

BELIEVERS A BLESSING NO. 3045

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*“You shall be a blessing,”
Zechariah 8:13.*

SO terribly had God punished idolatrous Israel and Judah that their names were a byword and a proverb among all the surrounding nations. If any man wished to pronounce upon his fellow man the most dreadful curse that he could utter, he would say, “May you become like a Jew—may a blight fall upon your whole life as awful as that which has fallen upon Israel!” Even the heathen used the Jewish nation as a model of their cursing and blasphemed the name of Jehovah who had poured out the vials of His wrath upon them. But God declared that He would return to His ancient people in love and mercy—and replenish them in the multitude of His loving kindnesses to them so that, from that time, instead of being the pattern of cursing, they should be used as the model of a blessing—that when men wished good things for one another, they would say, “May you be as blessed as the children of Israel, whom the Lord of Hosts has favored above all the rest of mankind!” You remember that old Jacob, when he blessed the sons of Joseph, uttered a sort of formula for future use by others, “He blessed them that day, saying, In you shall Israel bless, saying, God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh.” And I believe that to this day, in Jewish marriages, the blessing is given to the newly-married couple, “As Isaac and Rebekah may they be!” In like manner would God make His people to become the model of benediction as before they had been the pattern of a curse.

Leaving that primary meaning of the passage, I am going to apply the promise of the text to the *spiritual* Israel. In His inscrutable wisdom, God allowed His ancient people, the nation of Israel, to become a curse among the other nations of the earth. Their idolatry was not only high treason against God, but it also gave the very heathen reason to blaspheme His holy name. The Lord said, by the mouth of the Prophet Jeremiah, “Has a nation changed their gods which are yet no gods? But My people have changed their glory for that which does not profit. Be astonished, O you heavens at this and be horribly afraid, be you very desolate, says the Lord. For My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.” Israel turned aside from Jehovah to worship Baal, Ashtaroah and other false gods without number—and so, by evil example, Israel led other people into idolatry, dishonored the name of the Most High and became a curse among the nations. Yet Israel was the guardian of the Oracles of God and the time will yet come when God shall again visit His ancient people—and the branches that have been broken off, because of unbelief, shall be grafted again into their own olive tree—and their “fullness” shall be “the riches of the Gentiles,” as Paul so plainly shows in the parable of the olive trees in Romans 11:11-36. Indeed, at this very hour a Jew is the riches of Jews and Gentiles alike, for our Lord sprang out of Judah and, therefore, do we “take hold of the skirt of Him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with You.” And He is to us, “more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.” The Son of Mary, who is also the Son of God, is our blessed Lord and Savior, and in Him is that ancient promise fulfilled which was made to Jacob at Bethel, “In you and in your seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” We cannot sing too often that grand Coronation Anthem of the Christian Church—

*“All hail the power of Jesus’ name!
Let angels prostrate fall.
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all!”*

*Crown Him, you martyrs of our God,
Who from His altar call.
Extol the stem of Jesse's rod,
And crown Him Lord of all!
You chosen seed of Israel's race,
A remnant weak and small,
Hail Him who saves you by His Grace,
And crown Him Lord of all!"*

Yet let us not omit to sing also —

*"The hymn shall yet in Zion swell
That sounds Messiah's praise,
And Your loved name, Immanuel!
As once in ancient days.
For Israel yet shall own her King,
For her salvation waits,
And hill and dale shall sweetly sing
With praise in all her gates."*

Whereas through sin, then, Israel had been a curse to the other nations of the earth, she shall, through the mercy of God, be a blessing when she repents of her sin and accepts the Messiah whom she has so long rejected. But we need not confine to the literal Israel and Judah the promise of our text, for it belongs to all the people of God, and so to you, Beloved, who are, by faith, the true seed of believing Abraham! This promise is applicable to you—"You shall be a blessing."

