

# Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

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A BOUNDLESS BENEDICTION.

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## A Sermon

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, AUGUST 22ND, 1897,

DELIVERED BY

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“By the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under.”—Genesis xlix. 25.

You must have noticed, when reading Jacob's prophecies concerning his sons, that the good old man, when he came to talk about Joseph, suddenly seemed to be freer of speech than while he was addressing any of the others. The dying flame of life within him appeared to burn up more brightly at the sight of the son of his old age, the darling of his heart. The blessing which Jacob pronounced upon Joseph was infinite in extent; he seemed to ransack heaven and earth in order to express the desire of his soul, and what he knew as a prophet to be the purpose of God.

It is observable here, and it is to be noted in a great many other places besides, that God's richest blessing often falls upon those who have been the most tried. This boundless benediction is to come upon “the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren” through their jealousy, ill-will, and malice. All this blessing is for the one whom the archers sorely grieved, at whom they shot, and whom they desperately wounded. So have you and I observed, beloved, that, as our tribulations abound, so our consolations abound by Christ Jesus. It seems as if it were needful, for a life which is to win the highest blessing, that it should be greatly chequered with affliction. You must go down if you are to rise up. You must carry heavy ballast if you are safely to bear full sails. It has been so in the experiences of many of us, till we have come to this conclusion,—in days of joy, we tremble for all the good which the Lord has made to pass before us; but in days of trial, we rejoice because we are expectant of a greater weight of glory, and of the peaceable fruits of righteousness which will, by-and-by, be ours through our troubles. I think all of us who are wise would be willing to take the blessing of Joseph. We might not like to be with him as he was despised by his

brethren, we might not care to be put into the pit with him, we might not wish to be cast into prison with him; but we may be well content to take the bitters with the sweets, for, when Joseph came to the sweets, they were exceedingly sweet indeed.

Remember, too, that Joseph was not only a specimen of a tried saint, but also of a separated saint. There are some of God's people who are so surrounded by adversaries that they have to go to heaven very much alone. It is preferable to go with Mr. Great-heart, and the women and children, and old Father Honest, and Mr. Valiant-for-truth, and all the good company who make up the Church of God on pilgrimage; but sometimes there is a pilgrim who has to pursue his journey all by himself. It is somewhat of a loss for him; for he misses many of the blessings of Christian intercourse; but God has a way of making up for all his people's losses if they be but faithful to him. So Joseph, though he had not fellowship with his brothers, found better fellowship in his God, and after all he was greatly the gainer. Am I at this moment addressing a tried child of God, who is compelled to pursue his way very much in solitude? Then, I pray you, ask the Lord to give you the blessings of the text;—the blessings that shall be over your head: "blessings of heaven above," and the blessings that shall be under your feet: "blessings of the deep that lieth under."

Moreover, to complete the description of Joseph, I notice that he was not only tried, and separated, but he was very severely tempted. I need not do more than just allude to his temptation in the house of Potiphar. For so young a man, how well he behaved! How gloriously he showed that he truly feared God! And I believe that any of us who are exposed to unusual temptation, if we only have grace enough to resist it, are on the road to a far larger blessing than the untempted can expect. The Lord tries us in different ways; and when we come forth out of the furnace as gold seven times purified, then there is some honourable use to which that gold is to be put. Are you tempted just now, dear friend? Is it something very pleasant to the flesh, but very deadly to the spirit? Escape for your life; and in that act of escape, you will have opened a window through which the sunshine shall come upon you in an altogether unexpected manner;—perhaps not at the moment, for Joseph had to go to prison, and to lie there for a long while; but, before long, you shall see that fidelity to conscience and to truth will certainly bring its own reward. These preliminary remarks are suggested by the surroundings of our text, which show that the blessing came upon the tried, the separated, and the tempted Joseph.

