

GOD'S GLORY AND HIS GOODNESS

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A SERMON

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“And he said, I beseech You, show me Your Glory. And He said, I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. And He said, You cannot see My face: for there shall no man see Me, and live. And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand upon a rock: and it shall come to pass, while My Glory passes by, that I will put you in a cliff of the rock, and will cover you with My hand when I pass by: and I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back parts: but My face shall not be seen.”
Exodus 33:18-23.

IT has frequently happened that good men in times of great trial have asked God either to give them a signal token of His love, or a special Revelation of Himself, that they might be strengthened and encouraged thereby. I suppose of many here present it is true that when called by the Master to great labor or deep affliction, you have been conscious of the same inward desire—your heart has craved after some extraordinary dispensation of Grace to counterbalance the extraordinary visitation of suffering that has overtaken you. Were you indulged with singular nearness to God and unusual glimpses of His Glory, you feel it would then be easy to leave all matters in His hands and acquit yourselves valiantly—strong for service, whatever there is to do—and patient in enduring whatever there may be to bear. That prayer, “I beseech You, show me Your Glory,” is a natural yearning, a spontaneous impulse of the soul. Albeit, I know that there is a grievous incredulity, a sinful unbelief which asks to see signs and wonders—and without them men will not believe—yet I think there is a desire which springs up in the breasts of Believers from an earnest childlike feeling of dependence upon the great Father God which is not sinful, and which God accepts—and to which He often sends a gracious reply.

Now we will not linger over any preliminary reflections. Our text is rather long, and our time this evening is very short. Let us draw your attention, in the first place, to the fact that—

I. GOD'S GLORY EVIDENTLY LIES IN HIS GOODNESS.

You observe that when Moses said, “I beseech You, show me Your Glory,” the answer given him was this, “I will make all My goodness pass before you.” So then, Beloved, if we could actually see the Glory of the Lord, then the Infinite graciousness of His thoughts, His words and His deeds, all concentrated in one noontide effulgence and all beaming forth with ineffable brightness, would break on our vision! But, of course, it is not a Glory to be seen with mortal eyes, for God is a Spirit and, therefore, He is not to be discerned by our weak senses, or to be understood by our gross materialism. Still, I put it thus—could God be beheld by the mind of man and His perfections unfolded to our creature apprehensions, we would perceive that the chief splendor of His Majesty lay in His Infinite Benevolence! God is Love. This is the prominent point of the Divine Character. Though all excellent qualities beyond measure or degree, surpassing thought or reckoning, could be found in Him, yet, like the blended hues of many colors in the rainbow, the whole might be summed up in such words as these, “Your goodness.”

Some sublime evidences and brilliant reflections of this goodness of God may be seen *in the works of Creation*. Who can leisurely walk in the fields, or saunter among the hills and dells, observing the beauty and order, the uses and capabilities of this fertile earth, without breathing a tribute of gratitude to the goodness of the Creator? Who can look up to the heavens with a gleam of sensibility, or a glimmer of intelligence, by day or by night from these dusky streets of ours, and observe the luster of the constellations, or meditate on the regular motion of the celestial bodies, without an overwhelming impression of the transcendent goodness of the Lord? Yes, “the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.” The

woods ring with the melody of “happy birds that hymn their rapture in the ear of God.” The cattle on a thousand hills low out His praises and winged insects in countless numbers hum their joy! The world is His temple in which everything speaks of His Glory! Some glimpses of His goodness may be perceived in Providence, too. The history of man is the unrolling of the volume of Divine Benevolence to a great extent. That silver thread runs through all the web of human history. Yet, my Brothers and Sisters, these are but glimpses, for, alas, in Creation (and in Providence, too) much is to be seen of the terror and of the Justice of God as well as of His goodness. Earthquakes swallow cities. Storms sweep away not only the possessions men own, but the men, themselves, who own the possessions. Shipwrecks are constantly occurring and the sea is a vast cemetery. Dire famines are still abroad. Fell diseases stalk forth and mow down their helpless victims. The Lord Most High is terrible, yet surely He is good! His decrees are inscrutable. What then? We must be always ready to worship Him with resignation as well as with exultation, with bated breath as well as with grateful song. Tell me of the goodness of God to the whole animate Creation! Commend me to the tiny insects that dance in the sunbeams of His widespread benevolence and I tell you that He is great in power! His ways baffle our scrutiny. For by one chill wind, by one cold frost, in the course of a night millions of millions of those creatures perish at once! Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God! Whether in Creation or in Providence, between the tenderness that fosters life and the sternness that destroys life, the balance is held so steadily that we can but get glimpses of God's goodness by broadly surveying or minutely examining them.