I. And first, I want to remind you that THIS PROMISE QUICKENS REGRET WITHIN OUR SPIRITS—"You shall be a blessing."

Then the first emotion in our heart is that of *penitential sorrow*. If God says that He will make us a blessing, surely it is implied that once we were not so. Let us look back to the days of our unregeneracy. It may be that some of us were great curses to our families and to the neighborhood in which we dwelt. If so, we must look back with deep sorrow upon the past, for, albeit that God has blotted out the guilt of our iniquity, yet the *consequences* of the sin still continue. We cannot undo the evil that we have done to others. If we first tempted them and they fell into sin, we may be forgiven the temptation, but we cannot recall it, nor can we put them back into the place from which they have fallen. A child once learned an evil word from you—oh, how gladly would you unsay that word if you could! But it entered that child's memory and it will abide there, perhaps forever! If you led others into places of frivolous amusement, or into haunts of vice, you may abhor those places, now, and God may have forgiven you the sin of your youth—but what about those whom you led there—what will become of them? You can pray for them and I know that you will do so. You will plead with them if you know where they are and you will be quickened in your service for the Savior by your remembrance of the earnestness with which you served Satan in those evil days of the past—but Beloved, there must still remain the bitter fruit of perpetual regret that you cannot destroy the results of that early sowing of bad seed! The handfuls of cockle and darnel that you scattered broadcast in the furrows—you cannot call them back again! The firebrands you have thrown, the hot coals that you have cast about and which caused such a terrible conflagration—you cannot undo the mischief and ruin that they worked! The results of good or evil deeds will abide forever and ever, so let us beware what we do since it can never be undone. So, first, when God makes us a blessing, it reminds us that we were once a curse.

It also brings to us—at least it does to me—a *painful remembrance of the time wasted*—time spent unprofitably before our conversion when, if we were not actually doing damage to the souls of others, yet we allowed opportunities for doing them good to glide by unused. Oh, these blessed hours, these precious hours, these more than golden hours in which Christians may win souls for the Lord Jesus Christ! Angels never had them and the spirits of just men made perfect have them no more. Though they can render other and perhaps yet higher service to their Lord, this special service of soul-winning is reserved for us who are still living on this earth. We have, at the longest, only a few days, or weeks, or months, or years allotted to us in which we may glorify God by being a blessing to our fellow creatures after we have found the Lord for ourselves! Yet some of us allowed many years to pass away before we even gave earnest heed to these things for ourselves. Those of us who were brought to know the Lord in our early youth, bless Him for that, yet we

regret that we were not saved in our childhood. We wish we had given to God the very first rays of the morning of our life as well as the bright beams of the fuller day, so that we might have been made a blessing to the Church and the world as soon as we had intellect and understanding—and were capable of influencing the minds and hearts of others.

There is another reflection which is also a sorrowful one and causes us deep regret—namely that since the ever-blessed hour when the Holy Spirit taught us to trust in Jesus and gave us new life in Him, *we have not been such a blessing to our fellow creatures as we ought to have been*. Not altogether in vain have we lived—we have not sown to the flesh, but to the Spirit—yet how scanty has been our sowing of the Good Seed of the Kingdom! And, in consequence, how small has been the harvest that we have reaped! Oh, that we had availed ourselves of all the golden opportunities we have had of serving the Lord Jesus Christ! How much more good we might have done had we been earnest at all times, fervent at all seasons, had we thrown spirit, soul and body entirely into this holy service—and lived and breathed alone for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! If we had reached the ideal Christian life so that we did eat, drink and sleep eternal life, having Christ living in us and we living in Him, how much more we might have achieved than any of us have yet done! The capacity to “be a blessing” to others was given to all of us who have believed in Jesus at our conversion—but we have left that precious talent unused to a very large extent. To some Christians, and to some now present, this message must go home and this question must be asked and answered—what have we done for Him who died to save us? Alas, how little—at the most, how little—but by the most idle, alas, alas, how little! God help you to turn your regret to practical account while the glad sound of the text rings in your ears like the music of a silver bell, “You shall be a blessing.” Let your tears fall plenteously as you recall the sad fact that before you knew the Lord, you were a curse to others—and not a blessing—and that even since you have known Him, you have not grasped the truth of the text and realized the fullness of its blessed meaning as you should have done, for such tears of regret will be likely to lead you to change your course of action for the future!

