

A PROMISE AND A PROVIDENCE

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A SERMON

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“I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord.”
Ezekiel 34:15.

BEFORE this can be done there are certain preliminaries. A flock cannot be fed until it is in existence. It cannot be fed, as a flock, until all the scattered sheep shall have been brought together. Hence, in the context, other promises supply this deficiency! We find, for example, the Lord declaring that He will search out His sheep and seek them. They have gone far astray. Some of them seem to have so exhausted their patience in wandering that they have invented new forms of sin and new methods of transgression. Yet the Lord will seek them till His eyes of mercy shall rest upon them and His hands of power shall grasp them. If the Lord has an elect soul in the center of Africa, He will find him out. Or should there be one for whom Jesus died who frequents the house that is infamous and has plunged into the most detestable sin, yet the Lord will not lose him! Having set His heart upon him, He will seek him till He finds him and follow him up till He reclaims him. You remember one of the Lord’s sheep—a woman who had forsaken the paths of virtue. She had had five husbands and was then living with one who was not her husband. Yet He must go through Samaria to meet with her! He must—such was the Divine necessity that this sheep, which had wandered as far as it well could, should be brought back!

Cheer up! Be of good courage, preacher of the Word. You may not find the sheep, but your Master will! Take heart, you that wait upon the Lord in prayer—you may see some of your agencies fail and success may not wait upon all your efforts, but God’s purposes must stand—He will do all His pleasure and at the last it shall be seen that not a single sheep was left for want of being sought out. Nor is it enough to seek the sheep and to find them—they must be delivered from the dangers into which they have fallen. There is a promise to this effect. They had been scattered in a cloudy and dark day. Some of them had slipped from the crag and fallen into crevices, from which it seemed as if no hand could reach them. Others, skipping from rock to rock, had reached some lofty pinnacle where it seemed certain that the next move would dash them down the dizzy depth to ruin. But the Lord has said it, “I will bring them out from all places where they have been scattered.” High up there in pride, in blasphemy, in persecution, or low down there in shameful degradation and infamy, they shall be brought, every one of them, from all the perils of evil within and evil without, and be gathered safely into the fold! But when, one by one, they have been delivered, they are not a flock till they are gathered by the Shepherd. They must, therefore, not only be brought out of the danger, but brought into the flock, safely housed, and collected into one fold. So the promise runs, “I will gather them altogether into one place.” Beloved, this great work of gathering is going on today! By this man and by that, by this agency and by the other, the Lord is separating His chosen people from among the ruins of the Fall—fetching His Israel out of Egypt and His captives out of Babylon and Chaldaea—so that the whole company of the faithful may be a people separated unto the Lord! Let us entertain no fears as to the Lord having a Church in the world! With Omnipotent Power, directed by Infallible Wisdom and moved by Immutabile Love, those whom God has chosen to be His sheep shall be sought out, rescued from their danger and numbered with the living people of the living God! Do I not now address a section of this great flock? Are there not many in this dense crowd who belong to that Seed which the Lord has blessed? Can there fail to be a rich vein of comfort to such in this promise, “I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord”?

Our text has in it a double blessing. By way of division, we will emphasize each word and endeavor to draw out the fullness of its meaning. To take the last word, first, “My flock” is—

I. A NOTE OF DESCRIPTION.

It describes God’s people *distinctively*, separating them from all other people. They are not ravenous like lions. They are not crafty like foxes. They are not swift like the hare. They are not foul like the swine. They love not carrion like the

raven. They are timid, trembling, weak, but they are clean and they love clean feeding. They are gentle. They have no guile. When Sovereign Grace has renewed and changed them, you may easily distinguish the Lord's sheep from the world's goats. Naturally, these sheep of the Lord have the infirmities of sheep—prone to go astray they are fearful, weak and liable to disease. It is said that man, a horse and a sheep are liable to more diseases than any other creatures. Certainly sheep have many contingencies. They are prone to infect others with their ailments. As to going astray they are so gregarious that if but one sheep leaps the wall, the whole flock must go after him! The Lord's people, in a state of nature, are very much like sheep as to their infirmities and, when converted, they are like sheep for their meekness and gentleness. Then they can suffer without repining—they can follow the Shepherd, for they know His voice, and a stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers. This word is thus distinctive—it sets out a people who are no more to be mistaken for any other people than sheep are to be mistaken for wolves or lions! Question yourself, my Hearer, whether you are one of the Lord's sheep. Have you given yourself up to His care? Do you follow at His bidding? Do you desire to be washed in His sheep-washing? Are you desirous that He should make you to feed and to lie down in His green pastures?

