

EXCEEDING GLADNESS

NO. 1827

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, MARCH 8, 1885,
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON DECEMBER 21, 1884.

“For You have made Him most blessed forever: You have made Him exceedingly glad with Your countenance.”
Psalm 21:6.

You have heard a great many sermons upon the Man of Sorrows. I am sure that you have not heard too many and if, from this time to the end of your life, you should, every Lord's Day, hear of Him and of His sufferings, you will not be nauseated with that theme. You will still feel an intense pleasure in hearing the story of your Lord's griefs and in having fellowship with Him in His sufferings, for by His agonies and death He has redeemed you unto Himself. Probably you have never listened to a discourse upon, “The Man of Joys!” I venture, thus, to name the Christ of God. We do not often enough meditate upon the happiness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Remember that it was for the *joy* that was set before Him that He endured the Cross, despising the shame, and the expectation of joy is joy.

The light of His coming reward shone on our Lord's daily path and made it bright with a glorious hope. Sin is the mother of sorrow and Jesus knew no sin. Conscience never made Him a coward; remorse never pricked His heart; malice, envy and discontent never gnawed at His soul. He was the Prince of Peace even when He was despised and rejected of men. Deep as were His griefs, we may reckon Jesus of Nazareth among the happiest of men. There was nothing of that efflorescence, that effervescence, that froth of joy which *carnal* men value so highly—but there was a deep peace, a calm content which is beyond all price. Jesus did not enter into such mirth as might have befitted Herod's palace, or Dives' gilded saloons, or Caesar's luxurious banquets. But He knew such joy as the Son of God must know when His Father always hears Him and as the Savior of men must know when His every word and act are blessing a fallen race!

He felt a supreme delight in doing the will of the Father and in carrying out the purpose of His own gracious mind. He was filled with a mighty resolve so strong that it beat off every force which would have turned His mind aside from His chosen path. And He felt an infinite love which found intense satisfaction in yielding up everything for its objects. There was, in fact, even in the midst of the sorrows which were necessary to His service, a satisfaction in bearing those sorrows, a delight in passing through those depths of agony which were necessary for the accomplishment of His grand design!

A man cannot be full of such benevolence as that which filled the heart of Christ and yet be utterly miserable. Unselfishness necessarily brings with it a measure of joy. A man could not open blind eyes, unstop deaf ears, make lame men leap, heal lepers, raise the dead and yet remain comfortless! As well suppose that the sun, which scatters so much heat, may be, itself, a huge globe of ice! The fountain which yields such streams of blessing has its own flash and sparkle—we feel sure of it. As pearls may lie in plenty in caverns, over which there rolls a dread tempestuous sea, so there slept in the heart of Jesus, treasures of joy, even when the ocean of His holy Soul was lashed with hurricanes of woe. There is a joy in doing good which cannot be separated from the doing of the good—and the Savior possessed it beyond conception. There is a joy in living entirely out of one's self for the good of others—and this Jesus drank to the fullest! There is a joy in achieving a great purpose, even when it is only by sorrow that our design is worked out—and that, also, our Redeemer knew. In Him was perfectly explained that enigma of Paul, “As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.”

I am not going to say more of the joy of our Lord on earth. And only for a few moments shall I enlarge upon the exceeding gladness of the God-Man, Christ Jesus, at this present moment in Heaven, though it is to this that our text pri-

marily refers. Jesus has gone up into Glory and the eyes of faith can see Him at the right hand of the Father, forever exalted as Head of the Church, and Head over *all* things for her sake. In that position our Lord is filled with superlative felicity. His death is rewarded by the Father with an endless life of bliss—“He asked life of You, and You gave it Him, even length of days forever and ever. His glory is great in Your salvation: honor and majesty have You laid upon Him. For You have made Him most blessed forever: You have made Him exceedingly glad with Your countenance.”