II. Let us now notice, in the second place, that OUR TEXT IS CALCULATED TO EXCITE INQUIRY as well as to quicken regret. Inquiries will come something in this style from young Believers, “Will you kindly tell us what we can do by which we shall be a blessing? We hear the promise of the text, but how can we get it fulfilled in our own experience? In what way can we be made a blessing to others?” Beloved Friends, there are many ways in which God can make you the channels of blessing to your fellow creatures if you are, yourselves, regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

First, it will probably be *by your consistent conduct* that you will be made a blessing to others more than in any other way. An unholy professor is a downright curse both to the church and to the world and, as for a church of inconsistent members, Satan himself could not devise an instrument more fitted to carry out his diabolical purposes! A community of ungodly men that is known by everybody to be a synagogue of Satan is robbed of much of its power to do mischief—but if it is misnamed a Church of Christ, it is potent for all manner of evil! An unholy professor outside the Church of God may batter against the walls with small effect but inside, he would be like the concealed soldiers in the wooden horse who opened the gates of Troy to the besiegers. It was only an Apostle who could be such a “son of perdition” as Judas was, so beware, you who profess to be followers of Christ! You have great capacities for usefulness, but your position gives you immense capacities for doing damage to the cause of Christ. Only holy Christians are useful Christians—and the preaching of Christ’s Truth must be backed up by the consistent living of Christ’s followers if it is to have its due effect upon the hearts and lives of the ungodly. No doubt many a shaft has missed the mark because it has not been shot from the bow of a consistent preacher, or because it has been turned aside by inconsistency in the church of which he is the pastor. Oh, for holy living! The honest tradesman who has just weights and measures. The diligent domestic servant who sweeps under the mats and in the dark corners. The laborious workman who may be trusted when his master is absent. The man who would not tell a lie even though he could win a fortune or a throne by doing so. The man who in all things acts justly towards men and walks humbly before his God—these are the people who “shall be a blessing” to all around them! If a man had no tongue and so never spoke a word. If it were not in his power to bestow as much as a farthing upon the poor. If he could not visit the sick or the prisoners, yet his very presence upon the earth would be in itself a blessing—a silent reproof, but none the less eloquent to ungodly men—and a powerful example to such as wish to walk in the way of righteousness. “Be you holy,” for so shall you serve God and serve the Church of Christ and, in the highest sense, serve your generation and serve the world! I love to sing, with John Newton—

“Let worldly minds the world pursue,

*It has no charms for me!
Once I admired its trifles too,
But Grace has set me free!
Now, Lord, I would be Yours alone,
And wholly live to Thee!"*

But, in addition to that, all Christians may be made a blessing to others *by instructing them in the Truths of the Gospel*. The world is still very dark, spiritually, though many people foolishly speak of “this enlightened century.” It has “light” of a certain sort—or rather, of a very *uncertain* sort—within it. But the light that is in it is almost entirely darkness! It is still true of the bulk of mankind, as it was in Isaiah’s day—they “put darkness for light, and light for darkness... bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!” Today the scarcest thing in the whole world is true spiritual light and, where it is revealed, men hate it and try to banish it from their sight! Philosophy is exalted above Revelation. Science, falsely so-called, is set up in the place of Christ who is the Wisdom of God, though true science is never in conflict with the true Gospel. And anything that pretends to be light is preferred by many to Him who is “the true Light.” Spiritual Light is mainly conveyed to the dark souls of men through the proclamation of the Gospel—the good news concerning Jesus Christ, the Savior of sinners. So, proclaim that—

