

Spurgeon on Psalms-Pt7

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Psalms 32-100 - Today in the Word Devotionals

Psalms 102-150 - Today in the Word Devotionals

C. H. Spurgeon Sermons on Psalms Part 7

Psalm 102:6 103:5 Owl or Eagle?

NO. 2860

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“Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” — Psalm 103:6.

IN the 102nd Psalm, the believer likens himself to an owl, and in the 103rd Psalm, in almost the parallel verse, he is compared to an eagle. What a blessing it is that the saints of God, in the olden times, were moved by the Holy Spirit to write down their experiences, and what a mercy it is that they wrote them out so fully! They have not given us miniatures so much as full-length portraits. Especially was this the case with David; again and again, he draws himself to the very life. Possibly, if left to himself, he would have omitted from his autobiography some of his faults and failings, as well as the grosser sins of his life; but he was under the guidance of the Spirit of God and therefore he has shown us his true self, infirmities iniquities, and all that he was. It is related of Oliver Cromwell that, when his portrait was about to be painted by an eminent artist, the painter desired to conceal the wart upon the Protector's face; but the true hero said, "Paint me just as I am, wart and all." In a similar style, David, the champion and hero of Israel, in the portrait of himself, painted by himself, shows us his scars and warts, his blemishes and imperfections.

This, I say again, is a great mercy; because, if it were not for this fact, we might have supposed that these gracious men, of the olden time, were not subject to the same infirmities as ourselves, and we might have concluded that we were not the Lord's people; "for, surely," we should have said, "God's true people never wandered as we wander, never failed as we fail, were never downcast as we are and were never on the borders of despair as we sometimes are." But we turn to this blessed Book, and we find that the saints of God, described in it, were very much like the saints of the present time. The sea of life is rough to us, and it was rough to them; their vessels leaked then, and ours leak now; the winds sometimes blow a hurricane now, as they did then, and spiritual navigation was, in their day, very much what it is to-day. This must ever be a cause of consolation to us, and also a means of direction, for, seeing that they fought and struggled as we do, we can examine their methods, to discover how they gained their victories; and, having the same sort of enemies to deal with, and the same divine assistance at our disposal, we fly for help and strength where they fled, and use the same means which they used so well in overcoming their adversaries. If God had changed,

that would have altered matters for us; but, since he is still the same, and deals with his children after the same rule of grace, we are both comforted and instructed as we read how he delivered his ancient people. I hope it may be so while we are meditating upon our two texts.

Observe, first, that the saints of God have differed the one from the other. Some think that these two Psalms are by different authors; yet one of them says, "I am like an owl of the desert," while the other says, "My youth is renewed like the eagle's." But, as I believe that these Psalms were both written by the same person, I see another line of thought, which is that the saints of God have, at times, differed from themselves. Extremes have met in them; they have been like an owl one day, and like an eagle another day. We shall close our meditations by observing that the Lord alone can change the sadness of his people into gladness, and make the owl of the desert into the eagle that soars aloft on mighty opinions.

I. To begin, then, The Saints Of God Have Differed The One From The Other.

One mournfully hoots, "I am like an owl of the desert;" and another, stretching his broad wings, cries, as he mounts towards heaven, "My youth is renewed like the eagle's."

This may be accounted for in various ways. Something may be set down to the different times in which men have lived. David, on the whole, lived in times in which the Church of God prospered. Some think that the 102nd Psalm was written by Nehemiah, or by Daniel, who lived in more troublous times, when the house of God lay waste, and Israel was carried into captivity. The children of God usually sympathize very much with the condition of things by which they are surrounded. When there are revivals, they are cheered; and when there is a long season of declension, they feel humbled and brought low. We do not expect that the age of Jeremiah should bring forth many rejoicing saints; neither, on the other hand, should we expect that the days in which the Lord magnified his name through his servant David should bring forth a majority of mournful saints. Much will, therefore, depend upon the times in which God's people live; yet not so much as some would think. There have always been some who have blessed the name of the Lord when they have been the only godly persons in the district; they have shone like stars of the first magnitude amidst the thick darkness of the night that reigned around them, while there have been others who, even in times of refreshing, have cried out, "My leanness, my leanness!"

Something must also be set down to the various works in which different men have been engaged for the Lord; some of God's servants must be of a joyful disposition, or they would never get through the heavy work that is appointed to them. Others, who have the heavy task of rebuking incorrigible sinners, and threatening God's judgments upon them, are naturally of a somewhat gloomy cast of mind. They would not be fitted for their stern work if they were not themselves stern. I have no doubt that those wonderful sermons of John Bunyan, when he "preached in chains to men in chains," were the more powerful because there was a sympathy, in the sorrow of his heart with those who were themselves in sorrow through their sin. God may be as much glorified by a weeping Jeremiah as by an eagle-winged Ezekiel.

The trials of God's people also differ. All of them feel the weight of his rod, but they do not all feel it alike. There are some believers, whose path is comparatively smooth. In temporal things, they are well provided for; they have good bodily health, the members of their family are spared to them, they seem to travel along a very easy way to heaven. But there are others, to whom the getting to glory is like crossing the Atlantic in a storm. They have wave upon wave; all God's billows sometimes seem to go over them. Divine wisdom arranges our lot, but our lots are not precisely alike. I do not doubt that there is a more equal distribution of happiness than we sometimes dream; still, there are differences, and those differences are very conspicuous, here and there, among Christians.

Still, I think a great deal more is to be set down to constitutional temperament than to any of these outside things. I know some of my dear brethren who, if they were very poor, would still be happy. Indeed, I have seen them very sick and ill, but they have still been joyful. I have gone with them to the grave-side, but they have rejoiced in the Lord even there. They could not help doing so; there seemed to be a fount of joy in them, like water in a well that springs up continually. On the other hand, there are some brethren; I will not say that there are many here; still, there are some; who could not help grumbling wherever they might be. If they had the fat of the land upon their table, it would not quite suit their appetite; they would prefer an admixture of bitter herbs. I do believe that there are some Christians whom God himself will never satisfy until he takes them to heaven. They seem to have a soul that utterly disdains to be content, and shows its greatness, I suppose, in continually feeling that nothing is quite good enough for it. That is a dreadful constitution for any man to have; perhaps it is his liver that is wrong; or, more likely his heart; but there is no doubt whatever that physical disease has a great effect upon constitutional temperament; and some sad folk are rather to be pitied than to be blamed for the dark and sombre view which they take of everything around them.

I incline to think, however, that we must not lay too much stress upon such things as these; but that the main difference will be discovered in another direction. Some saints have more faith than others have; and very much in proportion to their faith will be their condition of heart and mind. Such saints, having more faith than others have, will also have more zeal for God, more

conscientious observance of his commands, more complete devotion to his will, more self-denying consecration to his service; and where there is much of all these things, there will be more joy than there can be in any other condition of heart and life. If you are a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, yet are slack in serving God, you shall get to heaven but you shall have very little heaven on the way there. But if your faith rests, like a trustful child, upon the omnipotence and immutability of God; if you, simply and implicitly, rely upon the atoning sacrifice of Christ; and, then, out of love to your Lord, are fired with a sacred devotion to be used to Christ's glory, your peace shall be as a river, and your righteousness as the waves of the sea. God, in his all-wise sovereignty, may send you various trials, which will cast you down; but it is according to the gracious rule of his kingdom to give the sweet reward of his presence to his obedient children. He says to us, as he did to his ancient people, "If ye will walk contrary unto me, then will I also walk contrary unto you; "but if you walk with God as Enoch did, you shall have the joy which doubtless beamed from Enoch's face, beaming also from yours.

The practical lesson of this first part of my subject is this. Do not judge yourself, dear brother or sister in Christ, by any other human being; do not say, "I cannot be a Christian, because I am not so mournful as So-and-So was." God forbid that you should fall into such a delusion as to think that you ought to imitate any man's miseries! Do not say, on the other hand, "I cannot be a Christian, because I have not the joys which I have heard such an eminent saint speak of." It would be an ill day for you if you should try to counterfeit those joys. The man who said, "I am like an owl," and the man who said, "My youth is renewed like the eagle's," are both in heaven praising God. If they were two different men, both were accepted in the same Savior, both were washed in the same precious blood, and both entered into the same glory everlasting; and you, whether you are joyful or miserable, if you are depending alone upon the atoning work of Jesus Christ, shall be there too, in due time, to praise the Lord for ever with them.

II. But now, secondly, I have to remind you that Saints Differ From Themselves At Different Periods. They are not at all times what they are sometimes.

I feel morally certain that David wrote both these Psalms, for there are very similar expressions in both of them. Anyone, who has studied every verse and letter of the Psalms, with diligent care, as I may rightly claim that I have done, gets to feel as if he knew the tones of David's voice, and could tell which is Asaph's and which is David's; and there is, to my mind, a Davidic ring in this 102nd Psalm quite as surely as there is in the 103rd. If it is so, then it was David who one day said, "I am like an owl of the desert." and the day after said to his own soul, concerning his God, "Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." It was the same man in different moods; and brethren, we know, experimentally, that the children of God have these various moods.

First, notice the contrast here, a contrast which I have verified, and so have you, if you are a child of God. Here is a man under sense of sin; he has discovered that he is a lost soul. The arrows of God drink up the life of his spirit, and his self-righteousness is smitten and withered. He cannot bear company and gaiety, nor even the common joys of life, so he gets away alone, and pines, and cries, "I am like an owl of the desert." The most dreadful verses that he can find in the book of Job, or the Lamentations of Jeremiah exactly suit his case. This is how he talks to his God: "I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping, because of thine indignation and thy wrath: for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down." But see what happens when the Lord Jesus Christ manifests himself to that poor guilty sinner. He looks at Christ upon the cross, it is a trembling look, and his eyes are half blinded by his tears, and by the mists arising from his doubts and fears; but he does look to Christ, honestly and sincerely, and trusts him with his soul. Have you not seen the change that such an experience works in men? Now he is not like an owl any longer. His sin is completely forgiven; in a moment, he has passed from darkness into marvellous light, from bondage into liberty, from death unto life. Now, like the eagle, he stretches his wings, and mounts aloft into the glorious sunlight. Ask him whether he is like an owl now, and he will say, "God forbid! Why should I be?"

See how the man walks now! Before, his feet seemed like lead; now, they appear almost as if they were winged, like the feet of the fabled messenger of the gods. Now, the man runs along the path of duty. He delights in his God; he loves him, he adores him, he triumphs in him, and boasts of the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior. All this change is sometimes wrought in a single hour; ay, in a single moment, the sackcloth and ashes are taken away, the loins are girded with the garments of praise, and sorrow is changed into overflowing bliss. There you have one example of the contrast between the owl and the eagle spirit.

And, afterwards, in the Christian life, you may see the same difference. Here is a believer in deep trouble Christians have a promise that they shall have trouble, and that is one of the promises that God always keeps; "In the world ye shall have tribulation." Now see the Christian in the time of his tribulation; sometimes he is bowed to the very earth under it. If you want an example, look at Job, covered with sore boils from head to foot, sitting among ashes, and scraping himself with a potsherd, his children dead, his property destroyed, his friends the few that remained miserable comforters to him. Watch him a little while, till the Lord returns to him in mercy; and gives him twice as much as he had before, and "blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning." So is it, often, with the people of God to-day. If they do not receive temporal prosperity, they get spiritual blessings that are more valuable

by far; and so, up from the ashes God's Jobs still arise; from the willows they take their harps again, and

“Loud to the praise of love divine,

Bid every string sake,”

because the Lord hath dealt so graciously with them. So you see that the same men may be like owls in their time of trouble, and like eagles in the day of their deliverance out of it.

The contrast will be still more conspicuous if you look at another picture. It is a portrait of yourself, and of myself. Do you ever sit down, and look within, and look around, and look beneath? If so, when you look within, you see imperfections, infirmities, temptations, sins. You fetch a long-drawn sigh, and moan, “I shall surely fall one day by the hand of the enemy. With all this combustible material in my heart, some day there will be a terrible catastrophe, and my profession of religion will be destroyed in a moment.” Possibly, you look around you. Business is not prospering; perhaps one child is sick and ill, another is deformed, another has gone out to a situation, but is not behaving well; you have all manner of troubles; your house is not “so” either with yourself, or with God, as you desire it to be. Then you look down; you feel that you are soon going to die; and you wonder how you will bear the pains, and groans, and dying strife. And your dear wife will be a widow, and your children fatherless. Ah! you fetch some more sighs, and say to yourself, “I am like a pelican of the wilderness; I am like an owl of the desert.” Of course you are, and you always will be as long as you turn your eyes inside; but when, instead of looking within, or around you, or looking down to the grave, you look up, and see Christ, the ever-living Savior, who has passed through the grave, and now lives to die no more, you will no longer yourself dread to die, because you will know that there is to be a glorious resurrection, in which you shall share.

Then, you will not be any longer like an owl of the desert, but you will mount aloft, above the clouds, into the clear blue heaven of happy fellowship with the ever-blessed God, rejoicing that, in Christ Jesus, your salvation is accomplished, the everlasting covenant is signed, and sealed, and ratified, your security certain beyond all hazard, you yourself adopted into the family of God, and being made ready, in due season, to enter into the glorious abode of eternal bliss. When you realize all this, no longer will you sigh, and cry, and repine; but you will rejoice “with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” Give up the habit of looking within or around you; or if you do sometimes mourn over what you see there, even then say, with David, “Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me” you can see the eagle stretching his wings there, “yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure.”

