

FORGIVENESS

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A SERMON

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“But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.”
Psalm 130:4.

How significant is that word, “but,” in our text! It is as if you heard Justice clamoring, “Let the sinner die,” and the fiends in Hell howling, “Cast him down into the fires,” and Conscience shrieking, “Let him perish,” and Nature, itself, groaning beneath his weight, the earth weary with carrying him, the sun tired with shining upon the traitor, the very air sick with finding breath for one who only spends it in disobedience to God! The man is about to be destroyed, to be swallowed up, when suddenly there comes this thrice-blessed, “but,” which stops the reckless course of ruin, puts its strong hand, bearing a golden shield, between the sinner and destruction and pronounces these words, “But there is forgiveness with God, that He may be feared.”

Suppose the question had been left open—forgiveness or no forgiveness? We know that we have offended God, but suppose it had been left a moot point for us to find out, if possible, whether there was any forgiveness? Where could we find it? We might turn to the works of God in Nature, and say, “Well, He is good, who loads the trees with fruit and bids the fields yield so plenteous a harvest.” But when we remember how His lightning sometimes strikes the oak and how His hurricanes swallow up whole navies in the deep, we shall be ready to say that He is terrible as well as tender—and we might be puzzled to know whether He would or would not forgive sin, more especially as we see all creatures die and no exception made to that rule. If we knew that death was a punishment for sin, we should be led to fear that there was no forgiveness to be had from the hand of God! But when we turn to this open page which God has so graciously written for our instruction, we are left in doubt no longer, for here we have it positively declared, “There is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.” Exclusively in the Bible is this Revelation made, but the words of my text are not exclusive. The page is but one among a thousand echoes from the Throne of God which proclaim His willingness to save sinners!

In attempting to bring this great doctrine of the possibility of pardon before the mind of the sinner tonight, I shall handle it in two or three ways. First, *I shall try to prove it is so, that he may be sure of the fact.* I shall then try *to attract him to accept this doctrine by dwelling upon the pardon, itself,* hoping that the Spirit of God may work with my words. And before I have done, I shall notice *what will be the sure result of this pardon*—whenever a man has been forgiven through the mercy of God, he is then enabled to fear the Lord and to worship Him in an able manner.

I. By way of assurance, O MAN, THERE IS FORGIVENESS FOR YOUR SINS, WHATEVER THEY MAY HAVE BEEN! However sinful your life may have been up until now, there is forgiveness with God even for you! God's bare Word ought to be enough for you, but since the Spirit of God and your conscience have shown you something of your sins, and since you will be desponding and full of doubts, it will be well for me to give you something more than the bare Word of God to make you confident there is forgiveness with Him.

Follow me, I pray you, back to the garden where your parents and mine first sinned. It was the greatest sin that was ever committed, with the exception of the murder of our Lord and Savior—the sin when Adam knowingly and wittingly rebelled against the one gentle command which his Master had given him as a sign of his obedience. This was the mother-sin from which all other sins have sprung—the well from which the great river of iniquity, which drowned the world, first streamed. What did the Lord say when this sin was committed? Did He lift His angry hand and smite the guilty pair at once? Did He visit our first parents with a curse that withered them and sent them down to their eternal portion in the Pit? He cursed, but it was the ground. He spoke in angry terms, but the serpent felt the weight thereof. As for man,

though God pronounced a sentence upon him that we call a curse, but which has been transformed into a blessing, yet He gave that matchless promise which is the mother of all promises, “The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.” In that one single promise that God, Himself, would provide a Deliverer by whom the tempter would be destroyed and all his craft would be foiled, I see written as clearly as with a sunbeam that God meant to have mercy upon me! He would not talk about the Seed of the woman bruising the serpent’s head if He had not intended something comforting for you and for me. The fact, I say, that though He did drive our first parents out of Eden, He did not drive them down to Hell—that though He did banish them from Paradise, He did not immediately consign them to the flames of His wrath—that He did, then and there, give them a bright promise which for many a hundred years was the only one that covered the thick darkness of the Fall—that fact alone should make you hope that there is forgiveness with God!