Nor is the word merely distinctive—it is likewise *collective*. It is not said, “I will feed My sheep one by one,” but, “I will feed My flock.” The Lord has only one flock, and so in this world He has only one Church. “Well,” says one “we see 20 denominations.” Thank God for it! I am not one of those who would deplore the fact that different Brothers are set for the defense of different parts of the Truth of God. Can you doubt that when Christ prayed that His people might be one, He was heard? It were almost blasphemy to think that His petition was denied! Very well, then, they are one. If the intercession of Christ prevailed, then today the Church is one! I do not believe for a moment that the oneness which Christ intended was ever a oneness of opinion, or a oneness of form of worship any more than a oneness of association, congregating them together in the same building! It was a mystical, secret, vital unity which exists in the Church of God at this very day! Brothers and Sisters, all Believers are really and truly one! When their souls are in a glow with Divine Love, and their hearts speak out of the fullness of their emotion, the unity of the one flock becomes perceptible! The little divisions in the Church of God that challenge your notice are like little cracks upon the surface of the earth—the rock is not cracked. The divisions that we have in the churches are only little skin wounds—the body is not divided. “Not a bone of Him shall be broken.” The great body of Christ still remains indissolubly one! And here tonight, be we Independent, or Baptist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, or Methodist—if we are one with Christ, we must be one with one another! After all, the Catholic is right in the expression, while he is wrong in the meaning he attaches to it, when he says there is no salvation out of the pale of the church. Referred to any worldly policy, it is a lie, but in sober truth, outside of the one indivisible Church of Christ lightly defined, there can be no salvation! But, thanks be unto Christ, every soul that knows the voice of God, the Good Shepherd, and follows at His beck and call, belongs to the one flock, soon to be gathered into the one fold. Note, then, the distinctive and the aggregate description—they are sheep individually and they are, collectively, a flock. But here is—

II. A WORD OF DISCRIMINATION, as well as a word of description—“I will feed My flock”—“My flock.” Oh, that sweet word, “My”! “I will feed My flock,” not the devil's flock—let those goats browse where they will! Not the world's flock—let them wander on their own mountains of vanity! But, “I will feed *My* flock.” Beloved, if we are the Lord's people by faith, remember we are His by Eternal Election. He chose us before earth's foundations were laid! He took us unto Himself to be the jewels of His crown and the delight of His soul. Before the channels of the sea were dug, or the sockets of the mountains were formed—long before the sun had scattered the thick darkness—our names were written upon the hands of Jesus! We are His, too, by purchase. Think of the price He paid for us! I am dwelling upon this to make you see how true it is that He will feed us. Did He choose us? Did He buy us—and will He not feed us?—

*“Count the purple drops and say,
‘Thus my sins were washed away.’”*

Thus I, a captive, was set free! Thus I, impounded by the Law of God, saw the gate of the pound opened and I, the sheep of Christ, came out to lie down in His pastures. You are His by ties of blood, as well as His by purchase—and you are also His by power. He won you, fought for you and made you His lawful captives. You held out as long as you could, but at last you cried, “I yield! Almighty Love, You have overcome me! Now I bow myself to Your silver scepter, willingly Your subject.” Oh, how hard it was for Christ to get some of us! Like wandering sheep, we strayed here, there and everywhere! And when the Shepherd came and began to grasp us, we struggled to get free, struggled for that awful liberty

