishment of the everlasting kingdom. Dwell upon these things Declare his glory.

And do not be ashamed to do this in the presence of people of a disreputable character, though their ignorance and degradation be never so palpable: "Declare his glory among the heathen." "I am going on a mission to the heathen," said a minister once to his people. Mistaking his meaning, they went home deploring the loss of their pastor. On the following Sunday, when they found him in the pulpit, they discovered that he had not been out of the city all the week; and when they wanted to know what parts he had visited, and what people he had seen, he reminded them that he had heathens at home, and they were to be found even in his own

congregation. Ah, and there may be some heathens here! At any rate, there are plenty of heathens in this great city of London. I have no doubt there are parts of this metropolis in which hundreds, and even thousands, of people reside who are as ignorant of the plan of salvation as the inhabitants of Coomassie. They know nothing of Jesus, even though the light is so bright around them. "Declare his glory among the heathen," ye lovers of Christ. Penetrate into these dark places: break up fresh ground, Christian men and women. I am persuaded, and this is a matter I have often spoken of, that many of you, who sit and hear sermons on the Sunday, ought rather to turn out, and preach the gospel. While we are glad to see you occupying pews, it will be a greater joy to miss you from your wonted seats, if we only know that you are declaring God's glory among the heathen. I am not sure that we are all of us right to be living cooped up in this little island of ours. There are, in England, enough disciples of Jesus to bear the gospel to the uttermost ends of the earth; but perhaps there is not one Christian in five or ten thousand who ever deliberately thinks about going to the heathen to make known to them the way of salvation, and to declare the glory of the Lord among those who have never heard his name. Pray that there may yet come a wonderful wave of God's Spirit over our churches, which shall bear upon its crest hundreds of ardent spirits resolved to carry the tidings of redemption to the jungle and the fever-swamp, to the high latitudes and the southern islands. Oh, that the love of Christ may constrain them! Know ye not that Christ has determined to save men by the preaching of the gospel? Has he not charged his disciples to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature? How poorly has his Church carried out this commission! If you do love Christ, here is the opportunity for you to show your love; go and declare his glory among the heathen.

A third expression is used here. "Declare his wonders among all people." Our gospel is a gospel of wonders. It deals with wonderful sin in a wonderful way. It presents to us a wonderful Savior, and tells us of his wonderful complex person. It points us to his wonderful atonement, and it takes the blackest sinner, and makes him wonderfully clean. It makes him a new creature, and works a wonderful change in him. It conducts him to wonders of happiness, and wonders of strength, and yet onward to greater wonders of light and life; for it opens up to him the wonders of the covenant. It gives him wonderful provisions, wonderful deliverances, and leads him right up, by the power of him who is called Wonderful, to the gates of that Wonderland where we shall for ever

"Sing, with rapture and surprise,

His lovingkindness in the skies."

Surely, dear Christian friends, we ought to talk about the wonders of the Lord our God, and especially should we dwell upon those wonders which we have ourselves seen. Of every Christian man, it might be said that he is a wonder. Will you think a minute, Christian, of the wonder that God has made of you, and the wonders that he has done for you? "That ever I should be," is a wonder; will you not say that? and then, "That ever I should be saved, is a wonder of wonders." That you should have been kept till now, that you should not have been suffered to go back, that you should have been preserved under so many troubles, that your prayers should have been heard so continuously, that, notwithstanding your ill manners, the love of Christ should still have remained the same; oh, but I cannot recite the tale of marvels; it is a long series of wonders! The Christian man's life, if the worldling could understand it, would seem to him like a romance. The wonders of grace far exceed the wonders of nature; and of all the miracles God himself has ever wrought, there are no miracles so matchless in wonder as the miracles of grace in the heart of man. Beloved, declare these miracles, these wonders; tell them to others. Men like to hear a tale of wonder; they will gather round the fire, at eventide, when the logs are burning, and delightedly listen to a story of wonder. When you go home, young man, for your next holiday, if God has converted you, tell what great things the Lord has done for you. And when you go home, Mary, and see your mother, if the Lord has met with you, tell her what the Lord has done for you. "Declare his wonders among all people." Do not be afraid of speaking about the gospel to anybody or in any company. Whoever they may be, whether they be rich or poor, high or low, if you get an opportunity of declaring the wonders of God's grace, do not let the gospel be unknown for want of a tongue to tell it.

So, you see, I have put before you these two outlets for your love, first, sacred song; and, secondly, gracious discourse. Be sure to use them both; and if any bid you hold your peace, shall I tell you the answer? Use the same answer which your Master did to the Pharisees when they complained of the shouts of the little children: "If these should hold their tongues, the very stones would cry out." Ordinary Christians may be quiet because God has done nothing very wonderful for them. They go through the world in a very ordinary kind of way. Their religion is skin-deep, and no more. But those, who know that they deserved the deepest hell, and who have been saved by a mighty effort of infinite mercy, must tell what God has done for them. They must come out from the world, and be separate. They must be decided, zealous, and even enthusiastic. Necessity is laid upon them to be earnest and intense in all they do and in all they say. They cannot help it, for the love of Jesus will fire their souls with a passion that cannot be quenched. "We thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not live henceforth unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." God help you, beloved, thus to live!

As for those of you who have never found the Savior, you cannot tell of his excellence or publish his worth; but I do trust that you will not forget that Jesus is to be found by those who seek him, for whosoever believeth on him shall be saved. Take him at his word. Rely on his promise. Trust him. Commit your soul into his keeping. Cast yourself unfeignedly and unreservedly on his mercy. He will not spurn you; but he will receive you graciously, and you shall yet praise him, and he will be the health of your countenance

and your God.

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