*“Old, old story
Of Jesus and His love”—*

to as many as you can! Tell it to thousands, to hundreds, to scores—tell it to one if you cannot tell it to more. Tell to all, as far as you can, these precious things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ—His Incarnation, His holy life, His wondrous Words, His perfect example and His substitutionary death! Tell these things to your children and charge them to tell them to *their* children—and to charge *their* children to tell them to the generation following. Tell that great central Truth of the substitutionary Sacrifice of Christ to the man who sits beside you in the tram or train, or who calls at your house on business! Seize every opportunity you can get of letting men know, by the Inspired Word of God, or by the written or spoken message, all that you can about “the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood,” “and by Him all that believe are justified from all things.” And not only justified, but also glorified! Every true testimony to Christ brings glory to God and blessing to men. A preacher may halt and limp, his elocution may be faulty, his theology may be open to criticism—but if it is “the Gospel of Christ” that he proclaims, it will be precious Truth to the saints who hear him—and sinners will be saved by it!

Not only by instructing men will you be a blessing to them, but also *by reproof*. This is a far more difficult matter and probably nine out of ten of us had better keep to the easier task of giving instruction. Yet now and then there will come occasions when you must not see sin in your Brother or Sister without rebuking it. If I hear blasphemy and am able to condemn it, yet do not, my silence makes me a sharer in the sin. I am always afraid lest when I hear God’s name blasphemed, my guilty silence should make me an accomplice of the blasphemer. A rebuke need not be and should not be discourteous or disrespectful. And it should not be unduly severe, but I am afraid that nowadays we are not so likely to err by our harshness, as by failing to be faithful to our conscience and our God. We must boldly stand up, at all costs, for God, for truth, for purity. Shut your ear to the lascivious song—do not allow it to be sung in your house—and let not scandal be spoken at your table! Set your face like a flint against sin of every kind and, God speeding your testimony, you “shall be a blessing.”

More frequently, however, and much more pleasingly to yourself, you can be a blessing *by giving words of comfort*. And often something more substantial than words to the poor and afflicted ones with whom you may come into contact. If you know someone who is fighting with a fierce temptation, go and help to succor him. If you know another who is struggling with a troublesome doubt, try to assist him to drive it away. Your experience may be just what he needs to know, so tell him. Be not backward or bashful in speaking of what the Lord has done for you. I am always grieved when I hear of any persons coming to this Tabernacle for a long time and nobody speaking to them—let it not be so. Do endeavor, Brothers and Sisters—you who know Christ by experience—to tell others of the sweetness that you have found in Him and of the faithfulness of God to His promises—and of the power of prayer and the reality of faith. You will thus bring many a poor soul out of bondage who, but for you, might have lingered long in Doubting Castle in the dungeons of Giant Despair. God grant you the Grace “to speak a word in season to him that is weary.” A word on wheels, as Solomon calls, “a word fitly spoken,” is like apples of gold on plates of silver.

Besides that you can be a blessing *by your actions*, as well as by your words. Some of you have the means with which you can assist your poorer neighbors. Of all people who ought to be kind and neighborly. Of all who should be sympathetic and generous, the Christian should be the first! The tendency nowadays is to get everything under a cast-iron code of law and I should not wonder if a law is passed, some day, making it penal to give sixpence to a poor person who is starving. Somebody said to me today when I was telling him how I had been deceived by a vagabond whom I had relieved, “It is such as you who make the vagabonds.” If so, I shall go on making vagabonds sooner than let the stream of charity in my soul be frozen into ice! It is better to be taken in a few times than to let the heart become hardened like steel against the real poverty that there is in London and many other places besides—the gaunt, grim poverty that may soon be seen if we will but take a little trouble to search for it. Be charitable, notwithstanding all the mischief that unworthy applicants may make of your charity, remembering the command of our Savior to His disciples, “Give to him that asks you.”

