

# Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

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GRACE FOR GRACE.

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## A Sermon

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C. H. SPURGEON,

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“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.”—1 Corinthians ii. 12.

THE course of our fallen race has been a succession of failures. Whenever there has been an apparent rise, it has been followed by a real fall. Into ever-increasing darkness the human mind seems resolved to plunge itself in its struggles after a false light. When men have been fools, they have danced in a delirium of sin; when they have been sober, they have given themselves up to a phantom wisdom of their own, which has revealed their folly more than ever. It is a sad story, the story of mankind! Read it in the light of God's Word, and it will bring tears from your very heart.

The only hope for man was that God should interpose; and he has interposed, as though he began a new creation, or wrought a resurrection out of the kingdom of death. God has come into human history, and here the bright lights begin. Where God is at work in grace, abounding sin is conquered, hope begins, and good becomes perceptible. This better state is always markedly the effect of a break in the natural course of things, a supernatural product which would never have been seen in this poor world had it been let alone. See yonder avalanche rushing down the steep mountain-side; such is humanity left to itself. Lo, God in Christ Jesus throws himself in the way; he so interposes as to be crushed beneath the descending rocks. But, beloved, he rises from the dreadful burial; he stops the avalanche in its terrible career; he hurls back the tremendous mass, and changes the whole aspect of history. In this divine interposition, of which the Bible gives us the best record, to which, I trust, our experience has added a happy appendix, we behold and adore the almighty grace of God.

In the interposition of omnipotent grace, we note that the Lord so works as to preserve his own glory. He takes care that no flesh shall glory in his presence. He might have used the power of the great, but he has not; he might have instructed man by man's own wisdom, but he has not; he might have declared his gospel with the excellency of human speech, but he has not. He has taken for his tools, not the armour of a king, but the sling of a shepherd; and he has

placed his treasure of truth, not in the golden vase of talent, but in the earthen vessels of lowly minds. He has not made men speak for him under the spell of genius, but as they have been moved by his Holy Spirit. The Lord of hosts will save men, but he will not give men a yard of space for boasting; he will grant them a salvation, which shall humble them in the dust and lead them to know that he is God, and beside him there is none else. "The Lord of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth." God's gracious interposition reveals his sovereignty, his wisdom, his power, his love, his grace; but it reveals nothing in men which can admit a boastful thought.

The Lord our God has worked in a way parallel with his central interposition, which is seen at the cross, where Jesus unveiled Jehovah's way of revealing power in weakness. It is in such a connection that Paul says, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." He knew that there was nothing else to know. The plan of the cross is to conquer death by death, to remove sin by the endurance of the penalty, to work mightily by suffering terribly, to glorify himself by shame. The gibbet whereon Christ died was the abyss of reproach and the climax of suffering; but it was also the focus of God's interposing grace. He there glorified himself in connection, not with honour and power, but with shame and death. The great self-sacrifice of God is the great victory of grace. Beloved, it is most sweet to think that all the ways of God to men are in harmony with this way of the cross, and that the cross is the pattern of the Lord's constant method of accomplishing his designs of grace rather by weakness than by strength, by suffering rather than by the splendour of his majesty.

Let me also add, that this way which God has taken, by which he saves men and glorifies himself, is entirely suitable to the condition of those whom he saves. If salvation had been by human excellence I could never have been saved. If the plan of salvation had required that in which a man might rightly glory, how could it have come to sinners without strength or goodness? Such a gospel would have been no gospel to us, for it would have been far out of our reach. God's plans are workable plans, suitable to the weakness of our fallen race. In Christ he comes to the wounded man where he is, and does not ask him, in his fainting condition, to come a certain part of the way. Grace does not begin half-way down the alphabet, but it is the Alpha of our hope.

It is my delightful task, though in much weakness, to set forth the exceeding freeness of the grace of God, and thus to set before you an open door, that you who have never entered may boldly do so; and that you who have already entered may sit within, and sing to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made you "accepted in the Beloved." My text speaks of the gifts of God freely given to us, and of the way by which we may receive them, and come to know their excellence and value: in all these three things it shows us that everything is of grace—it is given of grace, it is received through grace, it is understood by grace. "Grace reigns," and grace alone.