"I do not understand," says one, "how trials and blessings go together." Perhaps you do not; but there are many old women here who do, and there are many of us, whom you would perhaps set down as being very ignorant, who perfectly understand it. You see, experience teaches; there are many who will criticise some of the sentences of Ralph Erskine in his *Believer's Riddle*, and say that these things are contradictory. Just so; but faith has to credit contradictions. If you do not know that the spiritual life is a profound paradox, you do not know anything at all. The way of a serpent on

the rock, or of a ship in the sea, is a mere trifle compared with the way of spiritual life in the soul of man. To understand yourself, you must understand the mystery of the two natures, and of the daily inward conflict between them,—the carnal mind that never can be reconciled to God,—and that heavenly mind that cannot sin because it is born of God, both of which co-exist in the believer, and cause him often to be like the Shulamite, in which there was the company of two armies, crying, one moment, “O wretched man that I am!” and saying in the same breath, “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Please to note, next, that God alone is the source of all blessing: “By the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under.” All these are blessings distinctly from God; and there is nothing which looks like a blessing which will turn out to be a blessing, unless God be recognized in it. If God gives thee thy wealth, thou shalt be truly rich; otherwise, thou shalt be one of those poor rich people who enjoy nothing. If God gives thee thy health, and thou art grateful for it, thou shalt have true sanity, for thy soul shall be in health even as thy body is. Restoration from sickness should always be ascribed to God. Whatever part the physician may play,—and he often plays a very important part,—yet to God, who giveth the physician wisdom and skill, must the gracious result be ascribed. Whatever may be said to be due to nature,—and there is no doubt that a good constitution often works for itself more healing than does the doctor’s medicine,—yet, since that constitution is the gift of God, he is still to be praised. Every moment we owe the breath in our nostrils to the Lord’s kind forbearance. This dust would soon return to its brother dust, if God did not animate it by his breath. Therefore he is to be praised for every moment of our life; but when, on certain occasions, disease and pain set in, and we are rendered extremely weak, and life then, more apparently than ever, seems to hang upon a thread, if we are restored, our God deserves then a still more special song of thanksgiving. Did not King Hezekiah sing unto the Lord when he had been raised up from sore sickness, and his life had been preserved? He did not praise the lump of figs which had been the instrument of relieving him, or sing to the praise of the prophet Isaiah who had prescribed for him, but he praised the God who had healed him, and magnified his holy name. Recollect, beloved, that whatever God gives thee is a right-handed blessing, for which thou art to thank him, and by which thou art to serve him; but, remember also that, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” What thou gettest of the devil, what thou gettest of thyself, will prove to be a curse to thee; God alone can give thee the blessing.

Is it not sweet to think that the Lord is almighty as a blessing God? Jacob says to Joseph, “The Almighty, who shall bless thee;” and he seems to imply that he will give an almighty blessing. Is it not a glorious thought that God, being infinitely great, does not give as if he were little, and that the Infinite does not bless according to the narrow limits of our finite minds? Well may we join with Paul in saying, “Unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we

ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." Yes, God is almighty to bless us. Oh, happy is that man who has the blessing of the Lord resting upon him!

And, according to the verse in which our text is found, the Lord delights especially to bless the children of his own servants: "Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee." Do you not feel that the son of your dearest friend has some kind of claim upon you? If you have long loved the father, you naturally take to the children for his sake; and though grace does not run in the blood, "For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call," yet the God of Abraham does delight in Isaac, and the God of Isaac delights in Jacob, and the God of Jacob blesses Joseph, and the God of Joseph blesses Ephraim and Manasseh. God likes to cleave to his old friends, even to a thousand generations of them that love him. He will never turn aside from those who keep his covenant. I count it a far greater honour to be descended from the saints of God than to be descended from the greatest princes who ever stirred the history of the world. Will not you, beloved, pray for your children as your fathers prayed for you; and will not this verse encourage you to expect a great blessing for your Joseph from the God who has dealt so graciously with you? O young man, may the blessing of the God of your father come upon you, even the blessing of "the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under"!