You can also “be a blessing” in many other ways which I need not mention now. In such a vast city as this metropolis, there is work for all to do. A Christian living in a remote hamlet might, perhaps, say to his minister, “Sir, can you find me an opportunity of serving the Lord?” But no person who lives in London ought to ask another person, “What can I do for Christ?” If he is willing to do *anything* for the Master, the work lies at his door! Floods of sin are surging all around you—and sinners are sinking in them! Stretch out your hands to help them—

***“Rescue the perishing, care for the dying—
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave.”***

In such a city as this, with hundreds of thousands—I might truthfully say, millions—needing the Bread of Life and the Water of Life—and with many of them literally needing bread and water—all of you can do something to relieve them! And I beseech you, if you love your Lord and Master, do the first thing that comes to hand and “whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might.” Well did Dr. Horatius Bonar write—

***“‘Tis not for man to trifle!
Life is brief,
And sin is here.
Our age is but the falling of a leaf,
A dropping tear.
We have no time to sport away the hours,
All must be earnest in a world like ours.
Not many lives but only one have we,
One, only one—
How sacred should that one life always be,
That narrow span!
Day after day filled up with blessed toil,
Hour after hour still bringing in new spoil.”***

III. Now we must pass on to the third point which is that OUR TEXT IS ALSO CALCULATED TO SUGGEST ENDEAVOR. It has quickened regret and excited inquiry—now it suggests endeavor. But what endeavor?

Well, first I think *it stirs us up to look for a blessing upon what we have already tried to do for Christ and His Church*. You, my Brother, have been teaching a Sunday school class for two years—is it not time that you saw some blessing? Go and look for it! Perhaps in looking for it, you will be the means, under God, of bringing it to your scholars. I think that an earnest, godly teacher, believing that God had blessed his message, would be well repaid if he asked the boys or girls in his class, “Has God blessed your souls through my teaching?” If he asked that question with tears, it might be more effective than all his ordinary teaching. And you, my dear Brother, have you been preaching in some little mission-room in London or in the country and have you seen no “fruit” from your sowing of the Good Seed of the Kingdom? Have you asked, “Who has believed our report?” If so, I ask you—“Have you believed the promise of my text, ‘You shall be a blessing?’” If not, do so at once and go and inquire if there has not been a blessing—and never rest satisfied until you have it!

Next, *the text bids us look for a blessing wherever we may be and whatever we may do*. What have you been doing just lately? You have moved to a more suitable neighborhood? Then let one of your first questions there be, “How can I

be a blessing here?" You have been recently married. I congratulate you and suggest that you should ask, "How can I, in my new relationship, be made a blessing?" You, my Friend over yonder, have gone down in the world lately—well then, ask yourself, "For what purpose am I put in this lower position? Is it not that I may be a blessing to some whom I could not have reached under happier circumstances?" Are you a commercial traveler? Are you not sent from town to town to be a blessing to those you meet? Are you a tradesman? Are you not put behind the counter to be a blessing there?

So I might go on addressing the members of various trades or professions, but I want to remind you that *there are some persons who ought, above all others, to aim at being a blessing to their fellow creatures*. And I put, first of all, ministers of the Gospel. O my Brothers in the ministry, if we are not a blessing, we are a double curse! Every so-called "place of worship" in which the true Gospel is not preached is a curse, for it is like a sepulcher full of rottenness doing nothing but harm! Worldlings more often judge Christianity by fruitless trees than by fruit-bearing trees. O preacher, be a blessing, or never enter the pulpit again!

This rule should also apply to parents. What a blessing Christian parents often are to their children! I can conceive of nothing more natural and, at the same time, nothing more blessed than a father and mother who, by precept and example, have trained up their children in God's fear and whose loving instruction and earnest prayers have been blessed by the Holy Spirit to their children's salvation! What greater joy can we have than to see our children walking in the Truth of God? God grant that you, fathers and mothers, may all diligently seek to be a blessing to your offspring!

There may be some domestic servants here. If so, let me remind you that you have great opportunities for being made a blessing. Good servants can contribute much to the well-being of the family. By the faithful discharge of their duties, they may be the means of preventing others from committing sin. Whereas on the other hand, untidy and idle servants create so much discord in the household that they are the fomenters of sin! I do not know of any person who can have so much influence for good as a godly maid who has the care of little children—one who, instead of scaring them with wicked threats or silly tales, talks to them discreetly concerning Him who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me." I have known domestic servants who were earnest Christians, who have gone to live where there was no religion whatever, no family prayer and no Sabbath observance—and without ever intruding beyond their proper place, they have worked a blessed revolution in the house—and their masters and mistresses and fellow servants have been brought to Christ by their godly example! Let all Christian servants here endeavor to get the fulfillment of the promise of our text, "You shall be a blessing."