This morning I shall speak, first, of *the things which are freely given* to us of God; secondly, of *the power to receive them, which is also given*, since it is spoken of as "received"; and, thirdly, of *the knowledge of them, which is also given through the Spirit*. When we have set forth these three things we shall have ranged through a wide domain of sovereign grace.

I. First, then, **THE THINGS OF GOD ARE FREELY GIVEN.**

*All the blessings of salvation are a gift.* All the inheritance of the covenant is a gift. All that which comes by our Lord Jesus to save and sanctify men is a gift. A gift is not a return for purchase-money. We are not asked, in any sense, to bring a price to God wherewith to purchase pardon, justification, or eternal life. Where the notion of purchase is for an instant hinted at, it is only to show more plainly how free is the blessing: "Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." God freely gives his grace, expecting nothing in return, but that we do as freely receive as he does freely bestow; and even that free reception is a part of the gift which he bestows upon us. Be not feeling in your purse: money is useless as to purchasing salvation. Be not searching in your character, or in your resolutions, to find some little recommendation: neither the coins of the merchant nor of the self-righteous are current here. The free grace of God would be insulted by being put up to auction, or set forth to sale. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

It is a gift, and not a prize. There are heavenly prizes to be run for, to be fought for, and to be obtained by divine help. There is a recompense of reward to which we are to look, and a crown for which we are to strive; but the grace that forgives sin, and works faith, is no prize for exertion, but a gift to those without strength. "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." Jehovah will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and he will have compassion on whom he will have compassion, according to the good pleasure of his own will. Salvation is not granted to men as the result of anything they are, or do, or resolve to be, but it is the undeserved gift of heaven. If it were of works, it would not be of grace; but it is of faith, that it might be of grace alone.

The blessings of salvation are freely *given* us of God, therefore they are not a loan, handed to us for a time, and to be one day recalled. Our heavenly heritage is not held on lease, upon terms of annual payment: it is an unencumbered freehold to every man that hath by faith put his foot upon it. To give a thing and take a thing is for little children in their play; and even among them it is the subject of ridicule. But the gifts and calling of God are without repentance on his part. When he has given it, the deed is done outright, and can never be reversed. O believer, if thy sin be blotted out, it can never be written in again! God has declared that he has forgiven our transgressions; and then he adds, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." There is no playing fast and loose in connection with the everlasting love of God and its glorious acts; if thou hast God, thou hast him by an eternal holding, of which none can deprive thee. "This God is our God for ever and ever." The better part which Jesus gives to his beloved shall not be taken away from us. The things of God are all of them free

gifts, with no legal condition appended to them which would make their tenure one of payment rather than of absolute gift. We may not say that the blessings of salvation, such as pardon, justification, and eternal life, are gifts with an "if" in the core of them, rendering them uncertain. No, the gift of God is not temporary life, but "eternal life."

We will dwell for a minute upon the fact that saving blessings are the gifts of *God*. Some despise the work of salvation, and the blessings which accompany it; but, surely, they know not what they despise. Every part of salvation, from its Alpha to its Omega, is to the highest degree precious, for it is of God. It is the gift of the heavenly King, the gift of the Almighty Sovereign, whose hand makes the gift priceless. If the Lord himself has given thee this or that blessing, thou shouldst prize the gift as coming from such a hand! That which thy father gave thee, preserve; for there is a sanctity in the gift of love. That which thy choice friend has given thee, wear it, and for his sake value it as the token of friendship. But that which thy God has given thee, prize above all things else; his touch hath perfumed it with unutterable fragrance. Value every part of the work of grace because it came from God and leads to God. God's gifts are always worthy of the giver. God gives not trinkets and counterfeits; his gifts are solid gold and lasting treasure. The gifts of divine grace have a quality of divinity about them: they are all God-like. The Lord gives upon a God-like style. His grace is like the rest of his nature. How art thou blest if thou art divinely pardoned and divinely justified! "It is God that justifieth." Who is he that condemneth?" Jehovah is thy strength and thy song, he also hath become thy salvation.