The full display of the goodness of God, however, is reserved for the *working of His Grace in the redemption of man*. Do you ask wherein the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared? The answer is, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.” It is here at the Cross, by the blood of the Covenant, that Jehovah makes His goodness known in its most Divine forms! That God should be good to creatures is something to be thankful for, but that He should be good to *sinful creatures* exhibits His Character in a far more marvelous light and should compel our gratitude beyond all degree. That He should plan a scheme of redemption, that He should give His Son to carry out that purpose, that His Holy Spirit should bow the heavens and come down and be resident on earth, dwelling in the bodies of His people, that He might work out the good pleasure of His own will—herein is goodness! Is the earth a temple?—its windows are few and narrow, letting in little light compared with the Temple of God's Grace which seems to be a very crystal palace, letting in the light of His Grace on all sides! Or rather it is like one huge pearl, whose light beams from within and makes the earth and the nations bright with the radiance of its glory! If you would see the goodness of God in its purest tenderness, you must come into the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, into the Holy of Holies, where He dwells in the hearts of His people, who form the living Temple of the living God! The experience of one and all who know Him will bear witness to this. It would appear, however, that in the manifestation of this Grace, the goodness of God shines in a peculiar light. Another attribute is blended with it. Permit me to read the verse to you—“I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you, and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy to whom I will show mercy.”

You observe here, that while God's goodness is His Glory, *the very glory of His goodness lies in His Sovereignty*. What less than this can be meant by the sentence, “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy to whom I will show mercy.” God is not bound to be gracious to anyone, and He is peculiarly jealous of His right to bestow His Grace where He will. “Shall I not do as I will with My own?” is the question which the Most High seems to be constantly asking. He will show mercy, but He will take care so to grant it that His own absolute prerogative shall be conspicuous. He exercises a right of His own in every act of mercy—it is not of debt, but of Grace—therefore, no flesh shall glory in His Presence. The creature may not say unto his Maker, “Why did You made me thus?” No man is permitted to challenge His authority, or ask, “Why do You withheld such a gift from me, or why have You bestowed such a gift on another”? Against His fiat there is no appeal. “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.” I know this attribute of Divine Sovereignty does not shine in a very lovely light to many eyes. Oh, may those eyes be touched with a heavenly salve—and they will see better! The naked grandeur of the fact is not to be impeached—the eyes are at fault! Let them be abashed—the eyes that are dazzled and blinded by the excess of its splendor, for the Lord is God, He gives no account of His doings. The Lord Most High does as He wills among the armies of Heaven and with the inhabitants of this lower world!

Glory be to His name. Some of us have learned to love this attribute and to rejoice therein. We thank God that He is King. We delight in His absolute Sovereignty, knowing as we do that He is too wise to err, too good to be unkind. Therefore, we say, "Let His will be done on earth even as it is in Heaven"—and in all things let His counsels prevail—for in submission to Him we find all the purposes of His heart on our side, while in resistance to Him we find all His decrees set in array against us! Let not the creature, therefore, ask account from the Creator! Let not the subject call in question his rightful Lord! Above all, let not the disciple have a scruple about His Master's teaching. Not, indeed, that we should gaze at this one attribute till our eyes are so blinded with its dazzling splendor that we cannot perceive other attributes of the Almighty. All His perfections blend and harmonize—none of them clash or contradict one another!