Let me set before you another contrast. Sometimes, even good men, when they rise in the morning, get up in a humor which is anything but amiable. They go downstairs, and find their family in a condition which is anything but desirable. They go out to their business, and they find their affairs anything but pleasing. All day long, everything seems to go wrongly with them, or else they go wrongly with everything, which is probably the real truth. Some believers seem to like to indulge in a little comfortable misery, and appear all the day long to determine to, be unhappy. A certain thing, in which they are interested, has not prospered as they desired, although it has prospered far beyond their deserts. Another thing has not happened just as they wished it might, though it has happened a great deal better than they ought reasonably to have expected. Have you ever met a brother in that condition? I have, and I have also met sisters in the same condition. I have gone to visit them, and their story, from beginning to end while I have been there, has been about their rheumatics, or about the smallness of their allowance from the church or the parish, or about their sorrow at having lost so many friends and helpers! But what a mercy it is when the sorrowful soul is helped to shake off that depression, and to say, with Habakkuk, “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall: yet I will rejoice in, the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.” This is the way to leave the owl in the desert, and to let the eagle soar upwards in his glorious flight again. Suppose we have miseries; have we not mercies also? Are Marah's waters bitter? Then, put the cross of Christ into them, and they will at once be sweetened. Is thy way rough? Yet thy God leads thee in it, so it must be the right way. Does it traverse a desert? Yet the manna has always fallen even there. Art thou weary and footsore? Then remember that “there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.” Some people will always look on what they call “the black side” of things, but to faith's eye, there is no black side, for even the dark side of God's providential dealings with us glows with light when faith looks at it. Many people appear to take a telescope, and try to look through it upon the unknown future; and, before they look, in their anxiety, they breathe on the glass, and then, as they gaze, they cry, “There are a great many clouds to be seen.” Yet, all the while, it is only their own breath that has created them. It is best for the believer to leave the future with God, to rest entirely in his purposes of love and mercy, and to march forward singing to his God,

“What may be my future lot

Well I know concerns me not;

This should set my heart at rest,

What thy will ordains is best.”

Here is another contrast. From the 102nd Psalm, we learn that the believer, in his trouble, had forgotten to eat his bread; but, in the 103rd Psalm, we are told that the believer, in his joy, has his mouth satisfied with good things. There are some persons who fall into spiritual trouble through neglecting the means of grace. You say that you are very depressed in spirit, that you have lost your evidences, and are brought very low. Brother, let me ask you some personal questions. How long is it since you were at a prayer-meeting? How long is it since you were at a week-night service? How long is it since you left off the habit of carefully reading daily a portion of God's Word? How long is it since you enjoyed conscious fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ? I asked a Christian man as I believe him to be, that question, some time ago, and he shook his head, and said, "I wish you had not asked me that question; for, alas! it has been many a month since I could truly say that I have had any such fellowship." If that is the case with any one of you, do you wonder that you are like an owl of the desert? If a child never goes to his father, to get a good word from him, is it any wonder that he doubts whether his father loves him? What wife would live in the same house with her husband, and yet never speak to him by the six months together? It would be a shame if she did act like that; yet here are some of us, with Christ always near us, living on without speaking to him, or having fellowship with him. Well may such a person be like an owl of the desert; but let a man begin diligently to attend the means of grace, let him be much in private prayer, let him seek fellowship with Jesus, and he will soon shake off his mourning, and forget his sorrows, and up again into the clear air he will mount, like the eagles, on wings renewed by God.

The last point of contrast is this. The owl is a bird that is afraid of the light; it loves the darkness, and therefore it loves not the sunshine; but the eagle is not afraid of the sun, he even dares to stare into the face of the great father of day. There are also some Christians who appear to be afraid of the light. They have a little, but they do not want too much. I have heard of a good man, who would never read at family prayer that chapter about Philip and the eunuch. There is, in that chapter, a good deal of light upon the subject of believers' baptism, and that man did not want to read about it, for he was afraid of the light. Others will not read those passages, in the Epistles, which speak of election, predestination, particular redemption, final perseverance, and similar great truths that are revealed by the Holy Spirit. Such people say that these doctrines are too Calvinistic, so they do not read about them, for they do not want to see too much light. I know Christians at least, they profess to be Christians, who, in various matters, are like the owl of the desert; they do not like the light. But the true-born child of God wants the light; he cannot have too much of it. He delights to do his Lord's will. He saith of everything he doeth, "If it is not according to God's Word, I desire to be undeceived concerning it; and if there be any truth, taught by the Holy Ghost, which I have not yet received I desire to receive it, and to sit down humbly at Jesus's feet, to unlearn all I know if it is wrong, and to learn whatsoever he would have me learn." Let us pray to God to give us the unblenched eagle eye which is glad of the light, and to take away from us the sleepy eye of the owl, which only sees in the darkness.

III. My last point, for which I have only a minute or two left, is this, The Lord Alone Can Change Spiritual Sadness Into Spiritual Gladness.

No hand can heal a broken heart save the divine hand that made it. The minister's words cannot heal your wounds. The Holy Ghost alone can pour in the true balm. The ancient question was, "Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there?" The answer is, No, there is none. There is no balm in Gilead; that is not the place to look for it. There is no physician there; if there were, the health of God's people might be recovered. But it is not recovered in Gilead, and never will be. The only true balm comes from Calvary; the only unfailing Physician is he who has gone up to his Father's throne, yet who hears the cry of all who call upon him in truth. He aloes can turn the owl into an eagle, but he can do it. He understands your case, for he has passed through an experience exactly similar to yours. He has not only walked the hospitals that is an essential thing for a physician to do, but he has himself lain on the bed in the hospital. Christ took upon himself our sicknesses, and bore our sorrows, and even our sins were caused to meet upon him when he hung on the accursed tree, as the Substitute for all who believe in him. You have, therefore, the best of physicians to heal you; so, sin-sick soul, look to him! If thou hast only an owl's eyes, yet turn them unto Christ, and he will change them into an eagle's eyes. If thou art only as the owl of the desert, resolve that thou wilt see no light but his light; for, then, his light will surely soon come to thee.

Remember, O ye mourners, that there is one Person of the ever-blessed Trinity, who has been pleased to consecrate himself to the work of comforting tried and troubled souls. As Christ has redeemed us, so the Holy Spirit comforts us. He is The Comforter, the almighty Comforter. As God himself has become the Comforter, what case of sorrow can be thought to be hopeless? Of old, the Lord said, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted;" and our Lord Jesus Christ, after going back to heaven, has sent us the Holy Spirit to be our Comforter; and the Holy Spirit uses the very best medicine that can possibly be compounded. Do you ask, "What is that?" Christ said to his disciples, "He shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you." What medicine can ever be equal to the things of Christ? O poor owl of the desert, if the Spirit of God shall come and visit thee, as he will, and reveal the things of Christ to thy soul, thou wilt then spread thy wings, like an eagle, and mount aloft into the heavenlies in Christ Jesus!

With one more remark I will close my discourse. Whenever a soul is cast down by God, there is a reason for it, and that reason is love. When the Lord kills, why does he do that? When he wounds, why does he do it? Here is the reason, given in his own words, "I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal." You must first be stripped by God if you are to be clothed by him; you must be emptied if you are to be filled; you must be uprooted if you are to be transplanted; you must become nothing if Christ is to be your All-in-all. Is not this Christ's usual rule, that he cuts down the green tree, and makes the dry tree to flourish? The Virgin Mary truly sang, "He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away: he hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree." Destitute, empty, broken, crushed, wounded, dead, you are just the sort of people Jesus came to save. He came into the world to save sinners; to seek and to save the lost; so you, being lost, are the most suitable objects for the display of his love. I am sent to preach the gospel to the brokenhearted, to minister consolation to the afflicted and tried, and to tell of the opening of the prison to them that are bound. Not to those who are satisfied with their own righteousness, but to those who know that they are sinners, do we preach a Savior. You, who can fall no lower than you are, unless you sink into the lowest hell, are the very persons to be the objects of divine regard. Your extremity is God's opportunity to bless you. To you, who pine, and sigh, and cry, and say, "We are like the owls of the desert," is this message of mercy proclaimed, by the voice that soundeth even in the wilderness, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's had double for all her sins." Bankrupt sinners, come and learn how all your debts have been discharged! Wounded sinners, come and be healed by the great Physician! Yea, and even to you who are dead, and in your graves, the Lord saith, "Live," and ye shall live, even as the Lord Jesus said to Martha, "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." The Lord grant you grace to look to Jesus, that the owls' eyes may now be turned into eagles' eyes, and the owls of the desert into eagles, for Christ's sake! Amen.

Psalm 103:5 Our Youth Renewed

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"Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." — Psalm 103:5.

IN this delightful Psalm, one remarks how David finds something of praise within him in everything of which he thinks. There are some desponding, morbid, murmuring, ungrateful souls who find reasons for complaining everywhere, but a man of David's spirit, on the contrary, sucks honey out of every flower, and praises God in connection with everything. I noticed, whilst I was reading just now, how many of these things would have made others mourn, but they only galled forth from David's soul songs of praise. For instance, "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities"; some would be for ever complaining that they had sins and that those sins were a burden, but David sings of sin as pardoned. Some would be mourning before God that they were not well in health, complaining of their sicknesses, but David sang of him, "Who healeth all thy diseases." Morbid minds will be fretting about death, and about what might come after death, but David says, "Who redeemeth thy life from destruction." And now, in the view of his temporal and spiritual blessedness, he pens this verse with which to crown his song, "Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's."

I invite you first notice, in this verse and as you notice, ask that you may enjoy: —

I. Satisfaction.

David speaks of his mouth being satisfied with good things. Satisfaction. A rare word! It rings like a silver bell — satisfaction. The richest man in England has not found it: the greatest conqueror has never won it: the proudest Emperor cannot command it. Satisfaction! It is no more natural to man than it was to the horse-leech to cease from craving and crying for itself, "Give: Give." As well might the sea be thought to be full, or its billows to be still, as the heart of man to be thought to be satisfied. It is a spiritual blessing: it is a grace that cometh from the great satisfying God. The God, who is himself all-sufficient, is the only one who can be sufficient to fill the heart of man. Satisfaction! Why, that means enough, and enough is a feast.

David had enough of temporals, and so, I trust, have we. If we are of the apostle's mind, we have for, having food and raiment, we are therewith content. David had spiritual riches, and that satisfied him, and so have we, for if we have Christ, we have all things, for, first, Christ is all, and next, he that spared not his own Son, but freely gave him up for us all how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? For all things are yours, whether things present or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's. You have enough then, for you have all things. Your spirit is content with what it has: nay, more than content: you can say

with David, "My cup runneth over." In receiving Christ into your soul, you have received more than your soul can hold: you are filled with all the fullness of God

The text, in speaking of satisfaction, uses terms which denote satisfaction. "Who, satisfieth thy mouth with good things." In the mouth is the palate. It is the place in which there is a sensuous kind of enjoyment, which is here put as a figure of a higher and spiritual delight. We do not merely receive God's good mercies; we enjoy them. We have not lost our taste for them. We do not swallow the honey of the divine mercy as though it were so much tasteless white of an egg, but we know, through having our senses exercised and taught of the good Spirit, how to get the flavour, the taste of the Word, and to enjoy it. "He satisfieth thy mouth." We have, all of us, desires after pleasures, which are natural to us, and believing men have desires after higher pleasures, and these desires are for the time being satisfied, until we get into yonder realm, where, our capacities being enlarged, our desires also shall be increased, and there, too, we shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of his house, and shall drink of the river of his pleasures for evermore. Until then, we are satisfied with Christ, satisfied with his salvation, satisfied with the Holy Spirit, satisfied with all his gracious operations, satisfied with the covenant of grace, satisfied with its sureness, satisfied with the largeness of its provisions, satisfied with the love of God, satisfied, indeed, with all that the Lord wills, for we can say that his will is our will. There is enough, then, and there is enjoyment of that enough.

Note as you take the words, "Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things." See the variety of the satisfaction that is given. The mercies bestowed are not only good; they are not a good thing, but "good things." The Christian's spiritual wealth consists of all manner of good things. As we showed you last Thursday night — of Christ's fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. He giveth more grace. He is the God of all grace. All sorts of blessings are provided for the believer, and the satisfaction which he enjoys is the result of receiving all the blessings that he can want. "He satisfieth thy mouth with good things"; that is, with pardons bought with blood: with justifying righteousness, perfect and complete: with adoption and all the privileges belonging thereto: with sanctification and all its gracious results. Good things, superlatively good things, beloved. Not merely on good doctrines and good opinions shalt thou feed, but on real things, real blessings, and these not all of one sort, nor after one fashion, but like the fruit of that tree which becometh near to the throne of God, and which beareth its fruit every month, and hath a variety of fruits to suit the tastes of all who come hungering to eat thereof.