I need not enter into the joy of Christ as God, for this is inseparable from His Godhead, but I speak of Him, now, as Mediator, in His complex Person, standing between God and man. In that capacity, as risen from the dead and gone into Glory, He is supremely glad—glad because His work is finished. Such a work as His had so taken up His whole heart and engrossed His whole being, that it became a baptism to be baptized with—and He was straitened until it was accomplished. It is accomplished, now, and the straitening is ended. He has not another act to do by way of obedience to the Law. He has not another pang to bear by way of fulfillment of penalty due for our guilt. “It is finished,” is the *finis* of His God-like labor! There is not another drop of blood to be shed! No more chastisement of our peace is to be laid on Him! No more stripes are to be exacted for our healing—

***“No more the bloody spear,
The Cross and nails no more,
For Hell itself shakes at His name,
And all the heavens adore.”***

“*Consummatum est*” is written at the foot of His Throne. His work is so finished that all the results of it are sure—those for whom He died are safe—that which He purchased by His blood He has obtained. He has left nothing undone in any point so that a degree of failure may yet occur. He has left no stone of the wall to tumble from its place. His work is so completely done that, as He looks upon it all, He feels unmingled joy and content. The Father looks upon Him with such a perfect satisfaction in His glorious work, that our text is fulfilled beyond the letter. “You have made Him exceedingly glad with Your countenance.”—

***“A life eternal as Your years
A glory infinite like Thine
Repays Him for His groans and tears,
And fills His soul with joy Divine.”***

Nor is this all, for Jesus Christ our Lord rejoices to think that now, from this day forth, *God has made Him to be the fountain of priceless, numberless, endless blessings to men*. Observe the first clause of our text and remember that it may be read thus—“You have made Him *blessings* forever.” That is to say, God has now opened, in His Son Jesus Christ, a well of blessings which will never cease to flow as long as there are men to drink. He is no curse to men, but only blessing! He is not *one* blessing only, but *all* blessings! These blessings are the chief gifts that even God can give and they are in Christ Jesus to all eternity! The Lord Jesus, who was once the center of grief, has now become the source of love, favor, help, healing, benediction, delight, Heaven and whatever else may be called blessing—

***“Immortal joys come streaming down,
Joys, like His griefs, immense, unknown.”***

No, blessings do not only come *from* Him, but He *is* blessings! He is, Himself, made or constituted blessings to all eternity. O blessed Lord, we pause to adore and bless You even now! This makes our Lord exceedingly glad, to think that He is, in His own proper Person, the very center of all blessing to His people. Fullness of blessing abides in Him. There is no blessing that you need, poor Sinner, but what Jesus has it, has it for *you*! “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.” No blessing that you need, dear child of God, shall be denied you, for, “of His fullness have all we received, and Grace for Grace.” That fullness abides where it is—it has never diminished and it never will be diminished throughout eternity!—

***“Dear dying Lamb, Your precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed Church of God
Is saved to sin no more.”***

Whenever God makes any one of you to be the channel of blessing to other people, are you not happy? Yes, certainly, in your measure. But what must be the superlative gladness of the Christ in being the Center of centers, the Fountain of

fountains to all those who draw near to Him? God has made Him, beyond all others and inclusive of all others, to be blessings forevermore! Must He not be filled with gladness?

Our Lord has joy beyond this. I want you to think much of His gladness that you may be able to obey Him, now, should He say to you, “Enter you into the joy of your Lord.” At this very hour may His joy be in you that your joy may be full. Jesus sympathizes with you in your sorrows—will you not sympathize with Him in His joys? Should we not rejoice with them that rejoice and especially with Him, the Bridegroom of our souls? This is a further part of His gladness—He *joys in the conversion, the comfort, the justification, the salvation of every soul that comes to Him*. “There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents.” Almost everybody who preaches from that text is content with the undoubted Truth of God that the angels rejoice over sinners that repent. No doubt they do so—but the text does not tell us so. It says, “There is joy in the *presence* of the angels of God”—that is to say, *they are present* where there is joy—they look upon the face of Christ and see the joy which fills His heart as His redeemed ones are renewed by Grace!

Angels behold the delight that fills the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit as sinners turn from the error of their ways. If, at this moment, a sinner, conscious of his sin, is flying to the Cross for refuge, he is making Christ happy! If he is now bowing the knee and crying, “God be merciful to me, a sinner,” that cry of his is music to the soul of his loving Savior! When that repenting sinner casts himself upon the great Atonement and rests in the Sacrifice of Jesus, the heart of Jesus receives a part of its infinite reward and the promise is, in a measure, fulfilled, “He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied.” You know the meaning of the suggestive figure couched in those words—the soul of Christ was in pangs, like a woman in travail, for these souls—and they are born to eternal life as the result of His soul’s labor. And then, as the mother sees the child, and remembers no more her sorrow for joy that a man is born into the world, so does the Savior see each one of His beloved ones born to Himself and feels a joy so great that He is more than recompensed for having died on the cruel tree!