God will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, but *He always exercises that Sovereignty with respect to justice*. He treats no man unequally. In judgment He is impartial. Among lost spirits, not one shall dare charge the Judge of All with partiality. The equity of their sentence shall be palpable alike to the criminal and the foe. Unmoved by passion or by prejudice, the heavens shall declare His righteousness—and Hell itself shall be unable to impeach the integrity with which He administers the laws and statutes of His universal Kingdom! Neither does God exercise that Sovereignty inconsistently with wisdom. He has chosen a people, and He did not choose them because of their merits, yet depend upon it, He made a wise choice! Were we endowed with more wisdom, we might easily discern the choice God has made is not only gracious, but highly judicious. He is not blind and unwitting that the counsel of His heart should be distorted with a random change or an inevitable fatality. What though we cannot decipher the why or the wherefore, there is a reason which He has not been pleased to reveal. Therefore, it ill becomes us to pry into matters so far beyond the sphere of our intelligence! And still less would it be fitting to ascribe to mere caprice motives which we are unable to fathom. Our Sovereign Lord acts according to His own will, it is true, but know that He acts *according to the counsel of His will*, that is to say, not without deliberation, forethought and prescience of all the issues! Nor is this Sovereign choice of God ever exercised *apart* from His goodness. He is infinitely gracious, infinitely benevolent, infinitely loving. His election makes the Grace He bestows, the compassion He feels and the love He manifests more abundantly conspicuous.

Some preachers have set forth this Doctrine as if it were their delight to represent the Almighty as an austere Ruler, to be dreaded rather than to be revered! By exaggerating one feature of His admirable Character, or rather by neglecting to draw other features in their due proportion, they have produced an unseemly caricature, instead of an attractive delineation. His absolute dominion has thus made men shudder as if it were an awful despotism wherewith He tramples down the creatures whom verily He upholds by His power! But know you that the Lord is good, that His tender mercy is over all His works, and His mercy endures forever! Though in the exercise of His supreme prerogative, He says, "I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy," yet He speaks again in words like these, "As I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in him that dies, but had rather that he turn unto Me and live." He wills not, He declares, the death of the sinner. Infinite Mercy is not inconsistent with unrivalled Sovereignty. Do you tell me to show you that? No, but I cannot show you it—it is for God to show you! Who am I that I should attempt to reveal the Infinite? Go to Him and put up the prayer, "Show me Your Glory," and you shall see His goodness with His Sovereignty illuminating it like a blaze of light, always making it more resplendent, never obscuring it! At any rate, Beloved, the Doctrine is transparent enough to arrest attention. Do not, I beseech you, reject it. I know how angry it makes some men to allude to it, but I know also how good a thing it often proves for them to be incensed, when the Truth of God is more understandable than edible, for if the arrows of God stick fast in their conscience and wound them, there will come healing afterwards. Anything that wakes men from their apathy and makes them think is good. What though this Doctrine may look like a stumbling block in your pathway, it is one of the great thought leaders that has often brought men on their knees before the majesty of Heaven!

But ah, the best of men, while here below, can only have a partial view of this Glory of God's goodness and sovereignty. Moses, highly favored as he was, beholds it but in a measure. He sees the skirts of God's garment—he cannot see His face. And yet it has been well observed that this very Moses afterwards saw the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ on the mountain of Transfiguration. "What you know not now, you shall know hereafter." Here you can but know in part, but soon, and oh, how soon!—you shall know even as you are known. The veil will soon be torn, my Brothers and Sisters! If we have believed in Jesus, the least among us shall soon be wiser than the wisest of those who still linger behind in the wilderness! We shall stand before the Throne of God upon that sea of glass that glows with fire and cast our

crowns before the Eternal One, and see the Infinite One and rejoice in the sight! Thus have we tried to show you that the Glory of God lies in His goodness and His Sovereignty.