The excellency also of the mercy which satisfies us is mentioned in the text. "Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things" — emphatically good. Many of "the good things of this life," as we commonly say, are only good in a very modified sense. They are easily made into curses, and they often become temptations. But the good things of divine grace are so good that they never can be anything else but good, and so good that they make our bad things good. I mean that tines make our bitter affliction sweet, and turn our trials into joys. He that getteth Christ hath such a good thing that no tongue shall ever tell the goodness it. He that getteth everlasting love, and all the streams that gush from that deep and fathomless fountain, getteth things so good, and in the most superlative sense of that word, that they are like God himself, who is essentially good. Ah! Christian, what a happy lot is thine! to have good things from the good God, and to have an abundance of them, and to have thyself so ravished in the enjoyment of them, that thy soul can say, "I am satisfied; it is enough; I am content; my soul is overflowing with the good things of God."

Once more; this satisfaction is continual. The word is in the present tense, "Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things." It is not "did satisfy it," though that is true. He did satisfy my mouth with good things when first I came to him and perceived the beauty of my Lord Jesus. Often since then hath he made his servant to sit at the banquetting table, and there in the presence his enemies hath he been fed. But the text is in the present; and that means who now satisfieth, who, to-morrow when it comes, still shall be thy present help, and, still shall satisfy; who not only will satisfy thee in heaven — though that be true, for I shall be satisfied when I awake in his likeness — but who even now, as far as thy capacity goes, continually satisfies thee in things here below, not with things below, but with things above, satisfied with God, whilst yet absent from the Lord. Is not this blessing, being in the present tense, peculiarly delightful, but it is just that to which the worldling cannot come. All his good things are generally in the past or the future. I mean his good spiritual things; he will tell you of what he once did feel; or else he hopes that they may yet be in the days to come, and that one of these days he may be saved. But the genuine religion of Christ is known by its bearing the motto of "To-day" — present salvation. There is no religion under heaven, except the evangelical truth of God, that teaches present salvation. I think I have read some such passage as this by an eminent cardinal, since departed, and gone somewhere — I do not know where, for he has gone somewhere where they have Masses for the repose of his soul, and surely that cannot be in heaven. Surely, they would not need to pray for the repose of the souls that are there. But this departed cardinal says something like this: "How delightful to die after having received the saved viaticum from the hands of God's priest, with the memorial of the cross upon your bosom and the crucifix upheld by holy hands, before your expiring eyes! To pass out of this world with the sound of the passing bell in your ears, and then to lie awhile, while gathered round you are the prayers of holy men and blessed virgins consecrated to God in the neighboring convent; to be carried out with the songs of choristers, with the perfume of incense, and with attending monks and friars; to be put into holy ground, consecrated by sacred rites, amidst the reading of words long honored by being used by the Holy Catholic Church; to have the consecrated earth saturated with holy water falling upon the coffin-lid, that bears the memorial of the cross," and so on, and so on, and so on. How delightful! How delightful he makes it all out to be, as if it all were a theater — nothing

more — a piece of show. What good could there be to a soul in all that performance, and all that tag-raggery, and I know not what beside? What consolation could it be to a departing spirit? But that evidently is the ultimatum, the highest reward that can be obtained by that kind of faith. But, beloved, we speak out of this Book of God what we know and have proved, and we tell you that you may be saved now. The pardon of sin is not a thing merely for dying moments; it is a thing for this very present hour. What saith David? "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imparteth not iniquity; blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered." What saith Paul? "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." I dwell then, with a lingering delight upon the present tense of these words, "Who satisfieth" — to-day — "thy mouth with good things"; maketh thee even now a happy believer, a rejoicing believer, a hopeful believer, a contented child of God, looking for the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ, and hoping to be found amongst the waiting, worshipping company, who "worship Christ Jesus in the spirit, and have no confidence in the flesh." That is the first thought of the text, then — satisfaction.

Pass now on to the second thought, which is: —

II. Renewal

"So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's."

Beloved, there is need of this. Every Christian man has need that his soul should be restored, should be refreshed, re-invigorated, newly quickened. As to those who are saved, there is a constant need restoring them to their first love. This is promised in the words before us. I say there is need of it. There is need of it, first, because of the ordinary wear and tear, which operate upon spiritual life, as well as upon every other form of life. You cannot serve God, you cannot praise, you cannot pray, you cannot do anything without some expenditure of strength; and, therefore, you need to have that strength renewed. Moreover, in such a world as this, combatting with temptations, bearing up against the current of society, and I know not what besides of difficulty, takes away our strength. We need, therefore, to go and drink again of the brook by the way, that we may lift up our head once again. The ordinary wear and tear of spiritual life requires this.

Besides that, we are often the subjects of sinful decline. Backsliding is too common a complaint among Christians. We can ascend to the top of the mountain and dwell with God, but our foot soon begins to descend. There is a gravitation towards sinfulness in the best of men. Oh! that it were not so, but we are very conscious that it is so, and, therefore, we need to have the renewal.

And yet again, we sometimes fall into sorrowful spiritual diseases; I mean apart from sin. We may get depressed in spirit; we may be nervous, fearful, timid; we may almost come to the borders of despair. We may cry out with David, "All thy waves and thy billows have gone over me, my heart is consumed, because of grief"; we may be brought very low. Well, then again, we shall want renewal. So, what with wear and tear, what with sinful inclination to decline, and what with the sorrowful diseases which may come upon our mind, we often want renewing. Mark, now, the peculiar excellency of the renewing that is spoken of in the text. David says, "So that thy youth is renewed." There is great deal to be admired in the youth of the believer. Youth is the time of beauty. After a while, the furrows are ploughed upon our brow, and the grey hairs are scattered here and there, but the young man and the maiden rejoice in the beauty of their youth. And I am sure it is beautiful to see a young Christian. There is something so admirable in his carriage and bearing, in his first ardor his first love and zeal, his first jealous sensitiveness and tenderness of heart, his carefulness of walk, and so on, that we cannot but admire him. But, thank God, we need not give up these things, when our Christian youth, as to time, has gone. Thank God, he can renew our youth to us spiritually when we grow old bodily, and there is a beauty about the aged Christian that is living near to God and dwelling on; the borders of heaven, quite as fair to look upon as the beauty of the young believer. So God gives to his people from day to day a peculiar beauty in each season of life, and thus their youth is renewed. Youth, again, is the time for vigor. The young man can run: he is strong: he has even waste powers to throw away. And how strong often are the young men in Christ Jesus! They are strong, and have overcome the wicked one. Alas! it sometimes happens that growth in years does not bring growth in grace, and we have known some who have grown weak and feeble as years have passed over their heads. But God can renew to us all the vigor we ever had. All the strength we had for service during the first twenty years of our Christian life, he can bring back to us again. Though we may have been living under a starving ministry, and so have lost our strength, though we may have neglected much communion with Christ, and so have lost our vigor, he can give it all back again, and once more we shall run, and not be weary, we shall walk and not faint. Youth, again, is the time for ardor, for fervency, for enterprise. I would not say a word that might depreciate the wisdom and mature prudence of old age, but for all that, the most of things that are done in the world must be done by the young blood. The radical element comes in to stir the conservative element and quicken it into activity. In the Christian Church there must be young blood coming in, and if there is not, it is generally an ill time with that Church. But surely, beloved, it need not be that our first ardor, and enterprise, and hopefulness should leave us. God can renew it to us at any time during our spiritual career. He can renew our youth like the eagle's, by renewing our courage for him, our confidence in him, our energy towards him, our determination for him, our willingness to run risks in his cause, our ardor to tell to others what Christ's love has been in our hearts. If you have lost that youth, cry to God

to-night for it, and he, by his Spirit, will renew your youth to you. "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fail; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint." Youth, too, is the time for joy. We expect young people to be merry, and young Christians may well make merry and be glad, now that they are brought into the house of feasting. God often makes the early part of our Christian career to be smooth: screens us from the harder trials that will be necessary for us afterwards; but there is no reason why the joy of the Lord should ever depart from a Christian. I have not known many, but I have known some few Christians who are just as happy and joyful as ever they were in the brightest period of their lives, and have continued so by the twenty years together. I do not believe that spiritual decline, though it is very common, is at all inevitable. I believe it to be as unnecessary as it is sinful. We might always retain that early joy and delight. I must confess my own experience is that, whatever joy I had in Christ twenty years ago, I have much more now. Whatever I had that could delight me concerning him was shallow and superficial then compared with the deeper delight my spirit finds in his service, in his work, in his people, and especially in himself. There is no reason why we should not continue to be young. A dear friend of yours, who has lately gone to heaven, who was close on the verge of eighty years, and whom you all knew well, why, he was as much a boy as any of us in the things of God. There was not one among us that was more hopeful or more enterprising than was our dear venerable father. We had only just to think of any good thing for Christ, and instead of being, as some have a tendency to be when they get old, rather inclined to be a drag on the wheel, for fear lest the young people should go too fast, he was always ready to gird up his loins and run, like Elijah, before the chariot, and do a little more than anybody else if he could. I pray that that may be our case, that we may bring forth fruit in old age to show that the Lord is upright. So may it be with us, and right on as long as ever we shall live may he renew our youth like the eagle's. I shall now want your attention for only a few minutes to a third point. We have had satisfaction and renewal. The third thing in the text is: —

III. A Similitude.

"So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's."

How is that? Socrates and the old naturalists used to say that when eagles get to be very old, they lost their old beak and talons, and feathers, and turned young again. I suppose people, used to believe that in those times, but happily there is nobody who believes such rubbish as that now. I am quite sure that David did not believe it, for my persuasion is, the more I look into the Bible, though some have said that the Bible was only meant to teach us religion, and that we must not look for accuracy as to scientific facts, that that is a mistake, and that the Bible never makes a mistake in natural history, in physics, or in anything else, but is as much inspired about one thing as about another. There is nothing in this text to lead us to believe that David meant that — nothing at all. Some have thought and I think they are correct, that the allusion is to the newly-moulting of the eagle. As with every other bird at that time, they appear haggard, and then when their feathers are grown again, it makes them appear to renew their youth. I observe that many naturalists whose works I have consulted on the subject declare that the moulting of the eagle is not sufficiently severe to produce any appreciable change, and that David must have been a very acute observer, indeed, if he could have detected such an alteration, and they seem to think that the allusion is to the well-known longevity of the eagle, which lives on, and on, and on, when many other birds have passed through many generations. The grand old monarch of the craggy rocks is still young when generations of other birds have passed a-way. So our youth is renewed like the eagle's that is to say, our spiritual life continues on, and on, and on, through time right into eternity.

Let me, then, conduct your thoughts to the eagle for a minute. How is the eagle's youth renewed? I suppose in four things — in its sight, its flight, its might, and its fighting.

The eagle has a keen eye, but its eye would grow dim unless there was a constant renewal of its youth, and, therefore, its eyesight is renewed. The eagle-eye belongs to every gracious man. He can see farther than the eagle can. He can see beyond the gates of pearl: he can see farther than that: to the throne of God; yea, farther than that, into the heart of God. He can say:

"The streams of love I trace

Up to their fountain, God:

And in his mighty breast I see

Eternal thoughts of love to me."

But the eagle eye of faith is often clouded with unbelief, and it is a blessing for us that God increaseth our faith, and that once again we can see invisible things, and rejoice to behold what has never been given to mortal eye to see.

The eagle is a bird of strong flight, and that flight may be reckoned as a part of its youth which is renewed. Large as it is,

sometimes measuring from six to eight feet broad when its wings are outspread, yet as soon as it vanishes out of sight it is lost in the blaze of the sun. At another time the eagle is on its flight, simply making progress. So with the Christian. His youth is renewed. He mounts upwards in communion with God, higher, higher, higher. His motto is: —

“Nearer, my God, to thee,

Nearer to thee;

This still my cry shall be,

Nearer to thee, nearer to thee.”

Up he mounts like the eagle, or at other times he goes onward in his Christian pathway, going from strength to strength until he appears before his God. Now, it is a mercy for us that the Lord is pleased to renew our power of fellowship with himself, our power of making progress in the divine life, just as he renews the eagle's youth.

The eagle has great power and might, too. He had need to be strong, or when he carrieth his prey to his young ones, he might soon weary. And you and I have souls to feed, and work to do for God, and for his kingdom and we need that our might should be renewed, like the eagle's, that we may be strong for every service imposed upon us.

And then the eagle is made to fight. It smelleth the battle afar off, and delights in carnage. And the Christian, though he be a man of peace, is also a man of war. From his youth up he has to contend with his corruptions, and fight with spiritual wickednesses in high places, and he needs that his power thus to fight should be daily renewed, even as is the eagles. May we experience day by day what it is to have our youth renewed in these respects. But, now, let us ask the pressing and practical question, how is it that the eagle's youth is renewed? Is it not because there is a life within, which renews it? God has so constituted the eagle that it shall live on: God has so constituted a believer that he shall live on. He has put a living, incorruptible seed within us that cannot die, and the water of life that he has given to us, is in us a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. Therefore is our youth renewed like the eagle's. There is a holy nature, a spiritual immortality of grace bestowed upon us, and therefore is our youth renewed.

The eagle's strength is renewed by the food it eats. That is indicated in the text, “Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.” When the eagle has satisfied his hunger, he is strong again and when you and I have fed upon the Word of God, especially upon the incarnate Word of God: when we have been privileged to eat his flesh and drink his blood, as spiritual men know how, ah! then, again, our youth has been renewed.