Oh, the joy of Christ over a soul that turns to Him! O my Hearer, think of it! Consider! Is it really so? You are capable of making the heart of Christ to throb with unspeakable joy even now! My beloved Hearer, you have lived in sin and I fear you will die in it. Nobody thinks much of you and you feel the neglect. You are even now sighing, “No man cares for my soul.” But Jesus cares for you! And if you come to Him, you shall fill His loving heart with gladness! Your forgiveness, renewal and salvation will cause Him to rejoice in spirit. What do you say? If the Christ in Glory values you, I beseech you, do not trifle with yourself, or lie down in despair!

Moreover, I believe that Jesus in Glory finds great joy in *all the deeds of His saved people*. Whenever He sees one of His believing people counting His reproach to be greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt, our Lord is glad. When He sees a heart that has been washed in His blood, true to Him, refusing to believe false doctrine, or to do that which is unjust, then is Christ glad over His disciple! When He sees you plotting and planning how you can honor Him; when He marks your self-denials; when He sees you prayerful, earnest, active, spiritual, loving—His gladness is great! I tell you all the love you have for Him, He delights in! And your childlike confidence in Him and your little struggling light which seeks after more light—and your earnest longings for His coming and His Kingdom, and those broken words of yours by which you speak to others of His love—all these things He sees with exquisite pleasure! These are flowers that would not have grown in your garden if He had not sown them there. If there is anything that is honest, true, holy, heavenly and Christ-like, it is all His work—and He is right glad to see it! I know you will think that He sees in us much to grieve Him and I grant you that He does, but He knows our frame and He remembers that we are dust. But when He sees anything that His own Spirit has worked in us, He beholds it with intense complacency and deigns to take a continual pleasure therein.

Moreover—and I speak gently and softly here—I believe that our Master derives a Divine satisfaction from *the holy sufferings of His people* when they bear pain with patience—when they praise His name on their beds and adore Him in the fires and, when coming to die—they bear themselves calmly in the last dread article, behaving themselves as men who know no fear. When they walk through the very jaws of death, fearing no evil, simply confiding in the eternal Christ—then is Jesus glad to see how well they have learned the lesson which He taught them! When they come up on the other side of Jordan, like sheep from the washing—when they appear before His Throne, “without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing”—when the shining ones draw near before Him and cast their crowns at His dear feet. When they lift their

united hallelujahs unto Him that loved them and washed them from their sins in His precious blood—then is the King exceedingly glad!

My tongue cannot possibly tell you of the *joy of our Lord in His people's joy*. It is from Christ that Heaven's gladness comes and it is into Christ that hearers' gladness flows. He gives the redeemed all their bliss and He receives from them all that bliss as they lovingly ascribe their salvation to Him alone. He, at this moment, is Heaven's center, the happiest of the happy, the blessed Leader of a blessed company, the triumphant Captain of a triumphant band who, having gone forth conquering and to conquer, have, at last, finished the fight, sheathed the sword and shared their Master's victory! They cry unto Jehovah, "You have made Him exceedingly glad with Your countenance" and they, themselves, partake of that gladness!

All this is my preface at this time and I need not apologize for the length of it, since its theme might fitly have been that of the whole discourse. The sermon shall be somewhat short and I trust it will be sweet. This is the subject of it—I desire that the Lord's people may enter into this joy of Christ and that, as each one of them is made a king, the text may be fulfilled in each one of them. I have not described to you the gladness of our Lord as it ought to be described, but I can do no better. If you will endeavor to share in it, you will make up for my deficiencies. May the Holy Spirit aid you!

I. First, I would remark that GLADNESS IS THE PECULIAR PRIVILEGE OF SAINTS. "Happy are you, O Israel!" "Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous." Why should we not be glad? *It is all right between us and God*. If, having rebelled against Him, we had never repented and had never been reconciled, we ought to be miserable. He that is out of order with God may well be out of order with himself. But we have been brought near—we have been adopted into the family of God—we have obtained reconciliation through the precious blood and have enjoyed the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His Grace! Ought we not to be glad?