But what, I pray you, do those many altars with lambs and bullocks smoking upon them mean—altars whose unhewn stones are dyed crimson with gore? Above all, what does that priestly man, wearing that jeweled breastplate, who comes forward in obedience to God and offers every morning and evening a lamb, mean? Or what does it mean that once in the year he produces a scapegoat which carries the sins of the people into the wilderness? What do those rivers of blood and those mounds of ashes from the altar mean, if God does not forgive sin? There can be no meaning whatever in all the long and gorgeous pageant of the Jewish religion unless it taught to every onlooker this great and solemn lesson—that though God is just and blood must be shed, yet God is gracious and accepts a substitute that the sinner may go free! By all those smoking altars, the blood of rams, lambs, goats and bullocks, believe, O Sinner, that God has found a Ransom and a Sacrifice and that He, therefore, can and will pardon sin!

If you see these things dimly, here, you will see them more clearly in another fact. Do you not know, O man, that God has commanded you to repent? The times of former ignorance God winked at, but now He commands all men everywhere to repent. What for? Surely He would not command us to repent and then intend to punish us afterwards! It could not be possible that God would woo sinners to return to Him and yet not intend to forgive them! I cannot believe a theory so monstrous as that God would send His ministers and send His own Book—and earnestly and affectionately invite sinners to turn from their evil ways and repent of their sins—and yet intend, even if they did repent, to punish them on account of their iniquity! It cannot be!

Do you not know, too, that God has commanded you to pray for forgiveness? What is the meaning of that prayer, “Forgive us our sins, as we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us”? Would Christ put these words into your mouth if there were no pardon? Would He teach you to ask for forgiveness if forgiveness were an impossibility? Does God mock men? Does He teach beggars to beg when He intends to refuse? Does He bring you down on your knees that He may see you mourn—and laugh at your despair? Does He intend to see you rolling in the dust, girt with sackcloth and ashes, that He may afterwards put His iron heel upon your neck and crush you to the lowest Hell? It is not possible! The God who commands you to repent is just and merciful to forgive you your sins—and He who has bid you seek His face has not said unto the seed of Jacob, “Seek you me in vain.”

Moreover, Sinner—and here we come to something still clearer—do you not know that Jesus died? Have you not heard the wondrous story how the Son of God came down from Heaven and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh? Do you not know that after 30 years of holy life, wherein He rendered perfect obedience to the Divine Law and made it honorable, He took upon Himself the guilt, the crimes, the iniquities of a multitude that no man can number, for He bore the sins of many, and now He makes intercession for the transgressors? See there, if you can dare to look amidst those moonlit olives where upon the ground there kneels a Man—no, more, there kneels Incarnate Deity—what does it mean that His head, His hair, His garments are saturated with blood? How came it that, on yonder ground, I see great clots of gore—where did they come from? Came they from His forehead? But what could have forced them from Him? What does yonder sight mean? I watch that Man dragged away and charged most infamously with crimes He never knew, tied to a pillar and there lashed with a Roman scourge until the white bones stand out like islands of ivory amidst a sea of coral—and His whole back has become a stream of blood! What does it all mean?

And yonder sight where He is stretched upon the transverse wood, where the nails have pierced His hands and feet, and where His life goes oozing from Him in anguish and extreme agony? What does that shriek of “Eli, Eli, lama Sabachthani” mean? He is a just Man—does God punish the just? He is God’s dear Son, and has done no ill—does God hate Him and punish Him for nothing? Does He pour wrath upon Him without a cause? You know how it was. The sin of

man was imputed to Christ. The iniquity of His people was laid upon Him. “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” And here is the riddle solved—He dies that we may live—

*“He bore that we might never bear,
His Father’s righteous ire.”*

Then there must be forgiveness! I cannot see a bleeding Savior without understanding that there must be pardon! Gethsemane, Gabbatha, Golgotha—three sacred words, three irresistible arguments by which it is proved beyond controversy that there is forgiveness even for the chief of sinners!