The eagle's strength is renewed by the air he breathes. Not here below, in this smoky atmosphere, but up there, in the clear azure, where all is bright, there does the eagle breathe the pure air and thus renew his strength. So the Christian renews his strength, not here among grovelling gold-hunters, or pleasure-hunters, or fame-hunters, but up, up there in the rarified atmosphere of communion with God. There he grows strong again, and comes down from the heaven of heavens, with his face glowing with the radiance of renewed youth, renewed by breathing the atmosphere of the skies.

The eagle's youth is renewed as the season returns, or, if the reference I gave to some naturalists be correct, there is a season for renewal. So when the times for God's Spirit to visit us with times of refreshing come, then, again, our strength is renewed. When we feel once more the Holy Spirit bedewing us, and our heart gets to be like Gideon's fleece, and we are saturated, then, like the eagle's, our strength is renewed.

But I shall weary you, for there is so much scope here, if I continued to speak. I shall rather leave you to think the matter over than attempt to work out the fullness of such a text as this. And thus I must bring you to the last truth, which I desire to enforce: —

IV. A Divine Quickener.

Doth not David say “Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things”? — referring here to God himself. To make short work of this last point, let me say to every believer here who has been satisfied, who has had grace restored to him, and his youth renewed like the eagle's — you have had all this from God. You have never had your soul renewed from anywhere else, but from him. You have never had your mouth filled with good things, except by God. Every temporal mercy has his mark upon it, for he sent it. Those houses, those children, that competence of yours, all came from him. As to every spiritual blessing, you must see his mark thereon.

“There's ne'er a gift his hand bestowes,

But cost his heart a groan.”

Well, it all comes from God. Then remember that, and let it be all the dearer to you. Let it make your soul cling still closer to God to

think that all these blessings have come from him.

Well, then, if all has come from God, be it remembered with that fact that all has been through God. From him, and through him — I mean that no mercy would have been a mercy if God himself had not made the mercy, and that no spiritual gift could have been yours unless God himself had been in the gift. In fact, there is no good thing, until you get God himself.

“Less than thyself cannot suffice,

My comfort to restore.”

Life is nourished, not so much by bread, as by God's decree that bread should nourish us, for “man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God shall man live.” So the ordinances do not feed your soul, it is God in the ordinances. It is not the sacramental bread and wine; it is not baptism, it is not coming up to listen to a poor mortal like yourselves, it is not even private prayer; it is God in the prayer, God in the preacher, God in the ordinance; so that you not only have everything from God, but that which satisfieth and reneweth you is God himself. Oh! to say, “My Lord and my God: the Lord is the portion of my soul!” This is sweetness, indeed.

Well, then, as you get everything from God, and by God ascribe everything to God. Let nothing pass by without praise. Reckon that nothing comes to you by chance. Do not conclude anything to be your desert or your earning. Bless God for it all. “Oh! clap your hands, all ye people. Come into his courts with thanks giving. Praise him with cymbals, even the high-sounding cymbals.” Let him have the best of your songs, for you have the best of his gifts. Praise him with a new song, for you have new mercies for which to sing.

And if you thus ascribe everything to God, take care that you use everything for God. Let your temporal mercies be consecrated to him. Give him the first-fruits of all your increase, so shall your barns be filled with plenty, and your presses shall burst with new wine. Give to God all your spiritual strength, and whenever you feel that you are renewed in it, do not shake yourselves as though your strength were your own, and you might use it as you liked; but when the Spirit of the Lord moves upon you, as it did upon Samson in the camp of Dan, go out and smite the Philistines, as he did. Go and help on the Master's work, and the Master's children: watch over the Master's sheep: fight the Master's foes, and thus shall you continue to have your mouth satisfied with good things, and your youth renewed, because the Lord will see that you are not wasting it, or spending it upon yourselves, but giving it all to him.

I am sure I grieve much that such a text as this should not have a bearing upon you all. But alas! There are some here, there are some here who are not satisfied and you never will be, my dear hearer, till you get Christ. There are some here whose youth is not renewed. Nay, it were a pity that it should be. You must be born again. You must, you MUST be born again. Oh! that you may now be born again, for otherwise, for you to renew your youth, would be to renew your sins and increase your ruin. My dear friend, what you need most is a new heart, and there is only one who can give it to thee, and that is he who made heaven and earth, even Christ Jesus. What you need is to have your sins washed away, and it is only he who can do it who first filled the channels of the deep and who now can wash away thy sins in his own blood. Trust him, and it is done. Trust him, and it is done altogether. Trust him, and it is done altogether, and for ever. He that believeth in him is saved, for hath he not said it who cannot lie, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved”? Be obedient to that double command, and, in obedience, you shall find that God is faithful to his covenant, to his Son, and to you to whom the promise is made, and you shall be saved.

God bless you for Christ's sake. Amen.

Psalm 104:34 The Pleasures of Piety

NO. 2759

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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK,

ON A THURSDAY EVENING, DURING THE SUMMER OF 1858.

“My meditation of him shall be sweet.”—Psalm 104:34.

IT has often been insinuated, if it has not been openly affirmed, that the contemplation of divine things has a tendency to depress the spirits. Religion, many thoughtless persons have supposed, is not becoming to the young; it checks the ardor of their youthful blood, it may be very well for men with grey heads, who need something to comfort and solace them as they descend the hill of life into the grave; it may be suitable for those who are in poverty and deep trial; but! that it is at all congruous with the condition of a healthy, able-bodied, successful, and happy young man, this is generally said to be out of the question.

Now, there, is no greater falsehood than that. No man is so happy but he would be happier still if he had true religion. The man, with the greatest abundance of earthly pleasure or treasure, whose barns are full of store, and whose presses burst with new wine,

would not lose any part of his happiness, had he the grace of God in his heart; rather, that joy would add sweetness to all his prosperity, it would strain off many of the bitter dregs from his cup, it would purify his heart, and freshen his taste for delights, and show him how to extract more honey from the honeycomb. Religion is a thing that can make the most melancholy joyful, at the same time that it can make the joyous ones more joyful still. It can make the gloomy bright, as it gives the oil of joy in the place of mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Moreover, it, can light up the face that is joyous, with a heavenly gladness; it can make the eye sparkle with tenfold more brilliance; and happy as the man may be, he shall find that there is sweeter nectar than he has ever drunk: before, if he comes to the fountain of atoning mercy, if he knows that his name, is registered in the book of everlasting life. Temporal mercies will then have the charm of redemption to enhance them. They will be no longer to him as shadowy phantoms which dance for a transient hour in the sunbeam. He will account them more precious because they are given to him, as it were, in some codicils of the divine testament, which hath promise of the life that now is as well as of that which is to come. While goodness and mercy follow him all the days of his life, he will stretch forth his grateful anticipations to the future, when he, shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. He will be able to say, as the psalmist does in this Psalm, “I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live.” I will Sing praise to my God while I have my being. My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord.”

I. First, let us consider The Very Precious Subject Of Meditation mentioned in our text: “My meditation of Him shall be sweet.”

Christian, thou needest no greater inducement to excite thee to meditation than the subject here: proposed: “My meditation of Him shall be sweet.” To whom does that word “him” refer? I suppose: it may refer to all the three Persons of the; glorious Trinity. My meditation upon Jehovah shall be sweet And, verily, if you sit down to, meditate upon God the Father, and reflect on his sovereign, immutable, unchangeable love toward his elect people,—if you think of God the Father as the great Author and Originator of the plan of salvation.—if you think of him as the mighty Being who has said that, by two immutable things, wherein it is impossible for him to lie, he hath given us strong-consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us,—if you look to him as the Giver of his only-begotten Son, and who, for the sake of that Son, his best gift, will with him also freely give us all things, If you consider him as having ratified the covenant, and pledged himself ultimately to complete all its stipulations in the ingathering of every chosen, ransomed soul, you will perceive that there is enough to engross your meditation for ever, even were your attention limited to the manner and matter of the Father’s love.

Or, if you choose, you shall think of God the Holy Spirit; you shall consider his marvellous operations on your own heart,—how he quickened it when you were dead in trespasses and sins,—how he brought you nigh to Jesus when you were a lost sheep, wandering far from the fold, how he called you with such mighty efficacy that you could not resist his voice,—how he drew you with the wondrous cords of his almighty love. If you think how often he has helped you in the hoar of peril,—how frequently he has comforted you with a promise in times of distress and trouble; and, if you think that, like holy oil, he will always supply your lamp, and until life’s last hour he will always replenish you with his influences, proving himself still your Teacher and your Guide till you get up yonder, where you shall see your Savior face to face, in the blessed presence of the father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,—in such contemplation you might find a vast and infinite subject for your meditation.

But, at this time, I prefer to confine the application of this word “him” to the person of our adorable Savior: “My meditation of HIM shall be sweet.” Ah! if it be possible that the meditation upon one Person of the Trinity can excel the meditation upon another, it is meditation upon Jesus Christ.

“Till God in human flesh I see,

My thoughts no comfort find;

The holy, just, and sacred Three

Are terrors to my mind.

“But if Immanuel’s face appear,

My hope, my joy begins;

His name forbids my slavish fear,

His grace forgives my sins”

Thou precious Jesus! what can be a sweeter theme, for my meditation than to think Of thine exalted being,—to conceive of thee as the Son of God, who, with the golden compasses, struck out a circle from space, and fashioned this round world? To think of thee

as the God who holds this mighty orb upon thy shoulders, and art, at the same time, the King of glory, before whom angels bow in lowliest homage; and yet to consider thee as likewise “bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh,”—

“In ties of blood with sinners one;”—

to conceive of thee as the Son of Mary, born of a virgin, wearing flesh like men, clothed in garments of humanity like mortals of our feeble race; to picture thee in all thy suffering life; to trace thee in all thy passion; to view thee in the agony of Gethsemane, enduring the bloody sweat, the sore amazement; and then to follow thee to Gabbatha, the pavement, and thence up the steep side of Calvary, “enduring the cross, despising the shame,” when thy soul was made art offering for my sins, when thou didst, die the reconciling death ‘midst horrors still to all but God unknown;—verily, here is a meditation for my soul, which must be “sweet” for ever. I might begin, like the psalmist who wrote the forty-fifth Psalm and say, “My heart is inditing (the marginal reading is, bubbleth up,) a good matter; I speak of the things which I have made touching the King; my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.”

Consider our Lord Jesus Christ in any way you please, and your meditation of him will be sweet. Jesus may be compared to some of those lenses you have seen, which you may take up, and hold in one way, and you see one kind of light, and then hold in another way, and you see another kind of light; and, whichever way you turn them, you will always see some precious sparkling light, and some new colors starting up to your view. Ah! take Jesus for your theme, sit down, and consider him, think of his relation to your own soul, and you will never get, through that one subject. Think of his eternal relationship to you; recollect that the saints, in union with the Lamb, were from condemnation free before the world was made. Think of your everlasting union with the person of Jehovah Jesus before this planet was sent rolling through space, and how your guilty soul was accounted, spotless and clean, even before you fell; and after that dire lapse, before you were restored, justification was imputed to you in the person of Jesus Christ. Think of your known and manifest relationship to him since you have been called by his grace. Think how he has become your Brother; how his heart has beaten in tenderest sympathy with yours; how he has kissed you with the kisses of his love, and how that love has been to you sweeter than wine.

Look back upon some happy, sunny spots in your history, where Jesus has: whispered to you, “I am yours,” and you have said, “My Beloved is mine.” Think of some choice moments, when an angel has stooped from heaven, and taken you up on his wings, and carried you aloft, to sit in heavenly places where Jesus sits, that you might commune with him. Or think, if it please you, of some pensive moments, when you have had what Paul sets so much store by,—fellowship with Christ in his sufferings. Think of seasons when the sweat has rolled from your brow, almost as it did from that of Jesus,—yet not the sweat of blood,—when you have knelt down, and felt that you could die with Christ, even as you had risen with him. And then, when you have exhausted that portion of the subject, think of your relationship to Christ which is to be fully developed in heaven, imagine the hour to have come when you shall—

“Greet the blood-besprinkled bands

On the eternal shore;”—

and range the—.

“Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood,

Array’d in living green.”

Picture to your mind that moment when Jesus Christ shall salute you as “more than a conqueror,” and put a pearly crown upon your head, glittering more brightly than the stars. And think of that transporting hour when you will take that crown from off your own brow, and climbing the steps of Jesus’s throne, you shall put it on his head, or lay it at his feet, and once more crown him Lord of your soul, as well as “Lord of all.” Ah! if you come and tell me you have no subject for meditation, I will answer,—Surely, you have not tried to meditate; for your meditation of HIM must be sweet.

Suppose you have done thinking of him as he is related to you; consider him, next, as he is related to the wide world. Recollect that Jesus Christ says he came into the world that the world through him might be saved; and, undoubtedly, he will one day save the world, for he, who redeemed it by price, and by power, will restore it, and renew it from the effects of the Fall. Think of Jesus in this relationship as the Repairer of the breach, the Restorer of paths to dwell in.” He will come again to our earth, one day; and when he comes, he will find this world still defaced with the old curse upon it,—the primeval curse of Eden. He will find plague, and pestilence, and war here still; but when he comes, he shall bid men “beat their swords into plough, shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; “war shall be obliterated from among the sciences; he shall speak the Word, and there shall be a great company that will publish it. “The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” Yes, our Lord Jesus Christ shall surely come again! Christians, be ye waiting for the second coming of your Lord; and whilst ye wait, meditate upon that coming. Think, O my soul, of that august day when thou shalt see him with all his pompous train, coming to call the world to judgment, and to avenge himself upon his enemies! Think of all his triumphs when Satan shall be bound, and death shall be

crushed, and hell shall be conquered, and he shall be saluted as the universal Monarch, "Lord over all, blessed for ever. Amen."
"My meditation of him shall be sweet."