Notice, once more, before we get into the very heart of the text, that when God is about to bless his people, he can make the causes of disquietude to become the sources of benediction. Men are by nature afraid of the heavens; the superstitious dread the signs in the sky, and even the bravest spirit is sometimes made to tremble when the heavens are ablaze with lightning, and when the pealing thunder seems to make the vast concave of heaven to shake and to reverberate; but God can give us the blessings of the upper sky. As for "the deep that lieth under," why, in the imagination of some men, it is the world of darkness, and the valley of the shadow of death; and when earthquakes happen, as they do much more often in the East than here, then are men sore afraid. They know not what lies in the deep caverns beneath them, and they tremble, and are dismayed; but God can give us the "blessings of the deep that lieth under." He can, in fact, encompass us with blessings, so that we shall go forth with joy, and be led forth with peace. The mountains and the hills shall break forth before us into singing; and in yon dark forests, the very trees shall clap their hands. Has he not promised that the beasts of the field shall be at peace with us, and that the stones of the field shall be in league with us? The stars in their courses fight for the people of God; and the earth below is still moved to its inmost depth by the power of him that keepeth Israel, who doth neither slumber nor sleep.

Thus, dear friends, have I brought you up to the text, which I think readily divides itself into two parts, and so furnishes us with

our themes for meditation,—first, *the blessings of heaven above*; and, secondly, *the blessings of the deep beneath*.

I. First, there were given to Joseph, THE BLESSINGS OF HEAVEN ABOVE; and I believe that they are also given to all God's people who are in trouble, who bear themselves well in temptation, and who are sustained by divine grace as Joseph was. You and I, as God's people, shall have the blessings of heaven above.

Joseph had them, first, *literally*, that is to say, upon his country. There was the blessing of the sun which, in its season, shone to help vegetation to develop itself, to produce the fruits, and to ripen the harvest. There were the blessings of the moon; for, in the darkness of the night, men were cheered by it; and the moon has various subtle influences upon plants and people of which we know but little. But, whatever those blessings were, Joseph's land had the blessings of the moon and of the stars. There fell upon his mountains the blessings of the dew, which comes at nightfall very heavily in the East, and makes up for the lack of rain. Joseph had the dew, and in due season, Joseph had the rain, too, the early and the latter rains; and the two tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh rejoiced in possessing a fertile country, a land for which the Lord their God cared very specially. Thus they had, literally, the blessings of heaven above. And you and I, beloved, shall have all the blessings of heaven above, literally, as far as they would be real blessings to us, according to that ancient promise, "The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. . . . The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore."

But, just now, I am going to show that God's people shall have these blessings *metaphorically*; that is to say, they shall have that which is represented by the sun,—the sunlight of divine favour. You shall have fulfilled to you, tried child of God, the benediction of the high priest, "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." You shall have as much of the light of God's countenance as you can bear; and if you will walk with him, as Joseph did, in all carefulness and uprightness, then you shall have that sunlight continually with you, making glad your heart, and ripening within you the fruits of grace, to the glory of God.

Then, when the night comes, you shall have the Word of God shining in your soul, like the moon; and, oftentimes, the borrowed and reflected light of the gospel ministry shall be a blessing to you, when, otherwise, you would have been in darkness of spirit. You shall have a blessing by night as well as by day,—a blessing on your sleep, and on your rest, as well as on your labour. God will never cease to bless out of heaven those whom he has eternally chosen as his own.

Nor shall you, who are the Lord's people, lack the reviving and refreshing dew. If you live near to God, you shall be able to say with Job, "The dew lay all night upon my branch." Oftentimes, when the threshing-floor shall be dry, your fleece shall be wet, for the Lord shall send specially to you a perpetual watering by the dew of heaven.

Hath he not said of his vineyard, "I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day"? O my brothers and sisters, it is indeed a great blessing when your soul is full of the heavenly dew,—the unction of the Holy One, the bedewing of the Holy Ghost! This blessing also is intended for all the people of God.

And you shall have the rain, too, in its own season, for the value of the blessings of heaven is very much dependent upon the season in which they come. Sometimes, it is good for us to be surrounded with a damp atmosphere and dark clouds; but there are times when the plants must have sunlight, and there are seasons when the soul must have delight in its God. You shall have the dampness when you need it, and you shall have the brightness when you can bear it. The Lord will give you, just as he gives a land when he means to bless it, the early rain in its season, and the latter rain in its season, the dew in its night, and the sunlight in its day. Oh, be glad, dear friend, that all that the high peaks of Bashan and the hills of Ephraim ever possessed, shall be yours spiritually, and you shall bring forth abundant fruit to the glory of God!