I might speak thus to you who have the duty and privilege of instructing the children in our schools, to you masters of large factories, to you who, as workingmen, meet with great numbers of your fellow men—all of you ought to aim at realizing this promise, "You shall be a blessing." Dearly beloved in Christ, let me say to all of you—Do, by God's Grace, maintain a holiness of walk with God and then seek to be a blessing to others. Look at the six words before our text—"So will I save you, and you shall be a blessing." It is only as you yourselves are, in the fullest sense, *saved*—saved from falling into sin, saved from inward corruption, saved from error—it is only as you are conformed to the image of Christ that you can expect to be a blessing to others. Do, I pray you, as members of this Christian Church, always feel that you are to take your full share in being made a blessing to others! There are some who hold that blessing comes to men only through priests—that is what I hold! I believe that no blessing comes to men except through priests! First, through the great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, and then through all who believe in Him, who are, as Peter says, "a holy priesthood" and "a royal priesthood," and whose song in Heaven shall be, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father—to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

The priesthood of the Christian Church is common to all the saints! There is no other true priesthood but that of the Lord Jesus Christ. I cannot discharge any of your religious duties or relieve you of any of your responsibilities. My own are quite heavy enough for me to bear—I will seek, as God gives me Grace, to discharge them—but I cannot discharge the responsibilities of any other person in the world! You, having been personally redeemed by Christ, personally washed in His blood, personally saved by His Grace, are to render personal service to Him. All proxy-religion must be abhorrent to Christ, "who His own Self bore our sins in His own body on the tree." He did not seek to find someone else to save you, for He knew that no one else could do it! He tread the winepress alone and of the people there was none with Him.

So, to your personal Redeemer render your personal service. Give liberally of your substance to help others to do their part of the work, but give yourself—spirit, soul and body—for these are claimed by Christ as “your reasonable service.”

IV. Now I must conclude by trying to show you that our TEXT FURNISHES US WITH MANY CONSOLATIONS. “You shall be a blessing.”

Some of you have to live in places where you are not comfortable. Perhaps you are not in a neighborhood that you like. Possibly in the very house where you live there may be others whose thoughts and feelings are very different from yours and, sometimes, you are grieved and perhaps perplexed because you have to live there. But if God put you there, “you shall be a blessing.” My dear Friend, Mr. Orsman of the Golden Lane Mission, has often told me that the results of his work will never be visible in Golden Lane because as soon as a man is converted, he begins to save, he becomes industrious, wears a better coat, seeks a better house, for he cannot live in that dirty room in which he once lived and he cannot bear the foul language of the court or alley—so, very properly and very naturally—he moves away! Unhappily there are always others coming in to keep the place as bad as ever. Now, when a Christian man is compelled to live in such a place as that, let him conclude that he has been put there that he may be a blessing. If that is your trying lot, my Brother, fight the devil where you are placed, on his own ground! It is not fair that you should have the pick of the spot where the great duel is to be fought. Fight the devil where he has a firm foothold and beat him by God’s Grace! I think if I were a gas lamp and had the choice of the place where I should be hung—and it was proposed to me that I should hang up somewhere in the West End where there is already abundance of light streaming from the fine shops—I don’t know that I would particularly care to be put there. But if there was a dark corner where thieves were in the habit of meeting and where much mischief might be done if it were not for the light of a lamp—I fancy I should ask to be hung up there where I should be of the most use! At any rate, if you are placed, in the Providence of God, in a dark neighborhood, let this be your prayer, “O Lord, make me a blessing here!”