II. HIS GLORY CAN BE BEST SEEN IN THE CLIFF OF THE ROCK.

Moses was put into the cliff of the rock. Surely I am not guilty of trifling with a literal fact or fancifully spiritualizing the sacred narrative, when I take up the language of the Apostle Paul, and say, "That Rock was Christ." If the Rock from which the Israelites drank was Christ, surely this Cliff in the Rock, this splitting of the Rock, this making a shield and shelter of the Rock, was a true type of our Lord Jesus Christ—

*"Rock of Ages cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."*

It is no poetical fiction, no coinage of the brain. It is a substantial Truth of God that Jesus is the Cliff of the Rock wherein we stand when we come to God in Christ Jesus. There it is that we can look upon the goodness and the Sovereignty of Jehovah, and more fully survey the glorious vision than it were possible for us to behold anywhere else. *Apart from Christ, men do not see the true goodness of God.* The description that some preachers give of God's goodness amounts to this—that men's sins are such trifles that God will entirely overlook them as frailties of the creature, or if He should punish the transgressors, it will be with gentle discipline and not with fiery indignation—and that only for a short time—after which they will either perish by annihilation, or else perhaps they will enter into life everlasting by a general restitution. Sin is treated with an indifference that borders on levity! It excites so little aversion among men, that they begin to think it of no very great account in the sight of God! He is too good and generous to be hard upon His poor subjects, who did but follow their own inclinations and trample on His Laws! Knowing what they are, He pities them, as if vice were a disease and crime a misfortune! Take heed, my Friends, of all such sophistries! That leniency is not goodness. In fact, it is the very opposite. It has neither integrity nor benignity to recommend it. Take the case of a legislator or a judge, whose sense of justice might be lax, while his feelings were too tender to denounce a crime and too timid to condemn a criminal. Would you consider him deserving of eulogy? Suppose a magistrate on the bench should say, "Well, it is true this man did break into a dwelling house, smite the servant, kill the owner and wreck the property. The evidence is clear, but there are extenuating circumstances. He needed a little money, or he would not have done it. Poor man! The money tempted him! Let us take a merciful view of the matter. Is not money a commodity that everybody is anxious to get? Are we not all exposed to temptation? Do not put him in prison! Do not sentence him to death—how would you like to be hanged? Admonish the unhappy fellow, but give him his liberty! Encourage him with the hope of a better career in the future."

What would you think of this new species of charity? When felony is but a misdemeanor, and murder is condoned as a casualty, I can hardly imagine you would feel very comfortable with the red-handed culprit by your side in this Tabernacle! You would rather not have him go home and sleep in one of your houses tonight—your generous hospitality would rather grudge him a cordial welcome! No, we say that kindness to the murderer is cruelty to the nation! The easy good nature that makes light of sin is a wrong to the community! The reprieve and the release of heinous offenders is a breaking up of the defenses that shield us from men whose conduct is unscrupulous and whose disposition is ferocious. Or when, to give another example, I see a man in Holland, digging away at the dykes which are made to keep out the sea, I might ignorantly resent any interference with him. Why should not the man have a little sand if he needs it to put on his floor, or why may not he take home a bag of earth to make the things in his garden grow better? Do not molest him! No, but with the knowledge I now possess of the consequences, I would say he will let in the sea—he will break up the ramparts! It cannot be endured. It must not be tolerated. He infringes the law to the hazard of his neighbors, so that it becomes such a high offense that mercy extended to him would be a misery to the surrounding population! What say you, then, my dear Friends, shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Would you impute to Him a pitiful clemency that rather exposes weakness than exhibits strength of character? No such callousness or apathy, no such disregard of the rights and wrongs of the inhabitants of the world belongs to the government of the Most High! Even the mercy of God, which is revealed in Christ and recorded in the Bible, is wise and discriminating. He is as severe as if He were not kind and He is as tender as if He were not rigorous. His Justice is never eclipsed by His Mercy and His Mercy is not diminished, but rather is increased in splendor by His Justice! Never, I pray you, think that men can understand the goodness of God till they see Christ Jesus! When they see Him Crucified, they discover how He pardons sin, but not till an Atonement is

made—how He puts away the transgression, but not till His Law is fulfilled and made honorable by the suffering of the Only Begotten! He does not pull up the sluices of iniquity and let loose the floods upon mankind. He is too good to do that. He lays help upon One that is mighty and executes His vengeance upon the sinner's Substitute. You never see His goodness till you get into Christ.