which would have been our ruin! But, glory be to God, He would have us! He took us upon His shoulders, He carried us home rejoicing and this day we acknowledge it was the victorious love of Christ which made us His! Yes, and we are His by our own free consent. Would you be another's if you could? Oh, if there could be a divorce court held between your soul and Christ, would you sue for a division? Say, my Soul, if the branch could be cut off from the Vine, would you wish to be severed from Him now? For His sake can you suffer shame, spitting, rebuke and poverty? Say, for His sake can you count the world's treasures to be as dross—and all its pomp and glory but as sounding brass and as a tinkling cymbal? I know you! You say, "Truly, by His Grace, I can, for He is mine and I cannot let Him go! He holds me so fast and He has proved unto me a love which many waters cannot quench, neither can the floods drown it." Thus you see, Beloved, that that word of discrimination, "My," has a good and grateful tone about it. "I will feed *My* flock." Go, you who do not belong to God, and find such food as you can gather, but you who are the Lord's own peculiar ones, take this for your consolation, "I will feed *My* flock." The next word, going backwards, is—

III. A WORD FULL OF CONSOLATION—"I will *feed* My flock." Yes, He will supply your temporal needs. You may run short, but you shall never want. When the garment has got to be threadbare, then He will find you another. I recollect one instance of Providence of which I was the almost passive agent. It was the case of a Brother Christian and minister. I was staying in a country town and it was requisite to borrow an edifice for the preaching. One Chapel could not be had, for the preacher was not high enough in Doctrine. And another Chapel could not be had for the whim of some of the deacons. But there was one little Chapel which the minister very willingly lent, for he said, "Oh, yes. To a fellow servant of my Lord and Master, I will cheerfully open the doors." The preacher of that night noticed that the minister of that little Chapel wore a threadbare coat and he observed that in his house there were signs of poverty. Twelve shillings a week was the good man's income—all that his flock could afford to give him. After the preacher had done his sermon, he said, "Perhaps the minister here will pardon me if I say that his clothes are getting much too shabby, and I think it would be a good thing for us all to contribute and buy him a new suit of clothes." 'Twas done and when I said to the minister, "I hope you will pardon me for such an impertinent remark?" "Pardon you?" he said, "why the Lord always finds me fresh clothes when my things wear out, and it is always some such manner as I never dreamed of." The good man is in Heaven, now. I believe that suit just lasted him till he put on the white garment before the Eternal Throne. Depend upon it, that as it was with him, so, if you believe in your Master, it shall be with you! He will give you food and raiment—that is all He has promised you—and if you get that, He will be as good as His bargain, so you must not murmur at your fare.

"I will *feed* My flock." The sense, however, is mainly spiritual. It does not say the Shepherd shall feed them, but, "I will feed them, says the Lord," and He says that He will feed them with good pasture. Good Doctrines, comfortable promises, sweet encouragements, tender words of exhortation, gentle notes of warning—these shall be their daily food! And, mark it, He says He will feed them on the high mountains. Some of His sheep do not like to go up such lofty heights. Dear me! How many faithful souls are frightened at the very mention of High Doctrine! Election is one of those mountains where grass grows of the very sweetest kind, but there are some of the flock who do not like to go there to feed. But the best food is on these high mountains. If your feet shall know how to stand on the craggy heights of Immutable and Eternal Love, if you shall know how to climb up yonder into the great Decrees of God, if you can take hold of His Covenant, if you can contemplate the Divine Purpose which is sure to all the Seed, you will find those to be the very sweetest and most satisfying spiritual food that is to be found on this side the Jordan! "I will feed My flock." Ah, sometimes God's people are placed where they have a very innutritious ministry, and then He feeds them in some other way. Their own private readings become a consolation to them. When, at times, some of the Lord's people are sick, laid on their beds, unable to go up to the House of Prayer, this promise, "I will feed My flock," proves quite as true to them at home in their seclusion as it is here in our joyous gatherings! If you neglect the means of Grace, in vain can you expect a blessing! But if you are lawfully detained from them, plead the promise and expect its fulfillment—"I will feed My flock."