But if this contents you not, O troubled Sinner, here is another fact for you to reflect upon—what multitudes have already been pardoned! Dare you look up yonder beyond the skies? Have you strength of eyesight enough to see that multitude clothed in white, who, today, are standing before the Throne of God? If there were no forgiveness, not one of them had been there! Were their robes always white? Listen to their answer—“We have washed our robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, therefore are we before the Throne of God.” FORGIVENESS brought them there! Not one redeemed soul would ever have seen the everlasting Glory unless it had been for the pardoning mercy of God—

*“Round the altar priests confess
If their robes are white as snow,
’Twas the Savior’s righteousness,
And His blood that made them so!
Who were these? On earth they dwelt
Sinners once of Adam’s race—
Guilt, and fear, and suffering felt,
But were saved by Sovereign Grace!”*

Here are scores and hundreds of us who bear witness that God has pardoned us! Whatever I may doubt, I dare not doubt my pardon in Christ Jesus. There are moments when one has to look well to one’s evidences and come to Jesus Christ again—but this one thing I know—that Christ says, “He that believes on Me is not condemned.” And I do believe on Him! If I have an existence, I know that I am trusting the Lord Jesus Christ! And if so, then I am pardoned. And oh, how sweet it is to know this! What peace it gives! I can look forward to living or to dying with equal delight now that I can say, “My sin is forgiven.” You can say, as I often do, in these sweet words of Kent—

*“Now freed from sin, I walk at large,
My Savior’s blood my full discharge.
At His dear feet my soul I lay,
A sinner saved, and homage pay.”*

Do you know what it is to be forgiven, young man? If you do not, you have not tasted the sweetest thing out of Heaven! Oh, it is such joy! Angels hardly have ever tasted a joy that exceeds the bliss of having sins put away. It yields a calm so deep, so profound, that it can only be called, “the peace of God which passes all understanding.”

I have thus tried to bring forward the great Truth of God that there is forgiveness with Him. And let me say, before I leave this point, that you will please remember that we have warrant in God’s Word for saying that there is forgiveness for you. However great your sins may have been, with but one exception—there is the sin against the Holy Spirit which, if you have any tenderness left in your conscience, you have not committed—but, apart from that, “all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men.” I wish I could go round these galleries and to these pews, and find out where the aching hearts were. Perhaps I would find one who said, “O Sir, I never attended a place of worship for 20 or 30 years—can I be pardoned?” I would say, “Yes, there is forgiveness for you!” Another might say, “Why, I cursed God to His face! I have dared Him to damn my soul! Can I really be forgiven?” I will answer, in the words of the text, “There is forgiveness.”

And I might meet another who would say, “But I used to persecute my wife. I have ill-treated my children because they would serve God. Can I, a hardened wretch such as I am—can I be pardoned?” “There is forgiveness.” And I might meet another who would say, “Years ago, I was a high professor, but I became entangled in the world and I have gone bad. Am I not cast out?” And I would say, “There is forgiveness.” But there would be another who would say, “I cannot tell you what my crime is. Will you stoop down and let me whisper it in your ear?” And when I heard the awful words,

which I must not tell again, I would still say, before you all, “There is forgiveness.” And though it were murder or adultery—whatever it might have been and however frequently it might have been committed—though the woman were a harlot and the man a practiced thief, yet still we have the same Gospel for every creature—“There is forgiveness.” And though you are 80 or 90 years of age, “There is forgiveness.” Though you have sinned against light and knowledge, against mercy, against God and Christ, His dear Son, yet still—“there is forgiveness.” You have come to the brink of the precipice—O God, I see it! You are just going over—one foot already rests upon nothing and you totter to your fall! O man, let me catch you in my arms and tell you that “there is forgiveness!” One more step and you may be where there is no forgiveness, but where the black and terrible pall of despair shall hang over your soul forever! And it shall be said of you, “There are no acts of pardon passed in that cold grave to which he has gone. He is lost! Lost! Lost forever!”