I like to think of every blessing of grace that I have received as coming from God; because each mercy then becomes prophetic of more. God is unchangeable, and therefore what he has given he will give again. "Still there's more to follow," is a popular way of putting a great truth. The stream which has begun to flow will never cease flowing. The more the Lord gives, the more we may expect. Every blessing is not only in itself a mercy, but it is a note of hand for more mercies. When we get the most of God's mercy that we can hold, we are by its greatness enlarged to receive still more. Realization begets expectation, and expectation increases realization. Each mercy as it comes makes room for another larger than itself, even as the narrow end of the wedge opens the way for its wider portion. Every mercy bears a thousand mercies in its bowels. John Bunyan said that God's flowers bloom double: not only do they bloom double, but they bloom sevenfold; and out of every one of those flowers there comes a seed which will yield seventy times seven. Therefore, be encouraged. The least of the things which are freely given to us of God draws behind it an endless chain of more than golden links of love. The seed of salvation, glory, and eternal life, is small as a grain of mustard seed; but he that hath it hath received what neither earth nor heaven can fully contain. What a mercy is a single mercy! I cannot talk to you about the gifts of God; you must think over the subject. That which comes from God's own hand should be much on our mind.

I am going to dwell for a minute or two upon that word "freely":

"The things that are *freely given* to us of God." Harken, ye that have never found grace yet; and sing while you listen, you that have found it, and are now enjoying it. "Freely given." "Well," say you, "the word 'given' is enough to express the meaning, is it not?" Yes, it would be enough, if men were willing to understand; but the additional word "freely" is meant to make the meaning doubly plain. When we say "grace," there is no need to say *free* grace, is there? Yet there are some people who will be conveniently deaf, if they can. We wish to speak so that they not only can understand us, but cannot misunderstand, if they try. The text is very expressive—"Freely given to us of God."

How is salvation "freely given"? It comes from God *without compulsion*. If a man is stopped on the road with, "Your money or your life," he gives his money; but it is not *freely* given. Now, none can force mercy from God; blessed be his name, there is no need to think of such a thing. God gives freely, that is, even *without persuasion*. God was never persuaded to be gracious. He is ready to pardon, and his grace persuades us to accept mercy. Our praying does not turn the heart of God to love us, but proves that we are turning to love him. It is because he is gracious that he sets us praying. You have not, poor sinner, to convert an unwilling God to be willing to forgive: the conversion is in *your* will, not in *his* will: "He delighteth in mercy." He persuades Japhet to dwell in the tents of Shem, but Japhet does not need to persuade Jehovah to receive him. The fountain of divine love pours forth its streams of grace at all seasons without pressure. There is no need to tread the grapes of mercy to force forth their cheering juice. The paths of the Lord drop fatness, distilling spontaneously as the dew and the rain.

Yea, the grace of God is so free in its gifts that they come *without suggestion*. A man may be generous at heart, and yet he may need a hint to put it into his mind to relieve the needy. Mention a charity to him, and inform him that it is in need, and his guineas are forthcoming; but he needs a prompter. No one has prompted the grace of God. No one ever suggested any deed of bounty to God; out of his own heart the thought has come of itself. The gifts of his grace were in his eternal purpose from of old, and there of his own good pleasure. He freely instructs us how to pray for those gifts which he has of old purposed to bestow. Our prayer does not instruct the Lord; it only shows that he has, in a measure, instructed us. He gives freely in the sense of absolute spontaneousness.

He also gives *without grudging*. We have known men say, "Well, I suppose I must give something; but these claims come terribly often; my purse is always being drawn upon; but I suppose I cannot get out of it without a subscription." He gives as if he were parting with his blood. His fingers tremble and linger long over the shilling, which has to be extracted as forcibly as if it were a tooth. One wonders that the Queen's image is left upon it when it has been held with such pressure. But the Lord gives out of the greatness of his heart, without so much as a trace of unwillingness. Even when the boon was his own Son, he *freely* delivered him up. There is never a grudge in the Lord's mind towards those who draw upon him the most largely and

the most frequently. "He upbraideth not." Many who give take the opportunity to upbraid, saying, "I do not think you ought to have been in this plight. You must have been wasteful, and not so industrious as you ought to have been, or you would not be drawing upon me," and so on, until they have taken full compensation for their shilling out of the poor creature, who feels bound to endure the chastisement. God giveth liberally, and adds no sorrow therewith to those who humbly seek wisdom at his hands. Oh, the splendour of the generosity of God! He is ready to save—waiting to deliver. It delights him to bestow his goodness. The cost was paid long ago on Calvary's tree, and that is over. Since the great sacrifice has been presented, all the blessings of grace are freely given to us of God, with a willingness which shows that his heart goes with them.