Are you just going to New Zealand, or are you just about to take a voyage to Australia, my beloved Sister, my dear Brother? God will feed you there. I know not how. You may be up in the back settlements, or in the bush, and have but little opportunity of meeting with the people of God, but still remember, "I will feed My flock." You are going on a long sea voyage, are you, and there are but few on board to encourage you? Well, take the promise to your God, "I will feed My flock." Or are you moving away from this Church, which has been like a hothouse to you, and going into some country village where there is no Gospel preaching? Never mind, Brothers and Sisters—if God sends you there, lay hold on

Him by faith with these words, “I will feed My flock”—and He *will* feed you, and you shall have enough and to spare! In the time of famine you shall be filled, and in the day of scarcity you shall be satisfied. “I will feed My flock.” Again, going backwards, let us take the next—

IV. A WORD WHICH IS FULL OF ASSURANCE.

“I *will* feed My flock.” “I will. I will. I will.” See how positively He speaks. Not, “I think I will.” Not, “I may,” but “I will.” Beloved, these “shalls” and “wills” are the very marrow of the Gospel! They make the strength of it. Take the “shalls” and “wills” out of the Bible and put in conditional “ifs” and “buts” and “perhaps,” in their place—what a desolate appearance it would present! These “shalls” and “wills” stand like Jachin and Boaz, the great pillars of the Temple, right at the entrance, and we must see to it that we never give up these potent “shalls” and “wills,” but hold fast and firmly to them! “I will feed My flock.” “But,” says one, “are not some of the flock lost?” Read the verse! He says, “I will seek them and I will feed them.” “They may be lost, but if they have backslidden I will bring them back. If, like Peter, they have denied Me to My face, I will forgive them. If they have played the harlot, like Israel of old, and gone astray from Me, yet I will bring them back, for I will feed My flock.” He cannot feed them unless He brings them back! But, “I will feed My flock. I will bring back all the wanderers who have been bought with My blood. I will.” The adversary says they shall not be brought! “I will. I will,” says the Lord. “No, but,” says proud flesh, “I will not be brought.” “I will,” says the Lord—and God’s, “I will,” is infinitely mightier than all the hosts of darkness and powers of corruption! But, Lord, there are some of them who have been driven away—legal preachers have driven them from Christ—their doubts and fears, their sins and trespasses have driven them away. “But I will feed My flock, every one of them, for I will bring them back—they shall have all their old comforts back, their joys and hopes shall be restored to them—I will feed My flock.” But, Lord, some of them are broken! Some cruel blow has broken a leg, or some other limb of some of Your sheep. “But I will feed My flock. I will bring them back and heal them.” You may be broken in heart and your faith may be weak, and your Graces spoiled, but this stands good, “I will, I will feed My flock.” But, Lord, they are infected with disease—so runs the passage, “they are weak”—they have got some disease common to Your sheep. “I will heal them,” says the Lord, “for I will feed My sheep.”

My dear Friends, it is not possible for an heir of Heaven ever to get into such a state that God cannot save him! And should he be allowed in Sovereign forbearance to wander to the utmost excess of sin—if he were even in the very jaws of the destroyer, yet our Savior, like another David, would pluck the lamb out of the jaw of the lion and tear it away from the paw of the bear! As long as you are out of Hell, Sinner, have hope! And, Believer, if you should sink in deep waters and be swallowed up of the Devourer, still, like Jonah, you shall be able to say, “Out of the belly of Hell I cried, and You heard me.” “I will feed My flock.” Oh, that you who are doubting and fearing would lay hold on this, “I will. I will. I will.” Your flesh and carnal reason will doubtless say, “Well, I hope and trust.” Away with your hoping and trusting! Do not halt and hesitate, but believe! If God says He will, who are you that you should entertain a suspicion? You shall be fed—God’s Word cannot fail you! “I will feed My flock.” Moreover, this is—

V. A WORD OF DIVINITY.

“I will feed My flock.” Who is this that says, “I will”? When a man says, “I will,” it is often braggart impudence, but when God says, “I will,” and, “you shall,” such words are expressive alike of Sovereign determination and Irresistible Power! Christian, see who it is that makes the promise and mark who it is that will fulfill it! “I will feed My flock.” Do you complain that you cannot feed under such-and-such a minister? The Lord promises, “I will feed My flock.” Here you have Divine Infinity to be your supply! Here you have Divine Immutability to be your guarantee! Here you have Divine Omnipotence to be your aid and Divine Wisdom to be the measure of the supply which shall be afforded to you! Trust in the Lord and do good. When Jehovah says, “I will,” banish every doubt and fear and now, for time and for eternity, cast yourself upon your God. He says, “I will feed My flock”—let us reply, “The Lord is my Shepherd.”