Dear Heart, there is no quarrel between you and God! Peace has been made through Jesus Christ. The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keeps your heart and mind through Christ Jesus. If you have not a right to be happy, who has? In a well-ordered government, those that are friendly with their prince have a right to rejoice in his courts. And in the government of God, it seems but right and natural that those who are made to be at peace with God should be among the happiest of Heaven's courtiers. It is meet that we should make merry and be glad! Let us take advantage of that right and may the Spirit of Joy make us glad at this good hour!

In addition to the fact that they are right with God, *Believers have their present solaces* in many ways. Grace endows them with immediate joys. I like that part of our song which we sang just now—

*"The hill of Zion yields
A thousand sacred sweets
Before we reach the heavenly fields,
Or walk the golden streets."*

If I were to try and tell all the things that make Christians glad, even here below, I should have to make an endless catalog! Where should I begin? Once beginning, where should I leave off? You can count your sorrows, dear Brothers and Sisters, I dare say. You are quite *au fait* at adding them all up, but I would have you to recapitulate your *joys* with equal readiness! Why not? Review the shining ranks of your mercies. Are they not new every morning? Is not the faithfulness of God exceedingly great? Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, God has done so much for us that we are glad! He has surprised us with the greatness of His goodness!

If I had been sure, 35 years ago, that I would have possessed, in the Covenant of Grace, such a portion as I have at this hour, I think I would have leaped out of my body for joy! When I was under a sense of sin, if I had been assured that I should yet be forgiven, I do not know that I could have contained myself for delight! When I was lying under the chastening hand of God on account of my transgressions, if I had known that He would turn His face upon me and smile upon me, and make me His child, and put me into the ministry and permit me the great privilege of telling of the wonders of His Grace, I verily believe that it would have been too great a weight of joy—it would have crushed me with too much delight!

And yet, at this moment, I am not half as glad as I should be warranted in being because of the unspeakable mercy of God to me. Just apply that reflection to your own cases. Is there not about you, now, that which would have made your mouth water if you had known 20 years ago that you would be what you are now? Yes, 50 or 60 years ago, perhaps, if it could have been revealed to you that you would live to be a man verging upon 80, still rejoicing in God, you would have

said, “No, not I. I shall fall a prey to the enemy long before that. I shall go back and prove to be a hypocrite long before that.” You would not have credited that the Lord would ever have done so much for you as He has actually done! Come, do not rob your God of His praises! Defraud not your King of His revenue of Glory!

Do not get to fretting and stewing about nothing at all, but rejoice in the Lord *always*, and then rejoice again! This is an appointed feast; let us keep it. “The Lord has done great things for us, whereof we are glad.” I heard a Brother in a Prayer Meeting say, “The Lord has done great things for us, whereof *we desire to be glad*” and I wanted to jump down that man’s throat and pull that passage back, again, and put it into its natural shape! What business had the Brother to change the Bible and talk such wretched stuff? “Whereof *we desire to be glad*”? Why, if the Lord has done great things for us, we *are* glad, we cannot help it! And, blessed be His name, we do not *wish* to do so!

In addition to that, *we have a brilliant future before us*. We are the heirs of great expectations. The children of God not only possess present mercies, like the leaves and flowers of summer, but things which God has prepared for them that love Him, laid by in store like the fruits of autumn! Come, think of Heaven for a moment or two and anticipate its Glory. Put on your crown for a little while and wear your white garments! Can you not take a palm branch in your hand in imagination, and sing the new song in your heart? You know that you will be thus arrayed and thus occupied within a short time—then go through your part, rehearsing it by a lively hope! The glorious hour will soon arrive when you shall be near and like your God and reign with Him forever!

At this present moment there is a place in Heaven for me that nobody can ever fill but myself—and Jesus has gone before, not only to prepare it, but to prepare it for *me*. There is a crown that no head but mine can ever wear and a song that no tongue but mine can ever sing! And I shall soon cast my crown at Jesus’ feet and chant before Him my hallelujahs! That is true of every Believer here. Be glad! Yes, rejoice before the Lord with all your might! Brothers and Sisters, you have not much here, but you will have everything hereafter! You have but a little farther to journey through the great and terrible wilderness and you will be in Canaan and possess the land that flows with milk and honey! Be glad!