Once more: you know that we use the word "freely" in the sense of *bountifully*. We say of such and such a person, "His banquet was spread with a free hand," or we say, "He helps his poor neighbours very freely"; that is to say, his gifts are without stint. The benefits bestowed by some are like the provisions of a workhouse, weighed out by ounces; but free grace does not limit itself by calculations, nor bound the applicant by estimates. As a free-handed housekeeper makes liberal provision, so does the Lord provide more than need demands. The mere crumbs from the Lord's table would suffice to feed multitudes. The Lord giveth not his Spirit by narrow measure: we are not straitened in him. Come along with you, you needy saint or sinner; the more you can take in the better pleased will the Lord be with you; and if, sitting at his table, you feel as if you could eat all that is upon it, hesitate not to make the trial, for you shall be heartily welcome. Your capacity will fail long before the provision. The Lord desires you to open your mouth wide, and he will fill it: it is easier for him to give than for you to open your mouth. He encourages and requests you to bring large petitions with you when you come before his mercy-seat. Come and receive "the things that are freely given to us of God."

I do not know whether I have made my intent quite so plain as I wanted to do; but this I would set before you—God gives his grace *freely*, in the most emphatic sense. His sovereign grace is of himself: "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." He is not compelled to be gracious by the force of our importunity, but he often gives to those who have never asked of him, as it is written: "I am found of those who sought me not." He calls by his divine power those who aforesaid were unwilling to come to him; even as in the case of Saul of Tarsus, who received light and grace when he was in the act of persecuting the saints. God gives his grace as freely as the sun, which, as soon as it rises from its chambers in the east, "sows the earth with orient pearl." See how freely it visits the tiny flower, which holds up its cup to have it filled with sunshine! How it peers into the glade of the forest, where, by the brook, the fern loves the shade. Whether the lark flies up to meet it, or the mole burrows in the earth to escape its light, the sun shines all the same. It fills the heavens and floods the earth with the brilliance which it is its nature to diffuse. The Lord comes by promise to those

who seek him; but he comes also in sovereign grace to those who seek him not. He is coming this morning to some of you who look not for him; for he is like the dew, which waiteth not for man, neither tarrieth for the sons of man. You came from the country, and you said that you would go and hear Spurgeon this morning; but you did not know that the Lord was about to save you. Give yourself up to the writ of grace, of which I am the officer this morning. Surrender your hearts to almighty love; and when you do so, you will perceive many of "the things that are freely given to us of God."

Now, let us talk about what these things are. *They are altogether immeasurable*, these "things that are freely given to us of God." Shall I tell you what they are in one word? God. God gives us God. *God the Father gives himself* to the unworthy sons of men. He becomes their Father and their friend. He gives them his wisdom, his power, his love, his immutability. He gives himself to men to be their possession for ever. In adoption he gives his fatherhood, and grants them sonship, so that they may cry, "Our Father, which art in heaven." He gives them pardon and acceptance. He grants them answers to their prayers in ten thousand ways. He gives them his Providence to guide and lead them. He gives them all they need for this life, and then he gives them an inheritance with himself for ever in the world to come. He who gave us Jesus, with him also freely gives us all things.

Beloved, *the Son of God also gives himself*. "He loved me, and gave himself for me." "He his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." Jesus gives his people his blood to wash out their sins, his righteousness to cover them with beauty, his intercession to plead their cause, and his enthronement to secure their victory. He gives his loving care to prepare a place for them in the sky; he gives his resurrection to bring them up from the grave, and his union with them to preserve them through the perils of life. We are married to himself, and so he freely gives his heart's love to us. Even his crown, his throne, and his heaven he freely gives to his chosen. Oh, what a gift of grace this is that is freely given to us of God! "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son." He is God's unspeakable gift. Nobody can speak it, for nobody can compass it within the range of thought.