Passing on to the second clause of the verse, “*And I will make them lie down, says the lord,*” you will please observe that this further blessing is intended to make amends for the harshness of the false shepherds. They would never let them lie down quietly. Their custom was always to drive, drive, drive, or else to seize, fleece and slay. But the Lord says, “I will make them lie down,” and so redress their wrongs. For all the weariness they have suffered in the past, they shall have calm repose in the future. You know how apt the legal preacher is to whip his hearers with—“Do this!” And, “Do that.” You know how certain Calvinists whip their hearers with, “If you have *felt* this,” and, “If you have *experienced* that,”

you may be saved. But the Lord Himself always makes His people, when they come fully to confide in Him, to lie down in a good fold and to feed in a fat pasture!

When the Lord reveals to you that He has loved you with an everlasting love, is not that a good place to lie down in? When He tells you that having so loved you, He will never cast you away, is not that a good place to lie down in? When He tells you that your warfare is accomplished and that your sin is pardoned, is not that a good place to lie down in? Or supposing the message to be that Christ has brought in an everlasting righteousness and that you are accepted in the Beloved, is not that a place to lie down in? Let Him say to you, "You are My sons and My daughters, and I will be a Father to you"—is not that a good place to lie down in? Well, He does say all this to every one of you who has been brought to trust under the shadow of the wings of the Lord God Almighty! Your faith in Jesus is the evidence that He loved you before the world was and He will love you when the world shall cease to be! His righteousness is imputed to you and you are saved, completely saved, and Heaven is as surely yours as though you now wore the crown of gold! Is not this a good place to lie down in? Still more, He not only gives you a place to lie down in, but He also causes you to lie down! You know, dear Friends, it is one thing to have a promise, and quite another thing to live on it. Why, I am such a fool, sometimes, that though I know the sweetness of the Covenant, I cannot partake of it! Though I understand the sense and the preciousness of the promises, yet I cannot get a grip upon them! I remember when once talking to a captain on board his vessel, and telling him of the promises, he said to me, "Ah, Sir, the promises of God are very much like those posts by the riverside, strong posts driven in by the corporation of a country town! You see, if I could once get my cable right round them, it would hold my ship—but then *that* is the job—to get the cable round them." So it is, but then the promise supplies this need—"I will *make* them lie down. I will shed abroad the love of Christ in their hearts. I will make their peace like a river. I will come to them with such fullness of mercy, such overflowing of My communion, that their souls shall not dare to be afraid! They shall be sweetly hushed as a child is dandled to sleep upon its mother's knee. I will not allow a fear to vex them! I will send them such balmy breath from My own loving lips that their fears shall all fly away. I will make them lie down."

Ah, and thanks be to God, some of us know what this means, for we have had to lie down. My soul has fed for a whole year on one promise. I know not why it was given to me, but I had it, "His soul shall dwell at ease," and my soul did dwell at ease! What had I else but to be at ease? My sins forgiven. My Heaven secure. Christ mine! God mine! This world mine! Worlds to come mine! Why should not I dwell at ease? And, Beloved, many of you, too—some of you at least—know what it is to enjoy the same peace! You can walk up and down the world and look into the grave and not be afraid of it. You can stand by a sickbed and long for evening to undress, that you may rest with God. You have such pure calm that business does not fret you—you can leave it with your Lord, casting all your care on Him, for He cares for you! Yes, you have such unspeakable joy that sometimes you could even shout for joy, for the love, the sweet love, the precious love, the unspeakable love, the everlasting love which Jesus has manifested to you!