The children of God have further cause to be glad because *they have all blessings secured to them*, so that they shall never lose them. That which their God has promised them shall never be taken from them. They are in a position of indisputable security, for they are hidden in the wounds of Christ, as in the clefts of the Rock of Ages. They shall never die, for they are members of His body who is immortal. They are in that hand from which none can ever snatch them. “I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish: neither shall any pluck them out of My hand.” Let us begin to be merry, as it is said in the parable of the prodigal son. “They began to be merry.” I have read that parable ever so many times and I have looked to see whether it is written that they ever left off being merry—and I cannot find that they did. “They began to be merry.” Very well, let us begin to be merry at this hour, dear Friends, and let us never leave off as long as we live! Let us rejoice *forevermore*. As long as we have a God to rejoice in, let us rejoice! As long as we have a Heaven to go to, let us rejoice! As long as we have an eternal Covenant ordered in all things and sure, let us rejoice! As long as we have any being, let us rejoice in the Lord!

II. Secondly, let me remark that THE SAINTS’ GLADNESS IS OF A PECULIAR SORT.

The gladness which is peculiar to the children of God is *a gladness that God has worked in them*. “You have made Him exceedingly glad.” Oh, yes, I heard him! He seemed very glad, but when he began to explain to me his gladness, I could tell by his hiccough where he got it—he owed it to the deadly cup. Shame on him! Oh, yes, he was exceedingly glad, but when I saw his merriment, I could tell that it was his youth and his good health that gave him his gladness! These will soon vanish away. But the child of God owes his gladness to a deeper source—*God has made him glad!* He that can touch the secret springs of the heart, apart from circumstances or conditions, has often made a man glad when he has been racked with pain, or when he has been in the depths of poverty, or when he has been suffering at the demoniacal hands of inquisitors.

Saints drink from a spring which neither dries in summer nor freezes in winter, *for that which is of God’s making remains*. “Your joy no man takes from You.” If God has made you glad, then the devil cannot make you sad. If God has made you glad, then it is not the weather and it is not your property, and it is not your health, and it is not your friend, neither is it your foe that can make you unhappy. If it is written, “You have made him glad,” then the man is glad, indeed. Beloved, I wish that every one of you had that joy which only God can give you, that better part which, once obtained, none can take away. It comes from God and from God, alone, and when He bestows it, it is yours forever, for His

gifts are without repentance—He never takes back that which He has once granted! This is the joy which is worth having, for it is full, deep, lasting, everlasting. They say that philosophers can be merry without music and certainly Christians can joy in God without outward comforts—and they can even take joyfully the spoiling of their goods. They are happy people, to whom even losses are gains and burdens are helps!

Notice, next, in the text, that the gladness which God gives to His people is no ordinary gladness, but *an exceeding joy*. “You have made him *exceedingly* glad”—exceeding—exceeding hope, exceeding measure, exceeding the gladness of others, exceeding any delight that can come from any other source. “You have made him exceedingly glad.” One man has become wealthy and he is glad. But the child of God, if the Lord has smiled upon him, is *exceedingly* glad. Here is one that feels his blood leaping in his veins with health and he is merry as the birds in summer time because of it. When the Lord turns, again, the captivity of His people, and smiles upon them, they are exceedingly glad. I wish that I could tell you how our eyes sometimes dash and sparkle, how our whole spirit dances within us for excessive joy when a sense of Divine Love is poured into our souls!

I cannot communicate by any description what it is, but, Brothers and Sisters, you can surely guess, for you, perhaps, have felt the same—and if you have, you would not change with Caesar for his empire, nor with an archangel for his starry throne! No, when God lifts up the light of His Countenance upon His people, it is a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of Glory which He lays upon them! Then do they sing, “Joy, joy, joy!” I speak of what I know and testify what I have felt. May you know it! May you feel it now! I know that worldlings imagine that we Christians are a miserable crew and I fear that too often we turn our worst side foremost when we are with them. I am told that many shopkeepers are so poor that they put the most of their goods in the shop window, but this is a method which few Christians follow—for the opposite is the fact—their window is badly set out and yet they have a costly stock upon their shelves.

The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of Light in this as well as other things. I would recommend such Believers to dress their window a little and show some of their better things. Put your ashes into the back yard and pour out the oil of joy in the parlor. Let people see that, after all, there are great advantages in belonging to the Lord’s household! But whether we seem to be happy or not, I can speak as one who has not been without abundant affliction and trial—we who believe in Jesus are a happy people, an enviable people. “Happy are you, O Israel,” said Moses, and we can bear witness that he spoke the truth. I would change with no man. So long as I know whom I have believed, I would prefer my own lot to that of any I have ever seen or heard of. I leave that point, but you can be sure of this—God-given joy is no *common* treasure!