*The Holy Spirit also freely gives himself to us*. He is the "free Spirit," and never freer than when he gives himself to enlighten, quicken, convert, comfort, and sanctify his people. He leads to repentance and to faith. He conducts to knowledge and holiness; he preserves and perfectly conforms us to the image of Christ. Thus see a summary of the things which are freely given to us of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

All things are yours, the free gifts of God. Now if Paul, when he was writing as an apostle, spoke of these things, not as what he had won or deserved, but as free gifts to him, you and I, poor sinners that we are, may well be glad to accept these priceless boons on the same terms. We are happy to think that these benisons are laid at our door, with nothing to pay and nothing to do but simply to accept them as the "things that are freely given to us of God." I have used simple language, but my theme is sublime. The Lord bless it!

II. Our second head is: THE POWER TO RECEIVE THESE GIFTS IS ALSO FREELY GIVEN. Some of you are saying, "I see very clearly that salvation is the gift of God, but how can I get it? How can I apprehend these blessings, and make them my own?" Dear friend, the text says, "We have received the spirit which is of God." The power with which we receive these gifts, which God freely gives, is the power of the Holy Ghost; and this, also, we do not purchase or deserve, but we freely receive it.

*The power to grasp Christ does not lie in our nature* in its own strength or goodness. Our state is that of death, and death cannot grasp life. God the Holy Spirit must breathe life into us before we can rise from the grave of our natural depravity, and lay hold upon Christ, who is our life. It is not in unrenewed human nature even to see the kingdom of God, much less to enter it. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God."

*The power to receive the things of God lieth not in high gifts or attainments.* We may not think that a Homer, or a Socrates, or a Plato would be able to obtain the things of God more readily than common men. Genius is no help towards grace. Indeed, great talent and great learning often miss the way where lowliness travels with ease. Do not sit down and say, "I am a poor stupid, and cannot be taught of God." Or, "I am a humble countryman, or a poor woman keeping house for others; I cannot know these precious things." It is not so. Read the words of Paul in the first chapter of this epistle: "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called." The power to receive the blessings of God does not lie in talent at all, but it lies in the Spirit of God. You think that if you had a long hand you could reach the grace of God. No, but if you have a withered hand, that grace can reach you. You suppose that if you had a clear eye you could see the Lord; ay, but if you have no eye but a blind one, the Lord can open it, and give you sight. Grace is not tied to the rare gifts of genius, nor to the precious acquirements of experience, nor to the high attainments of learning. No young child may say, "I cannot receive the things of God, for I am too young." Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings he hath perfected praise. Persons who have had a long and instructive experience are often as far from grace as if they had never suffered anything. Persons who have taken degrees at the university may be still as ignorant as Hottentots concerning heavenly things. The power to receive is still of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit does not find good in us, but brings it to us. "Well," says one, "but surely we must pass through a period of great anguish and distress before we can receive the things of God." Very often men do suffer greatly from a sense of guilt, and the fear of punishment before they lay hold on Christ; but they do not lay hold on Christ by this experience. The wounded man is not restored by his pains, the famishing man is not fed by his hunger. The power to lay hold on Christ is a spiritual power, which must be given from above; it lies not concealed within, but is implanted by the Lord from without. No process of discipline, or education, or evolution, can enable a man to lay hold on the things of God. He must be born again from above, and his heart must be

opened to receive the grace of God. A man can receive nothing unless it be given him to receive it, and that gift is the Holy Spirit.