II. And now, secondly, I SHALL RECOMMEND THIS GRACIOUS FORGIVENESS TO YOUR NOTICE.

I commend it *for its nature*. It is a perfect pardon—every sin is blotted out at once—not a few sins, but every sin! Though they are innumerable, they are all gone, they are all gone at once! And it is *eternal* pardon—they are all gone forever! Once forgiven, they will never be laid to your charge again. They are like the Egyptians in the Red Sea—the depths have covered them, there is not one of them left—the pardon is complete in every respect. I heard one man say of his friend, the other day, when the two had disagreed and I had tried to make it right, “Yes, I forgive him, but.” That is not how God puts it. He has no “buts” in His forgiveness. You sometimes say, “Yes, I forgive him, but I will never trust him again.” Not so the Lord! You make a clean breast in confession and He will give you a clean breast by absolution. He will put all the sin you have committed so wholly away that they shall not be remembered against you any more forever! And this pardon is instantaneous. You know that it takes but a moment to receipt a bill when the debt is paid—and Jesus Christ has paid the debt of every Believer! And all that is to be done is for God to give you the receipt, to write in your heart the word, “JUSTIFIED”—and this He does in a moment! When I think of the nature of this pardon—putting away all sin in a moment, and all the consequences of sin, I feel as if I wish we had a choir of angels here, that they might sing, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.”

Consider too, dear Friends, not only the pardon, itself, but the *person to whom it is sent*. Remember that it is sent to you. Not to the fallen angels—they were greater than you but, when they fell, they fell without a hope of being restored to the favor of God. It is not sent to the damned in Hell. Oh, what would they not give for it? How would they stretch forward—how would they catch every word! Though they have been there but one moment, they know more of God’s wrath than you and I do and oh, how they would prize the presentation of eternal life in Christ Jesus! It is not sent to them—it is sent to you. You know what you have been. You know something about the hardness of your heart and the sinfulness of your past life—yet God sends this message to you, “There is forgiveness.”

And I want you to remember *who it is that sends the forgiveness*. It is the God whom you have offended—that very God whom you may have cursed, whose Sabbath you have broken, whose Book you have despised, at whose ministers you have laughed and whose servants you have persecuted! Yet He says, even He, “There is forgiveness.” And lest you should doubt it, He takes a solemn oath before you all—and God never swears unless there is need for it, and thus He swears—“As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live.” What more can we ask than this? Admire and be attracted by the pardon when you think of who it is that sends it!

Consider, too, *how it comes to you, and by what channel*. It comes through the wounds of your best Friend, through the sufferings of Him who gave His back to the smiters and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. “He was despised and rejected of men; a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief, and we hid, as it were, our faces from Him. He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.” O Sinner! Will you not be only too glad to lay hold of that which comes to you through so Divine a channel which is marked with the heart’s blood of One who is the Friend of sin even unto death?

And, then, I pray you to remember that if you do not receive this forgiveness which is preached unto you, *there is no other way under Heaven by which you can be saved*. Enter by this door or stand shivering outside forever! Bow the knee and kiss the Son, or else He will break you in pieces with His rod, as men break potters’ vessels. “Turn you, turn you from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?” But if you reject this pardon of God, you write your own death warrant and prepare the noose that is to be your souls’ destruction!

I would to God that I had such powers of persuasion that I might induce you to lay hold of this precious pardon that God presents to you. I know that my pleading is useless unless the Spirit of God shall be pleading, too. But many, many times in this House, while I have been talking about the full, rich Grace of God, some poor soul has felt that there was a message from God in it and I trust, I hope it may be so tonight! Remember that in the message of mercy, I am authorized to leave out no one—I am told to preach it to every creature under Heaven, and I do. There are no terms but just this—that you will take what God freely gives you! Just as when men enlist for soldiers, the soldier does not give the sergeant anything, he takes the shilling. And the way in which your souls are saved is by taking what Christ freely offers to you, freely presents to you—the finished righteousness which He worked out in His life and death! You are to take, not to give! If there are terms, they are very simple. They are put so as to suit the dead in trespasses and sins! Christ comes to you just where you are. You have no power, no spiritual life, no goodness, no tenderness of heart—but Jesus, like the good Samaritan, comes just where you are and He cries in your ear, “Awake, you that sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.” He bids me say to you, though your hand is withered, “Stretch out your hand.” Power shall go with the command and you shall be made whole!