Perhaps, however, you are a member of an ungodly family. Now, you had no hand in that matter. You were not responsible for your birth and you cannot get out of that family into which you were born. Now, instead of saying, “I wish I had a Christian mother and that our house were ordered in God’s fear,” say, “God has called me, by His Grace. At present I am the only one saved, but He must mean me to be a blessing to my brothers, sisters and parents and, therefore, I am thankful that He has put me where I am needed. I will try to do everything that shall be kind to them—I will win their love if I can and I will also try to win them for Christ.” I am really thankful when some of you come to join the Church and tell me that there is no other in the house who cares for the things of God—for I look upon your conversion as getting in the thin end of the wedge! If we get one who fears God inside the house, I hope we shall get more, for, blessed be God, good example is contagious as well as bad! God grant that since it is your unhappiness to have ungodly relatives, it may be your happiness to “be a blessing” to them!

It may be that you are persecuted, that you live in places where you are sneered at, where the Doctrines that are dearer than life to you, are regarded with contempt and Scriptural ordinances, in which you delight, are held up to constant ridicule. Do not altogether regret this, but say to yourself, “Perhaps I am put here in order that I may be a blessing to my persecutors.” Do not imagine that the unlikeliest man to get a blessing out of you is the one who laughs most at you. I sometimes think that the infidels who shout most loudly have more faith than others and that because they are afraid they shall hear conscience speak, they make a great clamor to try to drown its voice! When a man bullies you, there is a great deal better opportunity for you to get at him than when he says, as so many do, “Oh, yes, Sir, it is all true”—and there the matter ends as far as they are concerned. But there is something in a man who will stand up to oppose you and you may yet be able to say a word for Christ that will be blessed to him. Why should we want to run away because men mock us? If they say, “Come and fight,” let us go and fight—only with other weapons than theirs—with the weapons of holy gentleness giving a good reason for the hope that is within us with meekness and fear, for that is always the more powerful way of speaking! Do not, therefore, fear persecution, but rather thank God for it, and say, “I have to endure this that I may be a blessing to those who revile and abuse me.”

Brothers and Sisters, I think our text furnishes *sweet consolation to any who have been engaged in very arduous service.* Have you a great deal to do for Christ—a great deal too much to do, it often seems to you? Are you incessantly occupied about the Lord’s business? Then thank God for it, for He has said, “You shall be a blessing”—and the more you have to do for Him, the more blessing you are likely to be the means of conveying to others!

Or on the other hand, *are you passing through a very trying experience?* If so, you are being qualified for greater usefulness. Your dark experience will only teach you more that you will be able to teach to others concerning God and His dealings with His own. Believe that you will become a blessing to others by means of your trials and cheerfully bow your heads to overwhelming floods of sorrow in the confident assurance that you will thus be made a blessing to others—and so bring glory to God!

Yes, Beloved, and *we may even be content to die* if our last testimony shall be more useful than any that we have borne before! If God will enable us to glorify Him by being a blessing to others, we will be content. I hope we can say that we desire nothing on earth compared with this—to be blessed of God and to be made a blessing by God. We covet not earthly wealth or position, but we do covet the honor of being a blessing! Have an insatiable thirst for this honor, beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ—to be a blessing to tens, to hundreds, to thousands, to the millions of this great city! Incessantly strive, by your private prayer, by your generous alms, by your kindly deeds, by your public testimony, to be a blessing and may God bless you more and more—you and your children—for His dear name's sake!

But, alas, there are many who cannot be a blessing to others, for they are not themselves saved. They are getting gray, but they are not saved! Death will soon call for them. Hell opens wide for them and they are not saved! May the Lord have mercy upon all of you who are not saved and may He, by His Grace, constrain you to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and then to make the Scriptural profession of your faith, for HE said, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” May God grant that you may all “be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation,” for Jesus' sake! Amen.

[PUBLISHERS' NOTE—Mr. Spurgeon's Exposition of Zechariah 8 was an unusually long one, so it must appear with the next *short* Sermon that is published.] [It is in Sermon #3047, Volume 53, IF SO—WHAT THEN?—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

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