Now, for a minute or two, let me show you that this blessing of heaven above may be looked at as being similar to the blessing of the dew and of the sunlight. Look now, not merely at the metaphor, but at *the inward similarity*. The blessings of heaven, both naturally and spiritually, come to men sovereignly. If we summoned a Parliament, they might talk as much folly as they usually do, but they could not produce a shower of rain by all their talk. If we had all the kings and queens in the world gathered together, they could not give the farmer one sunshiny day when God willed to cover the sky with clouds. He just gives dew, or rain, or sunlight, according as he wills it. Well, so is it with the grace of God in all its various forms; it is the sovereign gift of heaven, and the Lord holds in his own hand the prerogative to give it or to withhold it.

"When he shuts up in fell despair,  
Who can remove the iron bar?"

And when he gives light and liberty, who is there that can darken the child of God, or thrust him into the dungeon? It is God who gives the rain, and the dew, and the sunlight, and it is he also who alone can give grace.

But these blessings of heaven are effectual as well as sovereign. When God makes it rain in the East, it *does* rain, and nobody has to go outside to see whether it is raining, or not. And when the sun shines in the East, it *is* hot, and nobody has to question whether the sun is shining, or not. It so shines that you need to get under the shadow of a great rock in a weary land; and, in like manner, I wot that, when God blesses his people, they are blessed. If his grace descends, he gives a plentiful shower whereby he doth refresh his inheritance when it is weary. When his dews fall, they saturate our fleece till we could wring out the water, as Gideon did. The Lord never fails to complete all the processes he intends at the various seasons; who can stand before his cold, or before his heat? So is it

with his grace ; it is effectual in accomplishing the purposes of the Most High.

But the blessings of heaven are also exceedingly pure. What can there be whiter than snow that drops from the sky ? What can there be purer than the mountain spring ? It is almost too pure for man's sinful palate ; but everything that God sends from heaven is, like himself, pure and clean. So is his grace ; when it comes into the heart, it is a lovely thing, a thing of good repute, and it makes us also to be of good repute when we yield to its power.

And what a sublime thing is that which comes from heaven ! You know how God said to Job, "Hath the rain a father ? or who hath begotten the drops of dew ?" He seemed to ask where else they could come from but from him ; and certainly he it is who bestows his grace, whatever shape it may take. Every drop of grace that comes into the soul of a man glorifies the God who sent it, so that the gifts of God's grace are included in the blessings of heaven above.

The blessings of heaven above are also continuous ; for, if it does not always rain, then the sunlight takes up its work, or the moon operates upon the earth ; but there is always some blessing coming from the sky towards man. The world is never cut asunder from its moorings amid the stars, they all have their ordained influences upon us ; and, in like manner, no child of God is ever beyond the reach of the sweet influences of the Pleiades of the promises ; and God, the great Father of lights, is ever affecting for good the hearts of all his people. Continuous are the blessings which come from heaven.

So, you see, there is a similarity between the benedictions of grace and the blessings of nature.

And, dear friends, I think that there is a *speciality* about some blessings, which proves that they have come from above more distinctly than any others. For instance, that first grace which works in the heart ; is not that just like the rain which comes when nobody is looking for it ? The man has never prayed for grace ; or, even if he has prayed for it, there is no true prayer ever offered until first of all grace has come to produce that prayer. The sinner is never beforehand with God. If you begin to pray at this moment, it is because God's grace has begun to work upon your heart so that you can pray. He is always first. That is one of the blessings of heaven, then,—that first movement of the Eternal Spirit upon the dead, chaotic heart, producing light and order there. That is surely from heaven, and God has given it to his people.

And do you not see how clearly grace comes from heaven, because it keeps on coming even when it is not fed by us ? Though we often flag in our spiritual experience, the great God never flags. "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful : he cannot deny himself." Often, when our heart's fire would go out, his flaming love burns so continually that the fire within us is kept alive. Because he perseveres in love, we persevere in grace. If God changed in his thoughts toward us, we should be utterly cast away ; but he does not change, and therefore we are not consumed. This is another proof that the gift of his grace is purely and clearly out of heaven,—heaven's own benison, the blessing of heaven above.