Nor does any man ever see God's Sovereignty aright until he comes into the Cliff of the Rock, Jesus Christ. I love the high Doctrines of the Covenant of Grace, I must confess, most devoutly and devotedly. But of this I am quite certain, that all the counsels of the Father concerning His people, and all the benefits He has conferred on His people were bestowed in the Person of His Well-Beloved Son! Still, I know of no greater pest under Heaven than high Doctrine preached or believed in as an abstract system of divinity or a blind fatalism by those who have not their heart set upon the One Mediator whom God appointed, the blessed Redeemer whom He has accepted as our Representative. Oh, how they caricature God as a Moral Governor! Oh, how they burlesque the Gospel as a proclamation of good tidings to the children of men! The love they attempt to describe is unlovely—and the mercy they essay to publish is unattractive! They sing hymns of Grace to the tune of reprobation! But in Christ Jesus you may see how Sovereignty blends with sympathy and how the strong will that knows no mutability is consistent with the goodwill that owns no animosity! The Lord is King, but the silver scepter is in His hand. He fulfils His own decrees, but His decrees are not grievous, for Christ is the Messenger of the Covenant and He proclaims His readiness to receive every heavy-laden soul that comes to Him for mercy!

Now I further remark that *in the gifts of the Gospel and the blessings of Christ we see Divine Goodness*. You will never see Divine Goodness so clearly as you do in the fact that God gave His Son. "God so loved the world that He gave"—gave what?—Gave what token of His love? Gave the air we breathe, the fruits of the earth we feed upon, the flowers that charm our eyes, the gorgeous sun that shines resplendent in the skies—these are proofs of His benevolence no doubt, but all other proofs are comprehended in this—"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The Gospel of good news declares everywhere that whoever believes in Christ is not condemned. Herein the amazing goodness of God is described in a few words—an Infinity of meaning is pressed into a single sentence! The blessings that God has conferred on us in Christ—comprehending as they do the Holy Spirit who brings all things to us—show the riches of His goodness! Earthly blessings are but the lower springs—and they are often discolored in a measure by the soil through which they flow—but heavenly blessings are the upper springs, leaping from the Eternal Throne, immortal and pure, making those that drink pure and immortal, so that they shall never die! In Christ you can see Divine Sovereignty as you never saw it before. Oh, I like to think that Christ is King—that over all the world He reigns—that God has committed all power into His hands who is our Brother, touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

The sons of Jacob might not go to Pharaoh, but it was a good thing when it was said, "Go to Joseph," for they would, none of them, be afraid to go to their brother! And now there is a mediatorial Kingdom set up on the earth in which Christ, alone, is the Head. And who would wish to have a better Head and a better King? We can trust the power with Him, for He has absolute wisdom, unlimited goodness, unbounded Grace. Oh, how glad are we that the Lord reigns and that Christ Jesus is Head over all things to His Church, that He is King of kings and Lord of lords, according to that ancient saying, "Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion." In Christ, Sovereignty and goodness shine as with noontide radiance!

And now I would ask you, my dear Hearers, to remember that *the Sovereign Grace of God may be seen in the Gospel that is preached to you*. God might, if He had willed, have made salvation conditional upon your performing certain works. He has not done so—He has been pleased to give salvation to every soul that will believe in Jesus Christ! In His Sovereignty He has been pleased to make faith the channel of saving blessing. He, in His Sovereignty, might have ordained a thousand Graces as the way to mercy, but He has only put two. "Repent," He says, and in another place, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ." The knowledge of salvation might have been put so far beyond the reach of common intelligence that the whole of the British Museum could not have contained the volumes in which it was written—and an entire lifetime could not have sufficed to learn the rudiments of this best of all the sciences! Instead of that, He has put it in these simple sentences, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved." "He that believes not shall be damned." Here is His Sovereignty and His goodness, too! Thank God for so simple a plan of salvation and thank Him, I pray you, for such promises as He has made. Listen, Sinner! He has said, "Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will