Ah, Christian! you are not afraid to be alone a little while now, for want of subjects of meditation. Some persons say that they cannot bear to be even for an hour in solitude; they have nothing to do, nothing to think about. No Christian will ever talk so, surely; for let me but give him one word to think of,—Christ,—and he may spell that over for ever; let me give him the word Jesus, and only let him try to think it over, and he shall find that an hour is nought, and that eternity is not half long enough for our glorious Savior's praise. Yea, beloved, I believe that even when we get to heaven, we shall want no subject for meditation there, except Jesus Christ; I know that there are some great divines, and learned philosophers, who have been telling us that, when we go to heaven, we shall occupy our time in flying from star to star, and from one planet to another; that we shall go and see Jupiter, and Mercury, and Venus, and all the host of celestial bodies; we shall behold all the wonders of creation; we shall explore the depths of science, so they tell us, and they say that there are no limits to the mysteries we shall understand, My reply to people who imagine all this concerning heaven, is, that. I have no objection that it should be so, if it will afford them any pleasure. I hope you Christians all will have, and I know my Heavenly Father will let you have, whatsoever will make you happy; but while you are viewing Stars, I will sit down, and look at Jesus; and if you told me you had seen the inhabitants of Saturn and Venus, and the man in the moon, I would say,—Ah! yes:—

**"But in His looks a glory stands,
The noblest labor of God's hands;
God in the person of his Son,
Has all his mightiest works outdone?"**

But you will say, "You will become tired, surely, of looking at him." No, I should reply; I have been looking at but one of his hands, and I have not yet thoroughly examined the hole where one of the nails went in; and when I have lived next thousand years more, I will take his other hand, and sit down, and look at each gaping wound, and then I may descend to his side, and his feet, and still I shall be able to say to him,—

**"Millions of years my wond'ring eyes
Shall o'er thy beauties rove;
And endless ages I'll adore
The glories of thy love."**

You may go flitting about as far as you like; I will sit there, and look at the God in human flesh, for I believe that I shall learn more of God, and more of his works, in the person of Jesus than you could win all the advantage of travelling on wings of light, though you should have the most elevated imaginations and the most gigantic intellects to help you in your search. Brethren, our meditation of Christ will be sweet. There will be little else we shall want of heaven beside Jesus Christ. He will be our bread, our food, our beauty, and our glorious dress. The atmosphere of heaven will be Christ; everything in heaven will be Christlike; yea, Christ is the heaven of his people. To be in Christ, and to be with Christ, is the essence of heaven.

**"Not all the harps above
Can make a heavenly place,
Should Christ his residence remove,
Or but conceal his face."**

So, you see that Christ is the very precious subject of our meditation. Our meditation of him shall be sweet.

II. Now, in the second place, let me proceed to point Out A Blessed Result Of This Meditation: "My meditation of him shall be sweet"

This result depends very much upon the character of the one who meditates. I know some persons, who come to chapel, who are very glad when they hear the minister pronounce the Benediction, and dismiss the assembly; they are very glad when all is over, and they would rather hear the parting Doxology than the text. As for a meditation on Christ, instead of saying it is sweet, they would say, "It is precious dry." If they happen to hear an anecdote or a tale, they do not mind listening to that; but a meditation

entirely upon Christ would be dry enough to them, and they would be glad to hear it brought to a close. Ah, friend! that, is because of the taste you have got in your mouth; there is something wrong with your palate. You know, when we have been taking a certain kind of medicine, and our mouth has been impregnated with a strong flavour, whatever we eat acquires that taste. so is it with you. You have got your mouth out of taste with some of the world's poor dainties; you have got some of the powder of the apples of Sodom hanging on your lips; and that spoils the glorious flavour of your meditation on Jesus; in fact, it prevents your meditating on Christ at all, It is only a hearing of the meditation with your ears, not a receiving it into your hearts. But the psalmist says," My meditation of him shall be sweet."

What a mercy, dear friends, that there is something sweet in this world for us! We need it. For, I am sure, as for most other things in the World, they are very, very bitter. There is little here that seems sweet, at first, but has a bitter flavour afterwards; and there are too many things that are actually bitter, and void of any relish. Go through the great laboratory of this world, and how many will be the cases and bottles that you will see marked bitter! There are, perhaps, more of aloes put in our cup than of any other ingredient. We have to take a great quantity of bitters in the course of our lives. What a mercy, then, it is that there is one thing that is sweet! "My meditation of HIM shall be sweet;" so sweet, beloved, that all the other bitters are quite swallowed up in its sweetness. Have I not seen the widow, when her husband has departed, and he who was her strength, the stay of her life and her sustenance, has been laid in the grave,—have I not seen her hold up her hands, and say, "Ah! though he is gone, still my Maker is my Husband: The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord"? What was the reason of her patient submission? Because she had a sweet meditation to neutralize the bitterness of her reflections. And do I not remember, even now, seeing a man, whose property had been washed away by the tide, and his lands swallowed up, and become quicksands, instead of being any longer profitable to him. Beggared and bankrupt, with streaming eyes, he held up his hands, and repeated Habakkuk's words, "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." Was it not because his meditation on Christ was so sweet that it absorbed the bitterness of his trouble? And, oh! how many, when they have come even to the dark waters of death, have found that surely their bitterness was past, for they perceived, through their meditation upon Jesus Christ, that death was swallowed up in victory!

Now, if any of you have come here with your mouths out of taste, through affliction and trouble, if you have been saying of the Lord, with Jeremiah, "He hath filled me with bitterness, he hath made me drunken with Wormwood. He hath also broken my teeth with gravel stones, he hath covered me with ashes; "take a little of this choice cordial; I can assure you that it is sweet: Lacrymae Christi, it is called. If thou wilt take these tears of Jesus, and put them in thy mouth, they will take away all the unpleasant flavour that is there now. Or again, I bid you take this meditation upon Christ, as a piece of frankincense that was perfumed in heaven. It matters not what thou hast, in thy house; this shall make it redolent of Paradise, and shall make it smell like those breezes that once blew through Eden's garden, wafting the odour of perfect flowers. Ah! there is; nothing that can so console your spirits, and relieve all your distresses and troubles, as the feeling that now you can meditate on the person of Jesus Christ. "My meditation of him shall be sweet."

But, my dear hearers, shall I send you away without asking whether you have all had such a meditation, upon our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? I do not like ever to preach a sermon without pressing it home upon the consciences of all my hearers. I never care to bring to you the sword of the Spirit, and show it to you, and say, "There is a sword and it is sharp." I always like to make you feel that it is sharp, by cutting you with it! Would to God that the sword of the Spirit might penetrate many of your hearts now! When I see so many gathered together even on a weekday, I am astonished. When I came to London, I did not fancy that there would be half such a congregation as this even on the Sabbath, much less on a weekday. But wherefore have ye come, my brethren? What went ye out for to see? A reed shaken with the wind? What have ye come to see? A prophet? Nay, but I say that you have come to see something more than a prophet. You have come to see and to hear of Jesus Christ, our Savior and our Lord. How many of you really do meditate upon Christ

Christian men and women, do not many of you live below your privileges? Are you not living without having choice moments of communion with Jesus? Methinks, if you had a free pass to heaven's palace, you would use it very often; if you might go there, and hold communion with some person whom you dearly loved, you would often be found there. But here is your Lord Jesus, the King of heaven, and he gives you that which can open the gates of heaven, and let you in to hold sweet fellowship with him, and yet you live without meditating upon his work, meditating upon his person, meditating upon his offices, and meditating upon his glory. Christian men and women, I say to you,—Is it not time to begin to live nearer to God? What is to become of our churches? I do not know what to think of Christendom at large. As I travel through the country, and go here and there, I see the churches in a most awfully dwindled state. True, the gospel is preached in most places; but it is preached as it might be by humble bees in pitchers,—always with the same monotonous sound, and little or no good is done. I feel that the fault lies in the pews, as well as in the pulpit. If hearers are meditative, preachers must be meditative. It is very true that water does not run up-hill; but when you begin to meditate and pray over the Word, your ministers will see that you have gone beyond them, and they will set to, and meditate themselves, and give you the gospel just as it comes fresh from their hearts, and it will be precious food for your souls.

As for you who have never meditated on Jesus Christ, what do you think will become of you when your greatest bitterness shall be in your mouth? When you taste death, how do you hope to destroy its ill flavour? Yet, "that last, that bitter cup which mortal man can taste" is but a dire presentiment. When you have to drink: that gall in hell for ever,—when the cup of torments, which Jesus did not drain for you, will have to be, drained by yourself—what will you do then? The Christian can go to heaven because Christ has drunk damnation dry for him; but the ungodly and unconverted man will have to drink the dregs of the wine of Gomorrah. What will you do then? The first taste is bad enough, when you sip here the drops of remorse on account of sin; but that future cup in hell,—that terrific mixture which God deals out to the lost in the pit,—what will you do when you have to drink that;—when your meditation will be, that you rejected Jesus, that you despised his gospel, that you scoffed at his Word? What will you do in that dread extremity? You business men, will your ledger serve you with a sweet meditation in hell? Lawyer, will it be sweet for you to meditate on your deeds when you go there? Labouring man, will it be a sweet meditation to thee, to think that thy wages were spent in drunkenness, or thy Sabbaths profaned, and thy duties neglected? And thou, professor, will it be a sweet meditation to sit down, and think of thy hypocrisy? And, ah! ye carnally-minded men, who are indulging the flesh, and pampering the appetite, and not serving the Lord, "whose God is your belly, and whose glory is in your shame," will your career furnish a sweet meditation to you at last? Be assured of this; your sins must be your meditation then, if Christ is not your meditation now. May there be great searchings of heart among you! How often do your convictions disperse like the smoke from the chimney, or the chaff from the winnow's hand; they soon vanish. It will not profit you to live at this rate—hearing sermons and forgetting them. Take heed to the voice of warning, lest God should say, "He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

O wicked, men! wicked men! I want to say just this last word to all of you who know not, God, and then ye shall go. I will give you a subject for your meditation; it shall be a parable. A certain tyrant sent for one of his subjects, and said to him, "What is your employment?" He answered, "I am a blacksmith." "Go home," said he, "and make me a chain of such-and-such a length." He went home; the Work occupied him several months, and he had no wages all the while he was making the chain, only the trouble and the pains of making it. Then he brought it to the monarch, and he said, "Go back, and make it twice as long." He gave him nothing to do it with, but sent him away. Again he worked on, and made it twice as long. He brought it up again, and the monarch said, "Go and make it longer still." Each time he brought it, there was nothing but the command to make it longer still. And when he brought it up at last, the monarch said, "Take it, bind him hand and foot with it, and cast him into a furnace of fire." There were his wages for making the chain. Here is a meditation for you to-night, ye servants of the devil! Your master, Satan, is telling you to make, a chain. Some of you have been fifty years welding the links of the chain; and he says, "Go. and make it longer still." Next Sunday morning, you will open that shop of yours, and put another link on; next Saturday night, you will be drunk, and put another link on; next Monday, you will do a dishonest action, and so you will keep on making fresh links to this chain; and when you have lived twenty more years, the devil will say, "Put more links on still!" And then, at last, the command will be, "Take him, and bind him hand and foot, and cast him into a furnace of fire." "For the, wages of sin is death." There is a subject for your meditation. I do not think it will be sweet; but if God makes it profitable, it will do you good. You must have strong medicines sometimes, when the disease is bad. God apply his own Word to your hearts, for Christ's sake! Amen.

Psalm 106:4 Fine Pleading

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"Remember me, O Lord, with the favor that thou bearest unto thy people; O visit me with thy salvation." — Psalm 106:4.

How gracious a thing it is on God's part to make prayers for us! He puts them into our mouths. No one need say, "I cannot pray because I am unable to compose a sentence." Here is a prayer already composed, which would be suitable for the lip of any one here present — high or low, rich or poor, saint or sinner. And it is a yet greater mercy that the God who thus gives us the form of prayer waits to give us the spirit of prayer, "for the Holy Spirit helpeth our infirmities." Whereas we know not what we should pray for, as we ought, he "maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." When he gives you the prayer, and gives you the power to pray it, what a sweet blessing! But that is not all; for when the prayer is thus presented on earth aright, there waits one above, quick of ear and ready of plea, who takes the supplication, presents it before his Father's throne, perfected by his wisdom, and perfumed by his merit; and then the Father smiles, and the prayer is answered with abundant blessing.

My prayer to-night is that many here present may take the words of our text and have them laid upon their souls like burning coals, and that then the smoking incense of holy prayer may go up to heaven, and the Lord may smell in it, through Jesus Christ, a sweet savor of rest.