I can look back upon many mercies which I have received, which do not appear to have come to me by any channel except through the blessed Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ; I mean, not by any human channel. Oftentimes, when we are alone, sweet thoughts refresh us, and comforts come flying into our spirit, and singing there, like the birds which are all alive at springtime. We know not how those sweet songsters came, but we hear them singing; those are, indeed, blessings from heaven above that never touch the earth, but come directly from God to your heart. Peradventure, you will have more of them soon, in times of greater trouble and direr sickness; and as you get nearer to the hill country, when there is only the narrow river between you and the golden shore, then shall you have more and more of the blessings of heaven above. They are all yours, but they shall come to you in their season.

Finally, under this head, I may say that we *actually and certainly* have the blessings of heaven above. Why, beloved, all that there is in heaven is given to us! There is God the Father in heaven, and he is our Father. "The blessings of heaven above" must include the blessing of him who has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Our dear Father's own benediction comes to us warm out of his infinite heart,—the heart that gave us Jesus, and now can deny us nothing. Oh, what a blessing we have in that love of our Father in heaven! But Jesus is there, too.

"He who on earth as man was known,  
And bore our sins and pains,  
Now seated on th' eternal throne,  
The God of glory reigns;"

and all the blessing there is in him comes streaming down to his people. There is not one of the children of God who has any idea of a thousandth part of the blessing that he is continually receiving from the Lord Jesus Christ. "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell," and of his fulness we are daily receiving, and grace for grace. There, also, in heaven is the blessed Spirit, the Comforter, and he blesses us, for he is here as well as there. He is in us, and with us, and abides with us henceforth and for ever, to illuminate, to comfort, to direct, to refresh, to sanctify, to make perfect. Every form of his blessing is ours. Then, as you look again up to heaven, you may rest assured that there is not an angel there but is bound to bless you. When the triune God becomes your God, then for certain all the courtiers of the King's palace are your ministers, "sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation."

Beloved in Christ, what is there in heaven that is not assured to you by your covenant-keeping God, who is eternal, immutable, full of benediction, infinite, almighty in the love that he has to his children? All this blessedness is yours, whether the sun and the moon shine, or are beclouded; all these blessings are yours even as the dew falls, and the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and return not thither. At all seasons the windows of heaven are open, and you have not room to receive the blessings that are continually coming to you from above. You do not know how much of blessing you may have,—yea, and shall

have,—if you have but grace to open wide your mouth to ask largely, and to receive largely, from him who gives without stint, and without upbraiding. Blessed men, blessed women, are you who have believed in Christ, and have the blessings of heaven above! I pity any who have not so believed, for the curse, and not the blessing, is theirs.

II. Now we must spend a few minutes in considering the second part of our subject, namely, THE BLESSINGS OF THE DEEP BENEATH. These are the blessings which come from God's works,—from nature,—from providence: "blessings of the deep that lieth under." Moses called it, "the deep that coucheth beneath."

This promise may be taken, first, *literally*, as an allusion to wells and springs. Underneath the earth, there are great reservoirs of water, which are constantly being tapped in these days by men who make artesian wells; but, in that country, where they did not know anything about boring artesian wells, they did know that springs often bubble up from the bowels of the earth in very strange places, sometimes on the very tops of the hills. It is a remarkable thing that, on the Island of St. Helena, a mere pile of rock which stands up out of the water, hundreds of feet above the level of the sea,—there are found numerous fountains of water, more than sufficient to supply all the needs of that place. And in all sorts of strange places, where you would not expect to find them, even in deserts, springs come up, and create an oasis of verdure in the midst of the barren sand. So the tribes of Joseph were to have the blessing of springs that bubble up among the valleys, or come leaping down the hills, to make glad the pastures and the fields.