The receptive power is *not bestowed by human excitement*, nor by the oratorical power of the preacher to whom the man listens. Possibly some have thought, "If I could hear So-and-so preach, I should then be able to believe." Put that thought away: you will believe in Jesus Christ when the Holy Spirit leads you to see how worthy your Saviour is of your confidence. You will never believe in him if you are looking to yourself for the power to believe, rather than to the truth itself, and to that Spirit who can make the truth clear to you, and work in you to will and to do of God's good pleasure. Come, then, dear hearts, you that feel so dull and dead, and so strengthless that you cannot do anything, remember right confidently that the Holy Spirit can enable you to receive all the gifts of God. May he at this time bless the truth to you, and you will feel the soft, sweet influence of repentance, melting you to tears on account of sin: you will feel a something telling you that in Christ there is just what you want, and you will feel a resolve forming in your heart, "I will have it if it may be had." Then you will come to a solemn decision for the present hour, "I will have it *now*. I will even now rest in Jesus, who died for the ungodly. Once for all I will turn my eyes to the cross, and look to him that did hang upon it, and trust my soul's weight on him." That is how the work is done. You may not know at the time that the moving power is the Spirit of God, but no one else works us to this thing but the Holy Ghost. We do not see the Spirit, nor hear his voice, nor recognize his person at the time, but being emptied of self, and led to accept the things that are freely given to us of God, we are spiritually enriched, and then we perceive that it was all of grace by the free gift of the Spirit of God.

One thing I should like to say before leaving this point: remember there are two spirits: there is the Spirit of God and the spirit of the world. This last is everywhere active, and believers feel it to be their foe: it worketh evil, and only evil. Only the Spirit of God can save you: the spirit of the world will ruin all who yield to it. I warn you against the spirit of this age—the spirit of the world. Do not lay yourselves under the influence of the spirit of the world; for even if you are truly saved, its pestilential influence will injure you. Are you seeking salvation? Keep clear of the spirit of the world as much as possible; and you will have no easy task, for its contagion will be found in men professing religion, but cunningly undermining it; and in books which pretend to reverence our Lord while they betray him. The religious world is more dangerous by far than the sensual world; it wears the sheepskin, but it has all the fierceness of the wolf. You cannot expect the Spirit of God to bless you if you yield to the spirit of the world. Do not meddle with that which is doubtful. There are works of fiction nowadays in abundance whose tendency is polluting: the world is drenched with them; avoid them as you would a bath of vitriol. If you would find eternal life, go where the Spirit of God works: search the Scriptures, and hear the truth through which the Spirit of God usually operates; and associate with those in whom the Spirit of God dwells. Hear that preaching which comes from God, for that alone

will lead you to him. You can soon tell what sort the preaching is. I do not think you need stay ten minutes before you will find out whether it is according to the spirit of the world, or is in the power of the Spirit of God. Those two opposite spirits are waging a fierce battle at this hour; and, I grieve to say it, many who profess godliness are tainted with the spirit of the world. Take you good heed that you follow the right Spirit, for in so doing you will find the things which are freely given us of God, and with them glory, and immortality, and eternal life.

Now, I have done what I wanted to do, if I have made you feel how free salvation is. I would have you know that not only are the gifts of grace most free, but that the very hand with which we take the gift is nerved to do so by God's grace. Undeserved bounty bestows not only the money, but the purse in which we carry it home. God gives not only the blessing to the heart, but the heart to receive the blessing. Hallelujah!

III. My last head is this : THE KNOWLEDGE OF THESE GIFTS IS FREELY GIVEN.

This is so in the lowest and most ordinary sense, since a knowledge of the things freely given of God is communicated to our minds by the revelation contained in the inspired Scriptures. These sacred writings are open to all, and all are invited to search them. Read the Word of God, and you will know in the letter what are the free gifts of God to men. But this form of knowledge suffices not : we cannot savingly know the things of God by mere reading, neither can they be taught to us by a book. The head learns by nature, but the heart must learn by grace. The way to know the things of God is for that which is written in the Word of God to be also written upon the heart by the same Spirit who wrote in the book. I heard about repentance, but I never knew repentance until I repented; I heard of faith, but I never knew faith until I believed; I heard of pardon, but I never knew pardon until I was washed in the blood of the Lamb; I read about justification by faith, but I was never justified till, by faith, I received the Lord Jesus to be my righteousness. Appropriation by faith gives an apprehension by the understanding: experimental enjoyment creates true acquaintance. Beloved, go to the Holy Spirit, and ask him to enable you to take the things which God freely gives, and when you possess them, you will "know" them.