We shall regard our text to-night in three lights — first, as a suitable prayer for every Christian; secondly, as a very fitting petition

for distressed souls — I mean Christians who are desponding and have lost their evidences; and, thirdly, as a very suitable cry for an awakened, seeking sinner. My dear brethren in the faith, will you join me, then, under the first head, while we consider:

I. How Suitable This Prayer Is For Each Of Us Who Are In Christ Jesus

You will observe that he who prays here asks for no exceptional favor. He says, "Remember me with the favor that thou bearest to thy people." It is not an ambitious prayer that asks to be distinguished beyond the rest of the beloved family. It is not a discontented prayer that seeks to have some special blessing which shall be denied to the rest of the Christian brotherhood. It is a prayer for benedictions common to all the saints. "Remember me with the favor which thou bearest to thy people." And this is a lesson for us in our prayers. For instance, nature suggests to me that I should pray to be saved of all bodily pain; but that is not a favor which God bears towards his people. Many of his people here endure even excruciating pain — some in the pangs of martyrdom, and others through his laying his hand upon them in natural sickness. He never intended to keep his people from pain. He had a Son without sin, but he never had a Son without suffering. The perfected One, the First-born, must have hands and feet pierced, and every nerve must become the means of fresh agony to him. I dare not, therefore, pray, "Lord, keep me from all physical pain." Why should I ask to have what he has not given to the rest of his people? Nay, if there be a cup on the table that tastes of the bitter, and he means it for the sons, let me have my share, and his love with it. So, too, I have no right to ask God to preserve me in riches, or in a comfortable position, or to keep me from poverty. I may ask this, but it must always be with complete submission to the divine will; for who am I that I should not be poor? Better ones by far than I have been poor — much poorer than I am likely to be. Why am I to expect to go to heaven by a smooth, grassy road, while others have had to tread the flints that cut their feet?

Must I be carried to the skies

On flowery beds of ease,

While others fought to win the prize,

And sailed through bloody sea?"

To desire to escape from every form of trial is natural to us, but it is not a dictate of grace that we should turn it into prayer. No; be content with the common lot of God's people. "Shall the disciple be above his Master? Shall the servant be above his Lord?" Let this content you, "Father, whether healthy or sick, whether rich or poor, whether honored or despised, extend to me the favor which thou bearest to thy people; and my largest desires can ask no more."

But please to observe, next, that while this prayer asks for nothing more than the common blessing, it also is content with nothing less,

"Extend to me that favor, Lord,

Thou to thy people dost afford."

It is the same favor that is extended to them that is asked for; for, brethren, anything short of this will not answer our turn. I would desire, and I know you do, my brethren, to have that favor from God which is eternal — that favor which hath no beginning — that everlasting favor which was in the Divine mind or ever the earth was. You want to have also immutable favor, the favor that never changes. Though we change, yet it abides the same. What would you do if the favor of God were changeable? Of what avail would his love be, if that love could come and go — could sometimes give, and then again could take away itself? You want immutable favor. And I know you want boundless favor, for your wants are unlimited. You want the love of Christ that passeth knowledge; you want it in all its heights and all its depths; you want the very heart of God; you want his bowels of compassion; you want a Savior to be one with you, and yourself to be one with him. You would not like to be put off with a crown; you would not like to be put off with an empire, or with all that earth calls good and great. You want no more, but you want no less than such favor as the Lord extends towards those that he loveth, who are the objects of his sacred choice. No more. No less.

You must note, next, in the prayer what is peculiarly to be observed — that he who is praying in this case ask for blessings on the same footing as the rest of the saints. You will observe that it is on the footing of grace He asks that he may have the favor which God beareth towards his people. "Favour." If there be one saved who has been a great offender against God's law, immoral, debauched, and depraved, it must be by favor. And, dear Christian friend, whoever you may be, there is no other way in which you can be saved; and you know it. When the Lord extends the blessings of the covenant to gross sinners, it is clear that they are given to them simply because he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy. But to you, also, the favor comes in precisely the same way. I am sure you dare not ask God to deal with you on the ground of merit, for what were your merits, O ye saints — what were your merits, but to merit the eternal flames? You ask the Lord that he would extend to you, not the dealings of his justice, but that he would remember you with the compassions of his grace. Is there any professed Christian here that refuses to stand on such terms

as these, and come to God and ask for favor — for gratuitous mercy? Then, friend, thou art no child of God. Whatever else the children differ in, they never disagree in this — that “salvation is of the Lord,” and is of grace, and of grace alone. Your spot is not “the spot of his children,” unless you look at even the bread you eat and the raiment you wear as the gift of divine charity, and unless you found all your hope for pardon of sin, and for acceptance at the last, entirely upon the free, undeserved, spontaneous favor of the Lord your God.

Well then, you see, what we ask for is what he gives to all his people — no more, no less; and we ask for that, not as our due, but as a favor — a favor for which we will bless him in life, and bless him in death, if he will but remember to grant it to us.

Still looking at our text as the Christian’s prayer, I would observe that he wishes, according to the text, that the same results may follow as in the case of all God’s people, for he adds, “Visit me with thy salvation” Beloved, God’s favor ends in salvation; and that word “salvation” is a very extensive term. If you read the Psalm you will see that the Psalmist evidently uses it, first, in the sense of deliverance. The children of Israel came to the Red Sea, and they were afraid that there they should be destroyed; but. God led them through the deeps as through the wilderness. Well then, when I pray this prayer, “O Lord, remember me with the favor that thou bearest thy people,” I mean this: “When I come into any trouble, I ask thee to help me to go through it. As thou didst make a way through the sea for thy people of old, make a way for me.” Oh! how often does God do this for us! When it seems as if the obstacles were almost insurmountable — when our wit seems to have failed us, and we can do no more — we have been ready to say, “Alas! Master, what shall we do?” Then our extremity has been the divine opportunity, and through the depths of the sea he has led his rejoicing people. Then the word salvation is meant in the Psalm evidently to include the forgiveness of sins; for you remember, as we read the Psalm, how the sins of Israel were mentioned over and over again. But it is added, “Nevertheless, when they cried unto him, he heard their prayers.” So if I use this prayer, I am to mean just this, “Lord, thou art accustomed to forgive thy people. Forgive me. Thou dost blot out their sins like a cloud. Blot out mine. Thou cast, moreover, help thy children to overcome their sins. Help me; sanctify me, spirit, soul, and body. Thou dost preserve thy people in temptation, and bring them out of it. Gracious Shepherd, keep me as one of thy flock. Thou dost save thy children in the hour of great peril, and as their day so is their strength. Oh! infinite preserver of thy beloved, cover me with thy feathers, and under thy wings permit me to trust Let thy truth be my shield and buckler!” I think it is a very, very sweet prayer. “Visit me with thy salvation when I am on my bed, tossing to and fro, and raise me up if it be thy will. Visit me when I am slandered, and my name is cast out as evil, and cheer thy servant’s heart. Visit me when I am in the deep waters and the depths overflow me — when I sink in deep mire where there is no standing. Come and prove thy saving might. Visit me when I come to die. When the chill floods of the last river are about me, visit me with thy salvation. Then deal with me as thou hast dealt with thy saints whenever they have passed through the valley of the shadow of death. May thy rod and thy staff comfort me. Visit me with thy salvation.” I suggest, Christian brethren, that this prayer will do for you living, and will do for you dying. It is a suitable prayer for the morning and for the evening, for the young and for the old, for days of joy and days of distress. Blessed prayer, let it be often on your lips!

Only one more remark we will make upon it in reference to the Christian. You observe that, all through it is a personal prayer. Our prayers must not always be personal. Our Savior has taught us not to say, “My Father,” but “Our Father which art in heaven.” Yet, for all that, he that never prays for himself in the singular ever prayed aright for others in the plural. If you have never said, “Lord, remember me,” you have not got so far as the thief on the cross. You are not qualified at all to go as far as Abraham on the plains of Mamre, when he interceded for others. He that has the largest heart must look to it that his own personal salvation be secure. So, dear friend, professing Christian, let me ask you to take the prayer in the first person singular, and say, “Lord, remember me with the favor which thou bearest to thy chosen.” I pray it. If thou callest me, Lord, to minister to this great people, as my day is, so may my strength be. As thou hast dealt with others of thy servants in a like position, deal thou so with me. Elders and deacons, with your responsibility upon you, pray that the God of Stephen and the God of Philip will be with you, and extend to you the favor which he gave to elders and deacons of old. Mothers, fathers, ask the grace that he gives to Christian parents. Children, servants, ask for the grace that he has been wont to give to those in your position. Ye who are rich, pray often that you may not miss the divine favor, for these things are often dangerous. You that are poor, pray that you may have this to sweeten all — to make your little to be enough. You that are in health, pray this, lest the vigor of your body be the weakness of your soul. And you upon whose cheek there is the hectic flush of consumption — you that are weak and near departure — you have got already your death-song ready. Here it is: “Lord, remember me! Remember me, O Lord, with the favor which thou bearest toward thy people: O visit me with thy salvation.” I leave that prayer with every Christian heart here, and ask that it may be engraver there by the Holy Spirit. This prayer is also: —

II. A Fitting Player For Depressed, Desponding Souls.

They are God’s people, and we give to them now this prayer, and we trust that as they pray it they may have “the oil of joy given them for mourning, and the garment of praise, instead of the spirit of heaviness.” I ask them to look very briefly, but with all their eyes, at this prayer. You will note that here is a case in which a good man may seem to be forgotten. It is a good man that wrote this Psalm an inspired man, and yet he says, “Remember me, O Lord.” Did he think himself forgotten? He feared he was. There

have been others of God's saints who have endured this fear. Yea, a whole church has sometimes labored under it. Zion said "My God hath forsaken me. My God hath forgotten me." Thus you may be, as you think, forgotten, and yet you may be very dear to God — as dear as ever you were.

Notice, next, that when you, child of God, come into this condition, the very best prayer you can pray is a sinner's prayer. Why do I call this a sinner's prayer? Why, because it so reminds me of the dying thief. "Lord, remember me," was such a suitable prayer for him. Oh! child of God, if thou doubt thine own salvation, do not dispute about it, but go as a sinner; use a sinner's prayer; begin where the dying thief began with, "Lord, remember me." I would recommend to every Christian who is in the dark, and has lost his evidences, to go, at once by the old track that sinners have trodden so long. "I will go to Jesus, though my sin doth, like a mountain, rise. I know his courts; I will enter in." Go to him. Go even now.

And you will observe, too, that for a desponding soul it is good to remember that everything it can obtain in the future by God must be by favor. "Remember me, O Lord, with the favor." I dwelt on this when speaking to the child of God in the light; but it is even more important that we should dwell on this when speaking to the child of God in the dark, for the danger is when you are desponding to begin to be legal. Your own conscience and Satan together will be setting you upon legal methods of getting comfort. They are all fruitless. Go on the track of grace. Free grace is what you want, and nothing else will suit you. Cry, "Lord, remember me with thy favor. Give me what thou couldst not give me as a mere matter of justice! Deal with me as thou couldst not deal with me if thou didst see me in myself as guilty before thee! Deal favourably with thy servant. Have a favor towards me, for this alone can restore me."

And then, next, it is good for a person who is in distress to remember that God's favor towards his own people does not change, for evidently this good man, though he asked God to remember him, had not any doubt whatever that God had a favor towards his own people. Nothing like being sound in doctrine to help you towards comfort. If a man shall doubt the perseverance of the saints, and believe that God will cast away his people, I really do not see what he has to do when he is brought into distress of mind. But if he still holds to this, "Truly the Lord is good to Israel — to such as be of a clean heart. As for me, he may have forgotten me. I fear I am not one of his; but I know he would not forget his own" — why, then the fact of the immutability of God towards his people becomes, as it were, as an argument; and we come before the Lord with better heart and greater hope, and say, "Lord, since thou never changest towards them, introduce me into their number, and let thy eternal love pour forth itself on my poor, broken, disconsolate spirit. Remember me — poor, fallen, backsliding me — with the favor, the free grace. which thou bearest towards thy people." It is well to hold to truth, for it may serve us like an anchorage on the day of storm.