The analogy of that is just this,—that all God's people are to have the blessing of *the inward design of creation*. What is it? Those things which you can see are merely the garments of some great thought of God. The sea, the land, the sky,—these are, as it were, the words in which some thought of the Eternal is couched,—in part concealed, in part revealed. But the great design of creation is the glory of God through the salvation of his redeemed. On the innermost heart of creation, if you could get at it, and could read it with the eyes of God, you would see this inscription, "Made for the accomplishment of the salvation of God's elect, and thereby for the glory of God." When he made mankind on earth, multitudinous as the bees that swarm out of their hives, the first thought with God was concerning his own people. The race was to live and exist, by his supreme mercy, because of his love to his own people; and his people are still made to live that they may be the means of blessing others. First, the bread is given to the disciples; and then the disciples give it to the multitude. The first thought of God is that his own children shall be blessed; when I gaze upon the sea with its rolling waves, or look upon the plains and the forests, or think of this round world and the myriads of stars, the first thing I am to remember is this,—that it is the love of God which has clothed his thought in these marvellous garments. The deep that lieth under them all is his love to his people; and that, you who are his shall enjoy most blessedly.

And, next, this is *the secret of divine providence*. You cannot see the

deep that lieth under, but you can perceive what is God's design in providence. Why these wars, and rumours of wars, and earthquakes, and famines, and devastations? The man who can read history aright down to the birth of Christ, and then making that the centre, will read on to the death of Christ, and all the after history, will begin to understand that all of it is merely the salvation of the chosen people hammered out; either nearer or more remotely, it all tends to that result. The issues of all events turn upon the grand plan of redemption; it is so in the great matters of life, and it is equally so in the little. Your poverty, your sickness, the death of one you love,—all that had in it the deep that lieth under, promoting the glory of God and your eternal safety. So, beloved, the next time you get where you cannot see to the bottom of the clear waters, say to yourself, "There is a deep that lieth under, and that is mine, and I am to have the blessing of it. I cannot see what God means by this experience, but how can such a babe as I am ever hope to understand the Infinite? I was born only yesterday, and the Eternal God has lived for ever and ever. He must have designs that I cannot grasp. The deep that lieth under in providence is, however, mine."

God's servants, in reviewing their lives, must often be startled to notice how, in their ministry, simple matters are proved to be from the Lord, though at the time they knew it not. Have you never heard the story of the Scotch minister? It is one which is beyond all question a pure matter of fact. He went to a certain place to preach, and took with him the sermon which he intended to use. He went upstairs to refresh his memory with his manuscript, and knelt to pray; but when he had done praying, he could not find the sermon. He was in a great state of anxiety about it, for he could not remember anything else that he could preach except a sermon upon the text, "Thou shalt not kill." He thought that would be a very queer discourse to deliver when taking an occasional service at a brother minister's church, and he did not wish to preach it. It was one of a course of sermons that he had preached to his own people upon the Decalogue; but, though it was a sermon apparently quite unfit for the occasion, he could remember no other, and he therefore preached from the text, "Thou shalt not kill," a sermon against the crime of murder. When the service was over, there rushed into the vestry a man, apparently demented, and shutting fast the door that none might hear, he confessed to the preacher that he had committed a murder which had never been discovered, and he received direction from the minister what to do in order that he might find peace with God. That done, the preacher returned to the bedroom where he had prayed, and the first thing he saw when he entered the room was the sermon that he had intended to preach, lying where he could not help seeing it. Often, we do not perceive what is immediately before our eyes; and this good man had not seen his manuscript, for there was a secret design of providence to be wrought through its loss.

There is also a great deep that lieth under, not only in creation, and in providence, but in *the teachings of God in the Scriptures*. You, dear friends, who have been lately converted, cannot fully comprehend some of the deeper doctrines of our holy faith. It is a mercy that you need

not understand them in order to be saved. If I am very thirsty, I do not require to go down into the bowels of the earth to see where all the reservoirs of water are. Here is a little spring that is bubbling up, and I have only to lie down by it and drink. That is enough for me; it quenches my thirst. Of course, after I have done that, I desire to intermeddle with all knowledge; and I would like to go in search of the hidden springs of the great sea of truth, to find out what it is that God calls his deep things, that I may know all that I can concerning them. But, whatever those deep things are, you who love the Lord, and live near to him, have the blessing of those deep doctrines, those vast truths before which the human mind lies prostrate in adoration. They are all yours; you have the blessings of the deep that lieth under.