But there is another flock. Hear it and tremble! There is another flock. They never get fed at all, or, if they do, it is only on empty husks! It is the devil's flock! Sinner, you are of his flock and he only feeds you upon mere shams, pretences, delusions, lies! He never causes you to lie down—you know you can never lie down. Your sins never give you any quiet. Who has woes? Who has redness of the eyes? They that tarry long at the wine! Who has uneasiness? Who has pangs of heart? The midnight sinner! Who is he that quivers at the fall of a leaf? Who is he whose cheek turns pale in a storm? Who is he that quivers when but a little sickness gets hold upon him, and flies to the physician? Who is he that dares not think on death? Who is he that goes to the theater or to the ballroom to quiet his terror and to keep his conscience from being heard? Who is he whose end is destruction, whose god is his belly, who glories in his shame? He is here! He is here listening to my voice! Oh, Sinner, it is time that you should change your master!

I remember an old salt, after listening to a certain sermon, coming with tears in his eyes into the vestry and saying, "Sir, I have served under the black flag for 60 years—and I think it is time I ran it down and had a new one." I think it is time you did the same, Sinner. The wages of sin is death! Fly from this tyrant master! Immanuel, the bright Prince of Glory, is willing to enlist you into His army! Though there are no conditions, I will tell you the terms. The terms are these, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved." To believe is simply to trust, to believe Him to be true. Trust your soul on Him! When you can do that, you are a saved man or woman! Whatever your sins may have been, or now are, the moment you believe in Jesus, you are a partaker of this precious promise, "I will feed My flock, I will make them lie down, says the Lord." God grant it to every one of you! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
DEUTERONOMY 33.**

Verse 1. *And this is the blessing with which Moses, the man of God, blessed the children of Israel before his death.* A very beautiful thought, that he should conclude his life with a blessing. Though they had greatly grieved and provoked his spirit, he was always meek and tender. And he had very much to bear from them, but this is the end of it all, that he will dismiss them with his blessing.

2, 3. *And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; He shined forth from Mount Paran, and He came with ten thousands of saints: from His right hand went a fiery Law for them. Yes, He loved the people; all His saints are in Your hand: and they sat down at Your feet: everyone shall receive of Your words.* “Yes, He loved the people.” God’s appearance on Sinai was a token of His love to them, even though it amazed them and distressed many of them. Yet still it was a great thing that God should come so near to these people and should reveal His will to them. Dear Friends, if God should come to you with His fiery Law. If He should humble you, and make you “exceedingly fear and quake,” it would be a token of love! The ungodly are left to go in their sin, but as for you, if you are one whom He loves, He will rebuke you and He will bring His Law to do its work upon your heart and conscience. It seems strange to you, but so it is. “From His right hand went a fiery Law for them. Yes, He loved the people.” Oh, it is so, because He loves them, He reveals to them His fiery Law! “All His saints are in Your hand.” A place of safety, a place of privilege, where they learn how precious they are to Him, for He holds them so dear that He keeps them always in His hand. “All His saints are in Your hand, and they sat down at Your feet.” Another place for saints—they are always learning—they are disciples. They sit with meek humility at their Master’s feet and drink in His words, “Everyone shall receive of Your words.” Those who know not God’s love, trifle with God’s words and reject them. Those whom He loves receive His words and feed upon them!

4-6. *Moses commanded us a Law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob. And he was king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together. Let Reuben live, and not die: and let not his men be few.* Here is his blessing, “Let Reuben live.” Reuben’s great sin had lost him his birthright, yet Moses gives him as much of his blessing as he can. If we are not allowed to draw the largest blessing, let us go as far as we can!

7-9. *And this is the blessing of Judah: and he said, Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people: let his hands be sufficient for him; and be You a help to him from his enemies. And of Levi he said, Let Your Thummim and Your Urim be with Your holy one, whom You did prove at Massah, and with whom You did strive at the waters of Meribah; Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed Your word, and kept Your Covenant.* Judah was the royal tribe—had to do much with warfare. Lord give him power in prayer! This is the peculiar benediction of those who have to lead the way in the battles of God. In the service of God, Levi was impartial—he did not wink at sin in his dearest relatives. You remember how they took the sword and went through the camp and slew their own brothers when they found them guilty of idolatry. And because of this faithfulness we read, “They shall teach Jacob Your judgments, and Israel Your Law.” Above all things, a teacher of the Truth of God must be fearless and impartial in the delivery of God’s Word! Then God will bless him, and it shall be said of such, “They shall teach Jacob,” etc.