I remember the time when if anyone had tried to preach to me full and free forgiveness to be had for nothing, and to be had on the spot, I do believe I would have leaped almost out of my body to have heard it! I have heard, sometimes, of Methodists and Welshmen standing up to dance and I do not wonder at it, if they really do but get the full sense of this, that the big, black, foul villain of a sinner—the moment he trusts Jesus Christ—is forgiven, is a child of God and is accepted! Why, it sounds too good to be true! And it could not be true if it came only from me, for I am but a man and can only think and act as a man! But because it comes from the true God and it is just like Him, because it accords with His attributes of loving kindness and truth, therefore we know it is true. “I am God, and not man,” He says, and He gives that as a reason for His mercy. Why, if His love were not as much superior to ours as the heavens are above His earth, there would never be mercy presented in any shape, much less in a shape like this! There is nothing asked of you, only that you will just be nothing and let Christ be everything—and take from Christ’s hand that which He freely presents to you—pardon through His precious blood!

III. Now, dear Friends, I cannot put this Truth of God more plainly than I have done, but I have the last part of the text just to comment a little upon—“There is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.”

You see, the only men that ever fear God are those that are forgiven. Other men may pretend to do it, but they fail to do it. Why I believe that the religion of nine out of ten professing Christians is just this, “I go to church, or I go to chapel, regularly, and I then think I have done very well.” That is what the men think, and the outside world believes that religion is this, “If a man is honest, and sober, and walks righteously, and so on, he goes to Heaven.” But how startling must the sermon of this morning [See Sermon No. 515, Volume 9—THE SINNER’S ADVOCATE—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge at <http://www.spurgeons.org>] have been to some of these stuck-up Pharisees when we told them it was not the righteous who would go there, but the sinner! And that the Apostle John did not say, “If any man has done good works, he has an Advocate,” but, “If any man sins, we have an Advocate with the Father.” As Martin Luther gloried to put it, “Jesus Christ never died for our good works—they were not worth His dying for! He gave Himself for our sins, according to the Scriptures.” What did our Savior, Himself, say, “I came not to call the righteous, but *sinner*s to repentance.”

The Lord never has any who really and acceptably fear Him but those who once were sinners and who are led as sinners to accept His pardon—and these are the people that fear Him. Do you want to find a warm-hearted woman who really loves Jesus Christ and who would break the alabaster box for His sake? You will find her in one who may be called “a woman who was a sinner.” Do you want to find a man who would preach Christ’s Word with tears running down his cheeks? You must go and find him among them who once were foul, of whom the Apostles said, “Such were some of you, but you are washed.” When the Lord wanted a man to write the next best book in the world to the Bible—*The Pilgrim’s Progress*—He did not go to Lambeth Palace for him, and He did not go to any of the fine streets of this city to pick up some moral person. There was a swearing tinker playing at “cat” on Sunday on Elstow-Green, and the Lord said, “That is the man.” He laid hold of him, washed his heart, made him a new man in Christ Jesus—and John Bunyan, the master-dreamer, has given us that remarkable book! And when the Lord wanted a man who would stir up London from end to end by preaching in St. Mary Woolnoth, where should He find him? Why, among the ragamuffins who were conducting

the slave trade on the coast of Africa among the sweepings and dregs of the universe! Almighty Grace picked up John Newton, changed his heart and made him one of His mightiest teachers!