Whatever *God's eternal purpose*, which is not yet revealed, may be, it is not for you and me to try to clamber up, and gaze upon the mysterious volume wherein is written all that shall yet come to pass; but we may be quite sure that there is nothing in that book which is not full of blessing to them that love God and are the called according to his purpose. You just rest content with that. When God is pleased to turn the next leaf of the volume of the future, and you hear it rustle, do not be eager to read what the next lines may be,—whether they are of gloom or of joy,—but stand back and say,—

“ My God, I would not long to see  
My fate with curious eyes,  
What gloomy lines are writ for me,  
Or what bright scenes may rise.”

It is enough for me that my name is in the Book of Life, and that, being there, all things must work together for my good. The deep that lieth under is mine with all the blessings that are hidden in it.

The more you think on this theme, the more you will see that there is in it; for, after all, there is no dark thing that you can think of but what there is a great deep of blessing underneath it. For instance, what lies under death itself? Why, resurrection; and Jesus says, “I am the resurrection and the life.” But there could not be any resurrection if there was not death first; and it is not an ill thing that this body should lie in the grave, and have fellowship with Christ in death, that it may afterwards have fellowship with him in his resurrection. Do not be content with looking at the top of the soil of truth, but think of the vast deep of infinite mercy and love that lies underneath it.

But what is at the bottom of all? I answer, *God himself*. “The deep that lieth under” is God, for “underneath are the everlasting arms.” God’s mercy, God’s love, God’s grace,—this is the deep that lieth under everything. This deep is unsearchable; as no man can see the great deep that lies under the earth, so we cannot search out or measure the great deeps of everlasting love. This we know, the great deeps under the world are always there; as they were there in Noah’s day, and answered to God’s call, and destroyed the earth at his bidding, so they are there still, and will be while the earth

remaineth ; and there is ever in the heart of God the immutable deep of divine love and faithfulness towards his own Joseph. The deeps are always there, and we may always feel sure that those deeps are inexhaustible. The springs that come up from the deep are never dried in summer, and they are never frozen in winter. I know a spring which, within a few yards of its source, produces a river, which turns a great mill-wheel, within a distance of about the length of this Tabernacle from the place in which it comes out of the earth. It is an extraordinary thing, the force that there is in the deep that lieth under, a force that is never exhausted ; and such is God's eternal love to his chosen.

The best of all is, that this great deep that lieth under, though unsearchable, and immutable, and inexhaustible, is, nevertheless, available. See, Moses does but smite the rock, and the waters flow out from the great deep that lieth under. God does but speak, and in the wilderness waters leap up, and streams in the desert. When man could not get at the flood underneath, then God made the flood come welling up for man ; and now he has taught man to get at it, and he sets his boring machinery to work ; and, if he does but continue long enough, it is very seldom that he does not at last tap God's great wine-cellar,—the best wine that there ever was, which he brews up among the everlasting hills to make drink for his people ; and up it comes, always fresh, and clear, and sweet, as stored away by God long ago, and now given out at the touch of man's industry. Oh, dear friends, I wish that some of you would come and drink of the water that is so freely flowing ! And those of you who cannot find it, I want you to begin working with that blessed boring-machine of prayer, and to keep on working right down through all the rocks of doubt and fear, boring, and boring, and boring away till at last you come to the living water of which you may have enough to drink for ever.

At my Nightingale Lane house, I had a well which produced the sweetest water I ever drank. It was 460 feet deep. The man who had it made would have a well sunk just there ; so the workmen dug down 100, 200, 300 feet, and they quite despaired of finding water ; but the owner said, "Keep on working ; I will bore to the centre of the earth but what I will have the well made, so keep on." And they did keep on, till they reached the enormous depth of 460 feet. Then, one day, the workmen came up to dinner, and they never went down any more, for while they were away the water burst through. They had left their tools below, but they could never get them up any more, and they are there now. I know some people who have a very deep experience, and for a long time they keep on boring away through all the mud and slush of their feelings. If this is the case with any of you, I hope that you will get through that experience very soon, and that you will come to the living water ; and when it comes rushing up, you will have to drop your tools, and just drink to the full of that which God freely gives to all who ask for it. You have only to ask and receive ; God grant that you may do so, for Jesus' sake ! Amen.