10. *They shall teach Jacob Your judgments, and Israel Your Law: they shall put incense before You, and whole burnt sacrifices upon Your altar.* True hearts, alone, can be God’s priests—He will not accept sacrifices from those who will dally with His Truth and trifle with His Word.

11, 12. *Bless, LORD, his substance, and accept the work of his hands: smite through the loins of them that rise against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again. And of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by Him; and the LORD shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between His shoulders.* They that have God near them are safe, indeed! There is no protection in such a world as this like constant communion with God. We have to go out into a world full of all manner of evil. Go not out into the world without your God! Let Him dwell with you and cover you all the day long, and so shall you be safe.

13. *And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the LORD be his land, for the precious things of Heaven.* Oh, in a spiritual sense, what a rich blessing this is! And remember it came upon that tribe whose father was the most afflicted of all Jacob's sons. If you are an afflicted Joseph, rejoice, for one of these days you shall have the capacity for receiving great blessings!

13. *For the dew*—The Lord send us that dew tonight to rest upon our branch.

13. *And for the deep that couches beneath.* These deep eternal springs out of which we drink the Divine Water!

14. *And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon.* They shall have blessings both ways—in the day and in the night. Those whom God blesses, the sun does not smite by day, nor the moon by night, but, on the contrary, they are blessed both in the one and in the other!

15, 16. *And for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills. And for the precious things of the earth and fullness thereof, and for the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush.* Oh, that we may always enjoy the good will of God, who wills good to us, who in all His dealings with us has a good will towards us. Oh, that we may have the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush!

16-18. *Let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren. His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh. And of Zebulun he said, Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out; and Issachar, in your tents.* You that go much abroad in the world, God give you to rejoice in your opportunities of doing good. You that never go abroad, but live at home in the kitchen and the parlor, learn to rejoice in your tents, for there, too, you have a sphere of holy service!

19-22. *They shall call the people unto the mountain; there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness: for they shall suck of the abundance of the seas and of treasures hid in the sand. And of Gad, he said, Blessed is He that enlarges Gad: he dwells as a lion, and tears the arm with the crown of the head. And he provided the first part for himself, because there is a portion for the lawgiver; and he came with the heads of the people, he executed the justice of the LORD and His judgments with Israel. And of Dan he said, Dan is a lion's whelp: he shall leap from Bashan.* “And of Gad, he said, Blessed be He that enlarges Gad.” God knows how to enlarge His people, give them more Grace, more gifts, more opportunities of usefulness. Which He did. His tribes enlarged their boundaries by a sudden leap. God gives His people sometimes their leaping times—they leap from Bashan—some great purpose is accomplished, some great feat is done.

23. *And of Naphtali he said, O Naphtali, satisfied with favor, and full with the blessing of the LORD: possess you the west and the south.* What a condition of heart to be in! “Satisfied with favor; full of the blessing of the Lord.” Beloved, may you enjoy that tonight!

24. *And of Asher he said, Let Asher be blessed with children; let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil.* Then will he leave a mark wherever he goes of holy unction. He possesses it himself, and he will impart it to others.

25. *Your shoes shall be iron and brass, and as your days, so shall your strength be.* Will not some Believer grip that promise tonight and find it true?

26-28. *There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rides upon the Heaven to your help, and in His excellence in the sky. The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and He shall thrust out the enemy from before you; and shall say, Destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also His heavens shall drop down dew.* “Israel then shall dwell in safety alone.” There is no place for God's people like a separated place—they must get outside the camp—they must not be numbered among the people. Notice, there is none like unto the God of Israel, and there is none like to Israel.

29. *Happy are you, O Israel: who is like unto you, O people saved by the LORD, the shield of your help, and who is the sword of your excellence? And your enemies shall submit to you; and you shall tread upon their high places.* As God is by Himself, so all His people are favored beyond all others.

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

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TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**