Once again. Let me speak to the depressed, and remind them that the prayer is instructive, for it shows that all that is wanted for a forsaken, forgotten spirit is that God should visit it again. "Remember me, O Lord. Anybody else's remembering can do me no good, but if thou only give one thought toward thy servant, it is all done. Lord, I have been visited by the pastor, and he tried to cheer me. I have had a visit in the preaching of the gospel in the morning and the evening of thy day. I went to thy table, and I did not get encouragement there. But, Lord, do thou visit me!" A visit from Christ is the cure for all spiritual diseases. I have frequently reminded you of that in the address to the Church at Laodicea. The Church at Laodicea was neither cold nor hot, and Christ said that he would spue it out of his mouth; but do you know how he speaks of it as if he would cure it? "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me." That is not an address to sinners. It is sometimes used so, but it is rent out of its connection. It is evidently an address to a church of God, or a child of God, who has lost the presence and the light of God's countenance. All you want is a visit from Christ. All you want is that once again your communion should be restored; and I do bless the Lord that he can do that of a sudden, in a moment! He can make thy soul, "or ever it is aware, like the chariots of Ammi-nadib." You may have come here to-night about as dead in soul as you could be, but the flashes of eternal life can reach you, and kindle a soul within, within the ribs of your old dead nature once again. You may have felt as if it was all over, and the last spark of grace had gone out; but when the Lord visits his people, he makes the wilderness and the solitary place to rejoice, and the desert to blossom as the rose. I do pray it may be such a happy hour to you that the prayer may be fulfilled, "Visit me with thy salvation." I have great sympathy with those that are cast down. God, the comfort of those that are cast down, comfort you! May he bring you out who are bound with chains; and you solitary ones, may he set you in families! And I do not know a wiser method for you to pursue than incessantly to cry unto him; and let this be the prayer, "Remember me — me — with the favor which thou bearest to thy people: O visit me with thy salvation." And now our last point. This is: —

III. A Very Proper Prayer For The Awakened, But Unforgiven Sinner.

There are some in this house of that character. I know there are unforgiven sinners here. I only hope that some of them are awakened to know the danger of their state. If they are, may God help them to, pray this prayer, because, first, it is a humble prayer. "Lord, remember me" — as much as to say, "Lord, give one thought to me. I am a poor miserable sinner. I am not worth much thought, but, Lord, do at least recollect me. Pass me not, O healer of sin-sick souls. Pass me not. Hear my cry; answer my

anguish; regard the desires of my soul. Remember me!" It is an earnest prayer too. No doubt it was earnest as this inspired man prayed it. It breathes life as you read it. Oh! dear heart, if thou wantest a Savior, be in earnest for him. If thou canst take "no" for an answer, thou shalt have "no" for an answer, but if it comes to this, "Give me Christ, or else I die! — I must have mercy — you shall have it. When you will have it, you shall have it. When God stirs you up to agonise for a blessing, the blessing shall not delay. Note that this prayer, which I can recommend to you, is not only humble and earnest, but it is a prayer directed in the right way. It is to God alone. "Remember me, O lord. Visit me, O lord, with thy salvation." All our help lies yonder. There is none here. There is none in any man. No priest can help you — no friend nor minister. When you apply to us we might say what the king of Israel said to the woman in Samaria, when it was straitly shut up with siege, "If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? Out of the winepress, or from the barn floor?" There is nothing we can do. "Vain is the help of man!" Turn your eye to God alone — to the cross where Christ suffered. Look there, and there only, and be this your prayer, "Lord, remember me!" When the thief was dying, he did not say, "John, pray for me." John was there. He did not look on the mother of Christ and say, "Holy Virgin, pray for me." He might have said it. He did not turn to any of the apostles, or the holy company that were around the cross. He knew which way to look; and, turning his dying eye to him who suffered on the center cross, he had no prayer but this, "Lord, remember me." 'Tis all you want. Pray to God, and God alone, for from him alone must mercy come to you.

Observe, again, O sinner, if thou wouldst use this prayer, that it is a personal prayer for thee. "Lord, remember me." Oh! if we could get men to think of themselves, half the battle would be over. Who are you? Who are you? I would put this prayer into your mouth, whoever you may be, "Lord, I have been a Sabbath-breaker this day. All the early part of it was spent as it ought not to be; but, Lord, remember me." "O God, I have been a drunkard. I have broken all the laws of sobriety — have even blasphemed thy name; but Lord, remember me." Is there one here into whose mouth I might put such words as these, "Lord, I stand trembling before thee, for I am a woman that is a sinner. Lord, remember me. Call on me with the favor that thou bearest to thy people. As thou didst look on the woman of Samaria, so look on me"? Is there one here that has been a thief — almost ashamed to have the word mentioned, lest those who sit near should look at you? Well, this is peculiarly the thief's prayer, "Lord, remember me." How I wish I could come round now! I should not know who you were, but, oh! if I could, I would put this right into your heart, "Lord, remember me." Up in the back gallery, where you can hardly hear, and cannot see, it is a good place to pray in — a capital place, there hidden away in the corner, to breathe the cry, "O God, remember me!"

Another thing about this prayer is that it is a gospel prayer. It says, "Remember me with thy favor." Everything a sinner gets must come by favor. It cannot come anyhow else, for if you get what you deserve, you will get no love, no mercy, no grace. Oh! sinner, do come to God on the footing of favor, and say, "For thy name's sake, and for thy mercy's sake, have pity upon poor undeserving me." It is a gospel prayer.

Once again. It seems to me to be an argumentative prayer. "Where is the argument?" say you. Why, here, "Thou hast had favor towards thy people. Lord, have favor towards me." It is always an argument for a man to do a kindness to you if he, has done a kindness to others. We generally say, if we are very poor, "Such a one has been helping poor people like me." There is a sort of implied argument that he will help you, being in the same case. Can you see it? There are the gates of heaven. Can you bear the lustre of those massive pearls? I want you not to look at them, however. Do you see them? Do you see them who are streaming through in long ranks? They go through like a mighty river. There are hundreds, there are thousands, there are tens of thousands of them. Who are they? Who are they! They are, all of them, sinners — just such as I am, dear friend — just such as you are. They are all clothed in white now, but their robes were all black once. Ask them, and you will hear them say they washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Ask every one of them how it is they passed so happily through that pearly gate into the golden-streeted city, and they will all tell you, with united breath, that they: —

"Ascribe salvation to the Lamb;

Redemption to his death."

Oh! I will e'en creep in that way. Ah! through the sinners' Savior I hope to find a passage to the sinners' heaven, where sinners washed white dwell for ever. There is an argument in the prayer. I hope you will have skill to use it till you prevail.

Once again. I commend this prayer to the awakened sinner because it is a prayer for a helpless soul, for it says, Oh! visit me with thy salvation." There are patients in London that would be very glad to be received into a hospital. They would be glad if they could be carried to-morrow morning into some one of those noble institutions, there to be cared for. But there are people worse off than they are, for there are some that could not be carried to a hospital, for they would die on the road. If they are ever to be healed at all, they are in such a bad case that the doctor must come to them. Oh! and that is a sinner's case too, and some feel it; and hence the prayer, "Visit me with thy salvation." "Here, Lord, I lie before thee, so ruined by my sin that I can scarce turn even an eye to the cross; I am so blind. 'Tis true thy grace can save, but my hand is paralyzed, and I cannot grasp thy grace. 'Tis true thy love can penetrate my heart, but, ah! my heart feels so hard, how can thy love get into it? O Savior, thou must do all for me, for mine is a desperate case." Such cases Christ loves. He came to seek and save — not the half-lost, but the lost. Commit thy desperate case

into his hands, who has saved desperate sinners thousands of times, and will save them yet. I do pray that before you rest to-night—before you go to your bed, and dare close your eyes — this may be your heart's prayer, "O Lord, remember me with the favor which thou bearest to thy people. Visit me with thy salvation."

I can do no more than leave it in the hands of the Eternal Spirit. May he bless the word, for Christ Jesus' sake. Amen.

Psalm 106:4, 5 The Poor Man's Prayer

NO. 1454B

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"Remember me, O Lord, with the favor that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation; that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance." — Psalm 106:4, 5.

Beloved, we always reckon it a very hopeful sign when a man begins to think of personal religion. Merely to come with the crowd and professedly to worship is but poor work; but when a man gets to feel the weight of his own sin, and to confess it with his heart before God, — when he wants a Savior for himself, and begins to pray alone that he may find that Savior, — when he is not content with being the child of pious parents, or with having been introduced into the church in his childhood after the fashion of certain sects; but when he pines for real godliness, personal religion, true conversion, it is a blessed sign. When the stag separates itself from the herd we reckon that the dart has struck home; the wound is grievous, and the creature seeks solitude, for a bleeding heart cannot bear company. Blessed are God's woundings, for they lead to a heavenly healing!

We are still more glad when this desire for personal salvation leads a man to prayer, — when he begins really to cry out before God on his own account, — when he has done with the prayers he used to repeat by rote like a parrot, and bursts out with the language of his heart. Though that language may be very broken, or consist only of sighs and tears and groans, it is a happy circumstance. "Behold, he prayeth" was enough for Ananias; he was sure that Paul must be converted; and when we find a man praying, and praying earnestly, for personal salvation, we feel that this is the finger of God, and our heart is glad within us.

The passage before us is one of those earnest personal supplications which we love to hear from any lips. I will read it again, and then proceed to use it in two or three ways. "Remember me, O Lord, with the favor that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation; that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance."

Now, first, this is a very suitable prayer for the humble believer: it was a humble believer who first uttered it. Next, it would make a very suitable petition for a penitent backslider; and, thirdly, it would be a very sweet gospel prayer for a seeker. May the Spirit of God bless the word to each of these characters.

I. First, then, this is an admirable prayer for A poor humble Christian. I think I can hear him using the very words.

Notice with interest the first fear felt by this poor trembling Christian. He is afraid that he is such a little one that God will forget him, and so he begins with, "O remember me with the favor which thou bearest to thy people." I know this man well. I think very much of him, but he thinks very little of himself. I admire his humility, but he often complains that he feels pride in his heart. He is a true believer, but he is a sad doubter. Poor man, he often hangs his head, for he has such a sense of his own unworthiness; I only wish he had an equal sense of Christ's fullness to balance his humility. He is on the road to heaven, but he is often afraid he is not, and that makes him watch every step he takes. I almost wish some confident professors were altogether as doubtful as he is if they would be half as cautious. He is afraid to put one foot before another, lest he should go wrong, and yet he mourns his want of watchfulness. He is always complaining of the hardness of his heart, and yet he is tenderness itself. Dear man — you should hear him pray. His prayers are among the most earnest and blessed you ever listened to, but when he has done he is afraid he never ought to have opened his mouth. He is not fit to pray before others, he says. He thinks his prayers the poorest that ever reach the throne of God; indeed, he is afraid they do not get there, but spend themselves as wasted breath. He has his occasional gleams of sunlight, and when he feels the love of God in his soul he is as merry as the cricket on the hearth. There is not a man out of heaven more gay than he when his hope revives. But, oh, he is so tender about sin that when he finds himself growing a little cold, or in any measure backsliding, he begins to flog himself, — at which I am very glad, but he also begins somewhat to doubt his interest in his Lord, of which I am not glad, but pity him much and blame him too, though with much sympathy for him. Now, I am not quite sure about this good man's name, — it may be Littlefaith, or Feeblemind. Or is it Mr. Despondency I am thinking of? Or am I talking of Miss Much-afraid? Or is it Mr. Ready-to-halt? Well, it is some one of that numerous family. This poor soul thinks, "Surely God will forget me!" No, no, dear heart, he will not forget you. It is wonderful how God does think of little things. Mungo Park picked up a

little bit of moss in the desert, and as he marked how beautifully it was variegated, he said, "God is here: he is thinking of the moss, and therefore he will think of me." Once upon a time a little plant grew right in the middle of the forest, and the trees stretched for many a mile all around it, and it said to itself, "The sunlight will never get at me. I have a little flower which I would fain open, but it cannot come forth till the sunbeam cherishes me. Alas! it will never reach me. Look at the thick foliage: see the huge trunks of those towering oaks and mighty beeches, these will effectually hide the sun from my tiny form." But in due season the sun looked through the trees like a king through the lattices and smiled on the little flower; for there never was a flower that God has not thought of and provided for. Say ye not right well that "each blade of grass hath its own drop of dew," and think you that God will forget; you, little as you are? He knows when swallows fly, and when emmets awake and gather their stores, and will he not think of you? Because you are little you must not suspect the love of your heavenly Father. Mother, which child is that which you never do forget? If you ever went to bed at night and left one of the children out of doors, I know which one it was not. It was not the babe which lies helpless in your bosom. You never forget that. And ye helpless ones, ye timid trembling ones, if the Lord must forget any, it would be the strong, but certainly not you. As you breathe the prayer, "Remember me with the favor that thou bearest to thy people," the Lord answers you, "I do earnestly remember thee still."

Observe next, that this poor trembling heart seems to be in great trouble for fear the Lord should pass it by, but at the same time feels that every good thing it can possibly receive must come from the Lord, and must be brought to it by the Lord. Note the words: "O visit me with thy salvation," as if he had said, "Lord, I cannot come to thee: I am too lame to come, I am too weak to come, but visit me. O Lord, I am like the wounded man between Jericho and Jerusalem: I am half dead, and cannot stir. Come to me, Lord; for I cannot move to thee. Visit me, for only thy visitations can preserve my spirit. I am so wounded and sore broken, and undone, that if thou do not visit me with thy salvation even as if I never had been saved before, I must be lost."

Now, poor trembler, let me whisper a half word into thine ear, and may God the Holy Spirit make it a comfort to thee. Thou needest not say, if thou hast a broken heart, "Lord, visit me." Do you not know that he dwells in you, for is it not written, "To this man will I look, and with this man will I dwell, even with him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word"? Are you not the very person? I wish you could rejoice at God's word, but as you cannot, I am glad you tremble at it, for you are the man that God has promised to dwell with. "Trembleth at my word," — lay hold on that, and believe that the Lord looks towards you, and dwells with you.