And when the Lord will bring out any that shall really fear Him and do anything great for His sake, it will be either from among those who have been outwardly great sinners, or else those who have been made in their conscience to feel the greatness of their guilt and thus have been fitted to deal with others. Oh, how many times I have blessed God for the five years of despair that I had to endure! No poor soul was ever more racked than I was, nor more hunted of the devil. For five years I was a victim to that black thought that God would never forgive me and I bless His name for it. I never could have preached to the chief of sinners if it had not been for that experience! If I had come freely from my mother's apron strings without any deep sense of sin, and had found Christ as many and many a young man does, readily and at once, I would never have liked to go down and run my hands in the mire to get at the foul and the vile. But now I look back upon those times of anguish—why, they were days when I thought I was worse than the devils in Hell! They were days when if anybody had asked me my character, though no one ever knew anything amiss of it, still I would have said, and felt it, too, that there did not breathe God's air a greater miscreant that more deserved to be in Hell than I did! I wrote bitter things against myself and if any had said, "Why, your life is moral," I would have said, "Yes, but my heart is a reeking dunghill, full of everything that is foul!" And I felt it, too, for though my lips never cursed God, yet my heart did with blasphemy so foul that I shudder when I think of it. When I was given up as prey to the devil, and it seemed as if there was a pandemonium within my heart, then indeed I knew what it was to be sorely broken in the place of darkness and to be like a ship driven out to sea with the mast gone over the side and every timber strained and the hold filling with water—and nothing but Omnipotence keeping it from going down into the lowest depths! Ah, then I knew that I needed a great Christ for great sinners! And I dare not ever preach a little Christ! And I dare not preach Him to little sinners either!

Oh, how great your sin has been, my Hearers! But Jesus Christ is still greater! You have gone deeply into sin, but the arm of Mercy can reach you! You have wandered far, but the eyes of Love can see you and the voice of Love calls to you now, "Come, come, come and welcome, come and welcome!" Come just as you are and you will not be cast away, but be accepted in the Beloved! "There is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared," and none fear, and love, and bless, and praise God as much as those who know that there is forgiveness with Him!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: PSALM 145.

When you get to the 145th Psalm, you enter the Beulah Land of the Psalms. Henceforth the time of the singing of birds is come and you go from one Hallelujah to another! In the Hebrew, this is one of the alphabetical Psalms, but one letter (nun) is omitted, perhaps, as Dr. Bonar suggests, "we must be kept from putting stress on the mere form of the composition." Those ancient singers sang their way through the alphabet from A to Z, and it is also well for us to begin to praise the Lord while we are yet children, and to keep on praising Him till we get to the "Z" in the very hour of death, gasping His praises till we get into eternity—

*"My God, I'll praise You while I live,
And praise You when I die!
And praise You when I rise again,
And to eternity!"*

Verses. 1-3. *I will extol You, my God, O King, and I will bless Your name forever and ever. Every day will I bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever. Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable.* Such as the Lord is, such should His worship be. If He were a little God, He would deserve little praise, but the great God is "greatly to be praised." There is no fear of going to any excess in our praises—we will never laud Him too highly, however lofty our expressions may be.

"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable." David knew what it was to be searched by God and he prayed, "Search me, O God." But he could not search the greatness of his God. There, he was utterly lost—the utmost range of his faculties could not compass the greatness of Jehovah—"His greatness is unsearchable."

4. *One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts.* There is a hallowed tradition of praise. Each generation should hand out the praise of God as a precious legacy to the next one. Train up your sons and daughters to praise your God so that when your voice is silent in death, another voice like your own may continue the strain.

5. *I will speak of the glorious honor of Your majesty, and of Your wondrous works.* “I will speak.” What a powerful speaker David was! Note how he piles up his golden words. He is not content merely to talk of God’s majesty, but he speaks of its “glorious honor.” When he talked of God’s works, he calls them “wondrous works.”

6. *And men shall speak of the might of Your terrible acts.* If they will not speak of anything else, they shall be obliged to speak with awe when the terrors of the Lord are abroad in the earth. If they were as dumb as fishes before, they shall begin to say to one another, with bated breath, when earthquakes, famines, war and pestilence are rife, “What a terrible God He is!”

6. *And I will declare Your greatness.* While other men were talking, David did not say, “Now I can be quiet.” When they did not speak, he did, and when they began to speak, he still added his quota of praise to Jehovah.

7. *They shall abundantly utter the memory of Your great goodness, and shall sing of Your righteousness.* What a beautiful expression! “They shall abundantly utter.” The original has in it the idea of bubbling up, boiling over, bursting out like a fountain! Men’s hearts shall get to be so full of gratitude to God that they shall overflow with the memory of His great goodness! Then they shall sing. Singing is the language of jubilant nature—“the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing.” Singing is the language of men when they wish to express their highest joys. The saints sing the high praises of their God. Singing is the language of the holy angels! Did they not, when they came to Bethlehem, sing concerning the newborn King? Singing is the language of Heaven and most marvelous of all, singing is the highest language that God ever uses! “He will rejoice over you with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over you with singing.” Oh, for more holy singing!