give you rest.” He has said, “Let the wicked forsake his ways and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him turn unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him.” He might have chosen to send the Gospel to the great and mighty, but He has dispensed it freely to the poor! He has directed it to the humble, yes, and He has made a special mark that He has provided it for every broken and contrite heart that trembles at His Word! How can you kick at Sovereignty, however absolute, which is exercised in so tender, so gentle, so merciful a manner? Instead of rebelling against His scepter, come and kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you perish from the way! Bow down before His nailed feet and ask the pardon that His wounds and death have purchased! Come to His Cross and let your trust fix itself on His passion which has expiated the guilt of all Believers! On His Resurrection which has secured life to all that trust Him, and on His intercession, which guarantees salvation to all that come unto God by Him—salvation even to the uttermost! Oh, see Him! He might, if He had so willed, have withheld the Gospel! He might, if He willed, have clogged the Gospel with terms and conditions which would make the acceptance of it a hardship! Or He might have denied to you the hearing of it, even though He gave others that unspeakable privilege. What, then, should be your gratitude, when He has been pleased to send His messenger to you with these tidings of Grace, this proclamation of pardon—“Trust in the Only Begotten, who died on the Cross, and I will forgive you—forgive you now”? “Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as wool; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as snow.” Oh, yield, yield now! May His blessed Spirit come with these words of mine, which I would to God could be made more quick and powerful than they are—may His eternal Spirit come and clothe them with might and with energy to convict your conscience, to convert your heart, to renew your spirit, to make you bow before the Infinite heart so good and yet so absolute! Then might you say, “Great God, I acknowledge You as my King! I love You because You are a gracious God. I worship You because You could reject me if You willed. I kneel at Your footstool and pray You to accept me, not for my merit, since I have none, but for Your mercy’s sake! Oh, for Christ’s sake, have pity upon me!” He will hear you, Sinner! An answer of peace shall be given you—shall be given you *now*!

The practical end of all this may be summed up in a few sentences. Sinner—unsaved, you are in the hands of God to do what He likes with you. He can destroy you. He can save you. A moth is not more feeble beneath the finger of a man than you are beneath the finger of God. Be not, therefore, high-minded. Submit yourself to Him whose power is able to crush or to uphold you. But know that He in whose hands you are, is infinitely good and gracious! Therefore, appeal to Him for mercy. By all means cherish hope. Yield not to despair. Suffer not that demon, like a nightmare, to sit on your breast, to crush out all your energies, stifle all your cries and prevent your drawing near to God in prayer! He is not more majestic and absolute as a Sovereign than He is benignant and compassionate! When you are in His hands, you are in good hands. Resist not His will! Repine not at His decrees! Confide in His clemency. Approach Him in the courts of His house. Fall down at His Mercy Seat! Adore Him by His generous titles. Seek shelter in His love. Give earnest attention to the Gospel—believe it implicitly. Right soon will you then get silent musings, obvious reasoning, solid arguments to banish fear and nourish hope! God need not have sent His Son into the world to suffer and to die. It must have been gratuitous on His part. That you should have a share in this great Redemption could never be inferred from His Justice! It must be referred to His Grace. But if you believe Him, then the Redemption is yours! The faith you have in Him is a token of the favor He has towards you. If you rely upon the simple fact that Christ died for you, your faith is the substance of the thing you hope for, and it shall be the evidence of your special Redemption! His blood was shed for your remission. Because He poured out His soul unto death, therefore your soul is raised up to everlasting life! Your relying upon Christ is my warranty for accrediting you with all the immunities and all the advantages of His salvation!