What a plaintive prayer this is! Carefully consider that this poor, weak, humble, trembling one longs to partake in the blessings which the Lord gives to his own people, and in the joy which he has in store for them. This is the way in which he speaks, "I hear many Christians around me say that they know and are persuaded, O that I had a little of their certainty. I hear them speak so confidently, with such full assurance, and I see the light leap out of their eyes when they talk about their sweet Lord and Master, and all his love to them; oh, how I wish I could talk so! Poor I, I am only able to say, ' Lord, I believe: help thou mine unbelief.' I see them sitting at a loaded table, and they seem to feast most abundantly, but as for me, I am glad it is written that the dogs eat the crumbs which fall from the Master's table, for if I get a crumb now and then, I feel so happy with it; but I wish I could sit and feast where others of God's children do. Oh that I could talk of rapt fellowship and close communion and toward joy, and overflowing bliss! They tell me, some of them, that they sit down on the doorstep of heaven, and look within and see the golden streets, and that sometimes they hear stray notes from the harps of the blessed ones in the far-off country. Oh, how I wish I had a sip of these joys; for, woe is me, I dwell in Mesech and sojourn in the tents of Kedar; and the only music that I hear is the din of a sinful world, — the viols of them that make merry in wantonness. I miss those precious things which the saints delight in." Poor sorrowing heart, let me say to thee, and say in God's name, if thou lovest thy Lord, all things are thine. They are thine freely to enjoy even at this moment. The Lord denies thee no covenant blessing. Make bold to appropriate the sacred joys, for if thou be the least child in the family, yet the heritage of God's children is the same for every one. There is no choice thing that God will keep away from thee. Nay, if there be one morsel more dainty than another it is reserved for such as thou art. Make bold, then. If thou be the Benjamin in the family, thou shalt have Benjamin's mess which is ten times larger than any other. He will comfort thee and bless thee. Only be thou of good cheer, and when thou art praying, "Favor me with the favor which thou bearest to thy people," let thy faith hear him say, "I am thy portion." Rejoice in the Lord thy God. Lift up the hands that hang down, and confirm the feeble knees. Is not my text a sweet prayer for thee? Pray it in faith, and be at peace.

II. We will now look another way, and say that our Text Is A Suitable Petition For A Poor Penitent Backslider.

I know there are backsliders here; though, alas, I am not sure that they are penitent. The Lord alone can read their hearts. But if they are penitent I can hardly conceive a more suitable petition for them than that which is before us.

It is clear that this poor, pleading backslider feels that he has forgotten, his God. Have you done that? You have been a church-member, and you have gone sadly astray; have you quite forgotten his commandments. You thought you loved him. You used to pray at one time: you had some enjoyment in reading and in hearing the Word; but now you find your pleasure somewhere else.

You have left your first love and gone after many lovers. But, oh, if the Lord is gracious to you, you are lamenting your forgetfulness; and though you have not remembered him, the prayer leaps to your lips, "Lord, remember me." Blessed be his name, he does not so easily forget us as we forget him. If thou be a truly penitent backslider thy feelings of repentance prove that God remembers thee. It is he that sets thee weeping, and makes thee sorrow for thy sin. If thou hadst been altogether forgotten of God thou wouldst not have any desire to return to him; but those inward pangs, those secret throes, those desires to be restored to the Lord — these prove that he remembers thee with the favor which he has towards his people.

And, then, I think your next trouble will be this: you feel that you have lost your fellowship with Christ: and you are right in so feeling, for "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" How could Christ have fellowship with you in the ways of folly? Do you think Christ would come and talk comfortably to you while you are frivolous, or while you are unclean? How could that be? All joyful communion between your soul and God is broken, and well may you pray, "O visit me with thy salvation. Come back to me, Lord. Come add dwell in me again.

'Why should my foolish passions rove?

Where can such sweetness be

As I have tasted in thy love,

As I have found in thee?'

Come back, my Lord, and visit me with thy salvation." Is not this a prayer made on purpose for you?

And, next, you observe in the text that the poor backslider is longing to get a sight of the good things which for a long time has been hid from him. He cries, "That I may see the good of thy chosen." he has been out amongst the swine, but he could not fill his belly with the husks. He has been hungering and thirsting, and now he remembers that in his Father's house there is bread enough and to spare. Backslider, do you remember that to-night? You know you are not happy, and you begin to perceive that you never will be happy while you are living in the far country. If you had not been a child of God you might have made a happy worldling after the sort of happiness that worldlings know; but you are spoiled for a worldling if you have ever known the love of God; and you have known that, or else you have been indeed a hypocrite. Do you not sigh to the Lord to give you these good things again? Well, he will freely give them to you, and he will not upbraid you. Come and try him. He is ready to press you to his bosom, and to forget and forgive the past, and accept you in the Beloved.

The poor backslider praying in the words of my text longs to taste once more the joy he used to feel, and therefore he says, "That I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation"; and, again, he wants to be able to speak as he once could — "that I may glory with thine inheritance." Poor man, he is ashamed to speak to sinners now. He hangs his head in company, for there are some that call him turncoat. He does not like to have it known that he was once a Christian: and therefore he comes stealing in to the assembly of the saints as if he hoped no one would know him. There he is, but he feels half ashamed to be here: and yet he wishes that he were once more with the Christian brotherhood, and could rejoice with them. My poor friend, you used to be bold as a lion for Christ once, and now you turn tail and fly. How can you be bold with all those inconsistencies? There was a time when you might have made a martyr, but now what a coward you are; and who wonders that you are so when they know that secret sin has sapped and undermined your profession, and made you weak as water? I beg you to pray the prayer — "That I may glory with thine inheritance." You never will again make your boast in the Lord till you are restored, till you come back again as you came at first with the old cry, "Father, I have sinned before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." Come back even now, my brother, and get another application of the blood of sprinkling. Look again to Jesus. Ah, and I may here say, if you have not backslidden, look again to Jesus. Those of us who have not fallen had better look to him with our brethren who have fallen, for there is the same blessing wanted by us all. We have all wandered to some extent. Come, let us look to those dear wounds anew. Can ye not see him? Methinks he hangs before me now. The thorn-crown is on his head, and his eyes are full of languid pity and tearful grief. I see his face bestained with spittle, and black and blue with cruel bruises.. I see his hands, they are founts of gore. I see his feet, they gush with rivulets of crimson blood. I look upon him, and I cry, "Was ever grief like thine, O King of sorrow?" and as I look I do remember that the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of all his people; and, looking, my sin departs from me, because it was laid on him. Looking, my heart beans to love, and then beans to leap. Looking, I come back: again to where I stood before; and now, once again, Christ is my all, and I rejoice in him. Have you gone through that process, backslider? If you have done so while I have been speaking, let us praise God together.

III. The last use I have to make of my text will, I hope, be beneficial to many here present. It is this: This In A Very Sweet Prayer For A Poor Sorrowing Seeker.

I beg all who desire conversion to remember this prayer. They had better jot it down, and carry it home with them, or, better still,

breathe it to heaven at once.

Consider it well. To begin with, it is a sinner's prayer. "Remember me, O Lord!" A sinner's prayer, I say, for the dying thief rejoiced to use the words. He could not have reached down a prayer-book and said a collect, poor man, when he was dying, and there was no need he should. This is the best of prayers, — "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Trembling sinner, what suited the dying thief may well suit you. Breathe it now, "Forget my sins, my Father, but remember me. Forget my delays, forget my rejectings of a Savior, forget the hardness of my heart, but, oh, remember me. Let everything pass away from thy mind, and be blotted from thy memory; but, dear Father, by the love of the Lord Jesus, do remember me." Sinner, do not go home without presenting that prayer to God.

Note, again, it is the prayer of a lost one. "Visit me with thy salvation." Nobody wants salvation unless he is lost. People may talk about salvation who do not feel that they are lost, but they do not know any thing about it, and do not really desire it. Lost soul, where art thou? Art thou lost in a thousand ways — lost even to society? Well here is a fit prayer for thee — "Visit me with thy salvation." Jesus Christ has not come to seek and to save those who do not want saving, but he has come on purpose to seek and to save that which was lost. Thou art the man he came to bless. Look to him, and thou shalt find that he is the Savior thou dost require. "Visit me with thy salvation" — I cannot get this prayer into your hearts, but God can, and I am praying in my own soul that many of you in the galleries, or down below there, may now be crying, "Visit me with thy salvation."

Farther, remark that our text is the prayer of one who has a dim eye — "That I may see the good of thy chosen." We have told the seeker to look to Jesus, but he complains, "I do try to look, but I cannot see." Beloved seeker, I do not know that you are bidden to see. You are bidden to look; and if you could not see when you looked you would at least have obeyed the gospel command. The looking, the looking would bring salvation to you. But for dim eyes Christ is the great cure. He can take away the cataract and remove the gutta serena. Pray to-night, "Lord, open my blind eyes, that I may see the good of thy chosen."

Then it is a prayer for a heavy heart. "That I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation." The seeking soul moans out, "O that I had a little joy, or even a trembling hope. If it were ever so small a portion of light I should be glad." Pray for joy. The Lord waits to give it, and if you believe in Jesus your joy shall be full.

And in the last place — not to detain you till you are weary — our text is the prayer of a spirit that is humble and laid in the very dust, which cries to God to enable it to glory with his inheritance, because it is stripped of all other glory, emptied of its own boastings. Practically its plea is, "Lord, give me to boast in thy mercy and thy goodness, for I have nothing else to boast of."

Now, beloved hearer, this prayer I would most earnestly press upon you, and I would press it upon you for these reasons.

Just think for a moment. Supposing you are living now without seeing the good of God's chosen, without being saved, what a wretched life it is to live! I cannot understand what men do without God: I cannot comprehend how they live. Do you have no cares, men? "Oh," you say, "we have anxieties in shoals." Well, where do you take them? I find I have troubles enough, but I have a God to take them to. What do you do with many troubles and no God? Do your children never distress your mind? How can you live with bad children, and no God? Do you never lose money in your business? Do you never feel distracted? Do you never say, "What shall I do? Which way shall I turn?" I suppose you do. Then what do you do without a helper or a guide? Poor weak thing as I am, I run under the shelter of my Father's wing, and I feel safe enough. But where do you go? Where do you fly? What is your comfort? I suppose you are something like the poor creatures, condemned to death in old times to whom they gave a stupefying cup, so that they might die without feeling the horror of death: surely you must be under a strong delusion that you can believe a lie, for if you were in your senses you could not do without a God, — no, not with your beautiful gardens and fine parks, and wealth, and riches, much less — many of you — with your poverty and hard labor. Poor man without a God, how do you keep up your spirits? What comfort is there in your life? No prayer in the morning, no prayer at night: what days, what nights! Oh, men, I could as soon think of living without eating, or living without breathing, as living without prayer. Wretched naked spirits, your souls must be with no God to cover them! But if it be bad to live without Christ — and I am sure it is, — what will it be to die without him? What will it be to look into the future, and find no light — no light, and nobody that can bring you any? You have sent to the minister, and he has spoken with you, but he cannot help you; you have had the prayers of your family, who are sobbing at the thought of losing you, but you are looking out alone like one that gazes upon an angry sea in a cold winter's storm, and you can see nothing but the palpable dark. Or, to change the metaphor, you are like a man on yonder wreck. See, he is clinging to the mast; he hears the blast go whistling by him, and anon it comes back howling around him, as if hungry for its prey. He can hear the sea mews screaming in the sky and they seem to prophesy his doom. The waves break over him, drenching him with their brine, till he is ready to freeze as he hangs between death's awful jaws. The lifeboat has been and carried off all it can, and it will never come back any more; and, though he clings with desperation, he knows it is a forlorn hope. He will drift out to sea, and his corpse will lie where pearls lie deep, in the caverns where many thousand skeletons have bleached these many years: his case is terrible to the last degree, and yet it is a feeble picture of a soul leaving the body without an interest in Christ's salvation. Before you get into that state, cry to God, "Remember me, O Lord, with the favor that thou bearest unto thy people. O visit me with thy salvation!"

But the mist darkens and the tempest lowers in tenfold fury when we come to think what it must be to rise again from the tomb without Christ. When that last shrill clarion has sounded, and every grave and cemetery shall have given up their sleepers, and the sea has yielded up the dead that are therein, and battle-fields are swarming with the myriad slain that live again, and in the sky shall be seen the great white throne, and upon it the Son of man who bled for sinners now come to judge and to condemn his adversaries; what will men then do if they have no personal religion, no interest in Christ, no portion in his salvation? Scripture tells us that they will ask the rocks to hide them and the hills to cover them: but they have no bowels of compassion, they will yield no shelter. There will be no refuge for the ungodly, and nothing before them except the fiery indignation and wrath of God. "I turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?"

This is a common scene to many of you, this great gathering in the Tabernacle. I must confess I cannot look upon it without emotion, though I see it twice each Sabbath day. Here are all of you, and I, a lone man, standing here to talk to you in God's name. It is as much as my soul is worth if I am not earnest with you; but ah, I am not half as earnest as I ought to be. Yet hear me once more. I am a true prophet at this hour — when I warn you that you shall see this sight again if you reject the Savior. Across the flames of hell you will see it, and you will say to yourself, "The preacher did warn us: he did tell us to cry to God for mercy: he did point us to the Savior. He bade us pray, and pray there and then." You will remember my entreaties, and then you will renew your agony as, with a wail which shall never end, you will cry, "God called, but I refused: he stretched out his hands, but I regarded him not, and now the day of grace is past, and the Christ whom I despised doth laugh at my calamity and mock when my time is come: for there is no hope — no hope. I knocked too late at mercy's door. My lamp went out. I was a foolish virgin, and I am shut out in outer darkness, where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth." In the name of the everlasting God I pray you submit yourselves to Christ your Lord at once and you shall live. Amen. Amen.

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