But, according to the text, this joy *comes to us in one way*. “You have made Him exceedingly glad *with Your countenance*.” Have you not, sometimes, been made very glad with the look of a friend’s face? I believe that there is more heart-cheer in the sight of some countenances than in sun, moon and stars. Oh, the joy that I had, a little while ago, in looking upon one dear face that I shall not see again for many a day, for it must necessarily be seen on the other side of the globe! What joy I have had in looking upon some of you when you have come to tell me what the Lord has done for you and I have seen your joy in the Lord! “Iron sharpens iron; so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.” Certain friends of ours carry with them countenances which are always a half-day’s holiday to me whenever I look on them!

I do not say that this is true of *all* of you, for I know some Knights of the Rueful Countenance, whose faces are long and dismal, and I would urge these to look into the face of Jesus till His brightness illuminates them! There are those among us who are so brimming over with sacred joy that a glance at their faces refreshes our hearts! Now, catch my thought—What must the countenance of *God* be? The countenance of a friend to a friend, of a bridegroom to his bride, of a wife to her husband, of a father to his child—each of these spreads gladness—but what is the countenance of God to His elect? It is a countenance that seems to say, “I am reconciled! Your sin is put away.”

Oh, the gladness of seeing that face! It is a face that seems to say, “I am watching you; I am caring for you; I am smiling upon you.” Is not this a gladdening look? Lord, You have made me glad with Your countenance. “How precious, also, are Your thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them! Carefully and continually You think upon me and watch over me, to do me good.” Thus to see the observing countenance of God is a great delight to His people.

What shall I say of His approving countenance? When God has looked upon you and seemed to say, “you are doing right. Men blame you, but I accept you. Dear child of Mine—you are doing My will. You are following Me in reproach

and I will abundantly reward you”—this makes a man exceedingly glad and nerves him to bear reproach and misunderstanding, however cruelly they may assail him.

Again, when you come before God in prayer and you are pleading with Him. And your faith discerns that glorious face—the face of Jesus—your heart cries, “I am accepted! God is hearing my prayer. I may ask what I will and it shall be done unto me. I am not praying like a stranger; I am pleading like a child. I have my Father’s ear and heart and His countenance is toward me.” Oh, then it is a glad time with you! You are being heard and answered—and your heart beats to music. When the Lord looks on His chosen follower and says, “I have loved you with an everlasting love. I love you inexpressibly; I love you without measure—I love you as I love My Only-Begotten—and I will love you when time shall be no more. I will never leave you, nor forsake you”—then, again, our heart is glad and our glory rejoices! We should not be afraid for our flesh to rest in hope, for at such a time we could either live or die without a question, so fully is our heart filled with God.

Then does our face shine like that of Moses when he came down from the mountain. Out of Heaven there is no gladness that is worthy to be compared with the bliss of knowing that the Lord has set His love upon us! This is the fullness of the vintage and all beside is as the gleaning of the grapes when the summer is ended. I have not time, you see, to open up this grand subject, fully, but such is the joy of God’s people. It comes from a clear sense of the Divine approbation. We must walk with God and be heartily agreed with Him, or we shall not possess this happiness. Whenever the child of God feels, “I was wrong; God is grieved with me,” then he goes slinking off to bed like a child that cannot have a goodnight kiss—and there is no gladness for him. But when, on the contrary, the Lord turns to him in love and mercy and says, “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions and, as a cloud, your sins: return unto Me, for I have redeemed you.” And when He smiles upon us in Christ Jesus, then we can say with the Psalmist, “You have made me exceedingly glad with Your countenance.”

I will not detain you many minutes more, except to say that this joy of the Believer *comes to him through many channels*. Heaven has many windows and out of each one of them the Lord pours out benedictions upon His chosen. Let me read a part of the Psalm. “The king shall joy in *Your strength, O Lord.*” Oh, it is a great thing, when you are weak, to be strong in God, for then you will be happy! Divine strength brings Divine gladness with it. “And in *Your salvation* how greatly shall he rejoice!” God’s salvation, the election that brings us into it, the redemption that makes us full possessors of its blessings, the effectual calling which leads us to accept it, the eternal love which holds us fast in it—why, in all these, how greatly we rejoice!