This Sovereign goodness of God ought to be a great encouragement to any of you that have been great sinners, because while there is no competition on your part in which merit might bear the palm, there is a complacency on His part in which Grace can assert its claims. If He can save whom He will, He may be as willing to save you who are the most depraved as He is to save those who have been the most virtuous of mankind! Do you heartily repent, at this good hour, of your transgressions? God has not limited the promise of this mercy to those who have transgressed but a little, but He is known to make the chief of sinners the objects of His greatest mercy! It is well for us that Grace is distributed Sovereignly. Better that we should look to His goodwill than dream of our own free will. To be suitors for the great benefits He has treasured up for His people is far preferable to being schemers seeking to justify ourselves and forge a righteousness void of worth, graceless, heartless and good for nothing! Since He does as He wills, He may be willing to give to you what you are desirous to ask of Him. No, He does will to give to you if now He moves your will to accept at His hand the

rich fruit of the Savior's passion! Never did a soul desire God, but God desired that soul. Whenever a soul yearns to be saved through Jesus Christ, admiring the Grace as it has been vouchsafed to others, and craving the same Grace for itself, that hunger and thirst are prompted by God, and by God it shall be satisfied, for blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness—they shall be filled!

Oh, come then, come and welcome! What more, what better can I do to conclude than ring again that silver bell which has so often resounded clear and loud in this Tabernacle? It has not lost any of its sacred melody or its enchanting power—

*“From the Mount of Calvary,
Where the Savior deigned to die,
What transporting sounds I hear,
Bursting on my ravished ear—
Love's redeeming work is done!
Come and welcome, Sinner, come!”*

Come, I pray you, for His mercy's sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *ISAIAH 45:1-16.*

Verses 1-4. *Thus says the LORD to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held, to subdue nations before him; and loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut: I will go before you, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: And I will give you the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that you may know that I, the LORD, which call you by your name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob My servant's sake, and Israel My elect, I have even called you by your name: I have surnamed you, though you have not known Me.* Long before the period of Cyrus's birth, this prophecy was written by Isaiah—and surely it must have flashed solemn conviction upon the heart of the king when he came to read words like these, in which his very name was mentioned—and all his exploits and successes, with which he vanquished his enemies, captured their strong places and cut the gates of brass in pieces! Our God has all things present before Him. To Him there is no future. All things are in one eternal *now* with Him and, therefore, He tells His Prophets the things that shall be.

5. *I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside Me: I girded you; though you have not known Me.* It is a wonderful subject—the Providential government of God over princes and potentates that know Him not—how He raised up Cyrus on the behalf of His people, that they might be delivered—and though Cyrus did not know it, yet was he, as it were, an instrument in the hand of God—moved according to the Divine Will!

6, 7. *That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside Me. I am the LORD, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness, I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.* It was to correct the Persian mistake into which Cyrus had fallen of a duplicate deity—one power creating light and another power creating darkness. “No,” says Jehovah, “I alone am God.”

8, 9. *Drop down, you heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it. Woe unto him that strives with his Maker!* As many do in these days. Tongue-valiant men who dare accuse the Most High and arraign Him at their bar.

9. *Let the potsherd strive with the potsherd of the earth.* Let them strive with their equals, but who is he that shall come into conflict with the eternal God?

9, 10. *Shall the clay say to him that fashioned it, What are you making? Or your work, He has no hands? Woe unto him that says unto his father, What did you beget? Or to the woman, What have you brought forth?* Quarreling with God is a waste of time, is audacity and presumption! It will end in disaster to us, for the Lord is Lord of All!

11-13. *Thus says the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons, and concerning the work of My hands command you Me? I have made the earth, and created man upon it. I, even My hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their hosts have I commanded. I have raised him—That is, Cyrus.*

13-15. *Up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build My city, and he shall let go My captives, not for price nor reward, says the LORD of Hosts. Thus says the LORD, The labor of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto you, and they shall be yours: they shall come after you: in chains shall they come over, and they shall fall down unto you, they shall make supplication unto you, saying, Surely God is in you; and there is none else, there is no God. No other God. The day shall come in which this shall all be true, when men shall relinquish their idols and believe in that one great invisible God, the Maker of all things! For the present we do not see this.*

15. *Verily you are a God that hides Yourself, O God of Israel, the Savior.* Throughout these long and weary years, man has forgotten or blasphemed his Maker, and God has sat still and borne it in the majestic patience of His Infinity.

16. *They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go to confusion together that are makers of idols.*

—Adapted from the *C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**