8. *The LORD is gracious.* That alone is enough to make us sinners sing, for we need Divine Grace and, “the Lord is gracious.”

8. *And full of compassion.* There is no “passion” in Him, but there is “compassion” in Him. What a mercy that is for us! He is full of compassion.”

8. *Slow to anger, and of great mercy.* Hear that, you great sinners and you saints who need great forbearance?

9. *The Lord is good to all.* Even to His enemies! Does not the dewdrop hang upon the thistle as well as upon the rose?

9. *And His tender mercies are over all His works.* He cares for the worm in the sod and for the fish in the sea as well as for men upon the face of the earth.

10. *All Your works shall praise You, O Lord; and Your saints shall bless You.* Their voices can reach a higher note and a loftier strain than God’s works can ever reach. “Your saints shall bless You.”

11. *They shall speak of the glory of Your Kingdom.* For the saints love God as their King, and they rejoice to remember what the King’s Son said to His disciples, “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.” So well may they sing of it!

11-13. *And talk of Your power; to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His Kingdom. Your Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations.* What is the use of preaching if it does not glorify God? What is the use of a tongue that does not speak or sing of the glory of God’s Kingdom? Let one of God’s bards have this as the theme of his song and he feels like a hind let loose, rejoicing in glorious liberty!

14. *The Lord upholds all that fall, and raises up as those that are bowed.* Does not this seem to be an amazing change in the strain? The Lord is a King and His Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom—yet what is He doing? Why, He is upholding, propping up those that are ready to fall and lifting up those that are crushed and oppressed! Earthly kings often glory in the terror of their power and the splendor of their majesty. What a condescending God is ours, whose Glory is a moral glory and whose chief delight consists in blessing the poor and needy! Let us bless His name for this. Are any of you ready to fall? Then praise Him for this glorious truth, “The Lord upholds all that fall”! Are any of you bowed

down? Daughter of Abraham, have you been bowed down these many years? Oh, that you might be made straight this very hour! And you may be, for God can lift you up, for He “raises up all those that are bowed down.”

15, 16. *The eyes of all wait upon You; and You give them their meat in due season. You open Your hands and satisfy the desire of every living thing.* What a glorious God we have! How easily can He supply the needs of His people! He has but to open His hands and it is done! We need not be afraid to come to Him, as though our needs would be too great for Him to supply. The commissariat of the universe is superintended by this truly Universal Provider, who has but to open His hands to satisfy “the desire of every living thing.”

17. *The LORD is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works.* This is a thing for which many modern divines do not praise God. The attribute of righteousness in the Character of God is expelled from a good deal of modern theology. But he who loves God rightly, loves the righteousness of God! I would not care to have salvation if it were unrighteous salvation. The righteousness of God gleams like a sharp two-edged sword and it is terrible to those who are at enmity against Him. But the true children of the Most High delight to see this sword of State carried in the front of the great King of kings! The seraphim cry, one to another, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts!” The redeemed in Glory sing, “Just and true are Your ways, You King of saints!” But the critical critics of the present day care nothing for these attributes of Jehovah.

18. *The LORD is near unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth.* If you read this Psalm through carefully, you will notice the great number of, “alls,” with which the latter part of the Psalm is studded. And this is appropriate, for God is All-in-All, He is the One, the All, so let Him have all praise from all!

19. *He will fulfill the desire of them that fear Him: He also will hear their cry, and will save them.* When you have respect to God’s will, God will have respect to your will. When you fear Him you will have no one else to fear, and when you make His service your delight, He will make your needs His care.

20. The LORD preserves all them that love Him: but all the wicked will He destroy. As in a state of sanitary perfection, everything that breeds pollutants and disease is banished—so must it be in God’s great universe when He has completed His works—“all the wicked will He destroy.”

21. *My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD: and let all flesh bless His holy name forever and ever.*

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