Next, *answers to prayer* make us rejoice. “You have given him his heart’s desire, and have not withheld the request of his lips.” When a man comes from the Mercy Seat, like Luther, saying, “I have conquered! I have won my suit with God,” what gladness has the Lord given him! “For You prevent him with the blessings of Your goodness.” God is beforehand with us—He outruns us in love. Here is another source of joy—when God *gives us mercies before we seek them*—when He lays them in our road and there they are, ready for us before we come to the spot! When David was made a king, I am sure he said, “I never thought, nor sought, nor worked to be a king.” Many of us have received choice blessings of which we said, when we obtained them—“Why this to me? I never dreamed of this. This was not in my plan. I never proposed this to my soul in her hours of largest desire. You prevent me with the blessings of Your goodness.” Brothers and Sisters, such things as these tend to make God’s people glad in their hearts.

This is my last word to you—be glad in the Lord. I do not ask you to *simulate* happiness—to *pretend* to be glad when you are not. I do not ask you to sing when your heart feels that it must sigh. But I do ask you to be glad when there is reason to be! Be true and real in all your expressions, but let that truth and that expression spring from an educated soul that has been in the school of Christ and has learned what the facts of the case really are! Let your feelings be according to truth and your condition of heart according to the eternal settlements of Immutable Love. What are the facts of the case? Here they are—“O Lord, I will praise You: though You were angry with me! Your anger is turned away and You comforted me.” If I do not praise You, the timber out of the wall must cry out against me. If I do not rejoice in You, I shall be a traitor to my own consciousness and false to my own convictions, for You have brought my soul up out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay—and You have set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings—and I must have a new song in my mouth, even praise forevermore!

I would, if I could, stir you all up to a burst of holy joy, a blaze of sacred gladness! Put on your silver sandals and your bridal ornaments. Take off your weeds and gird yourselves in white raiment. Doff the sackcloth and ashes—and put on your beautiful array. Cast aside your chains! Leave them for those to wear who love them and walk at large, in liberty, bedecked with the jewels of infinite Grace, and crowned with the diadem of loving kindness! Sing unto the Lord a new song and end it not till you get to Heaven—and then it will never end. “I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live. I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.”—

*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Savior Jesus Christ
Who has blessed us with such blessings, all uncounted and unpriced!
Let our high and holy calling, and our strong salvation be
Theme of never-ending praises, God of Sovereign Grace, to Thee!”*

Hallelujah! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalms 20, 21.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—333, 21, 720, 288.**

LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON:

DEAR FRIENDS—As requested, I append a line or two to the sermon in which my personality must appear far more than I would choose if it were left to my option. This week I am considerably improved and believe that I have fairly turned the corner and may hope to come back in good order for future service. I cannot yet call myself free from fits of deep depression which are the result of brain-weariness, but I am having them less frequently and, therefore, I hope they will vanish altogether.

I have preached twice to the little gathering in this town. After the first sermon, I felt very much wearied and could not sleep. But on the second occasion, that experience will not, I trust, be repeated. I cannot be sure, for I am writing just as the service has ended, but at present I feel refreshed by having told out, once more, the Gospel of the Grace of God.

I regret that during the last two weeks the funds for the College and Orphanage have been coming in very scantily—and for the Colportage and Evangelists there is next to nothing. Colportage is always deserving and always needing more aid, but not getting it. The work of our Evangelists, by which, under God, many sinners have been converted and Churches revived, is just now very short of income. With one grand exception, namely Weston-super-Mare, the churches visited of late by our Evangelists, Messrs. Fullerton and Smith, have not been able to defray the cost and this is likely to be the case in several future instances.

At this moment I do not see how such needs will be met. This is God’s work and I think it meet to say to my Brothers and Sisters, that I should be glad of help in it before I am tempted to be anxious about it! I am not troubled about it at present, but as I am only my Lord’s steward and have no means of my own for carrying on this most blessed service, I can only mention it to Him and to His servants. For all these works, God will provide. Without our spending money in advertised appeals, He will use this simple hint and lead His stewards, who judge us to be faithful, to keep the army of the Lord supplied with ammunition.

To one and all I send hearty Christian love.

Yours to serve, for Christ’s sake,

C. H. SPURGEON.

Mentone, March 1, 1885.

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