If still you desire to know more of the infinite preciousness of the gifts of God, it is a wise ambition; and it will be fully and freely satisfied by the Holy Spirit. Resort to him, for he is the great Teacher; there is no instructor like him. His knowledge surpasses all other, for he knows the mind of God. No man can communicate to you what he does not know, and no man knows the mind of God but the Spirit of God. The Holy Ghost knows the infinite and the unsearchable; and therefore he is able to teach you what you cannot learn elsewhere. The mind and meaning of God in every gift of grace the Spirit can unfold to you. There is no being taught effectually except you are taught of the Spirit of God. All other teaching is superficial, and therefore temporary and vain; but the Holy Spirit speaks to the soul, and writes the lines of truth on the fleshy tablets

of the heart, so that they can never be erased. If you would know the things freely given us of God, the Holy Spirit must lead you into the inner secret of the sacred treasure-house.

By the same divine aid you must be enabled to feed upon these choice things, and have a full enjoyment of them. The things of God, as I have said before, are best known by a personal enjoyment of them. Who can know meat and drink except by living upon them? When you can feed upon a Scripture, when you can suck out the marrow of a doctrine, when you can extract the juice from a divine promise, when you are made fat and flourishing by inspired teaching, then hath the Lord made you freely to know the blessings of his covenant. Oh, that the Holy Spirit may be to you as the seven-branched lamp gladdening your eyes with his light, and as the loaves of the shewbread nourishing your heart, and then may he lead you within the veil, and make you to see the mercy-seat, and all the glory of the Lord your God! Oh, to realize that blessing, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord"! May we be taught by actual enjoyment and heavenly communion, so that we may come into holy familiarity with the choice things that are freely given to us of God. I do not know that I want to hear any lecture on bread; I know all that I want to know about that form of food, because I eat it every day; even so, we need little talk about covenant blessings, because they are the continual portion of our souls, our strength in every stage of our heavenward pilgrimage, and our song in anticipation of the eternal rest.

My dear brothers and sisters, go to this high-school of heaven. The terms are, "nothing to pay," though the education is beyond all other. Blessed school, wherein sinners are made saints, and saints are made to grow into the likeness of Jesus. Everything is as free in this university as in the first dame-school of humble faith, where the sinner learns repentance, and ventures to trust his Saviour. Eternal life is the gift of God, in its first breathing; and it is still the gift of God in its highest development. When you stand before the throne of the Most High, you will stand there through grace alone. All along, from sin's pit to heaven's gate, without a break, the whole road is paved with grace. We do not begin with grace, and then go on to trust in works: we do not at first receive freely, and then afterwards have to live upon a hard-earned wage. No; still, still, still he worketh in us to will and to do, and we lovingly work under his divine guidance, as we are strengthened by his divine power. Grace lays the foundation-stone, and

" Grace all the work shall crown,  
Through everlasting days;  
It lays in heaven the topmost stone,  
And well deserves the praise."

What of all this? Listen to me for a very few minutes more.

I speak to those of you who know the things that are freely given to you of God. Learn from these things to *be humble*. If you know anything, you have been taught it. If you possess anything, it has been given you. You are a charity child. The clothes on your back are furnished by the Lord's favour. The bread in your mouth is the

provision of his love. A proud saint is a contradiction in terms. "What hast thou which thou hast not received?"

In the next place, *be generous*. I cannot believe in a stingy saint. Here again there is a flat contradiction in terms. All things are freely given you, are you going to be mean over them? "Freely ye have received, freely give." He who turns over the coin in his pocket, to make it as small as ever he can before he gives it, is a poor creature. He gets the smallest change on Saturday, that he may give it on Sunday. He is a saint, is he? Let those believe in his saintship who can. The child of God should be free-hearted. He should give himself away, because Jesus gave himself for us. You should be of large heart, for you serve a large-hearted Christ, who has given you all things freely to enjoy.

Next, *be ready to impart what you know*. If the Spirit of God has made you to know the things freely given of God, try to tell somebody else. Don't act as if you had a patent, or a monopoly, and wanted grace to be a secret. You have not the gift of God yourself if you have no desire that others should have it. The first instinct of a converted man is to try to convert others. If you have no wish to bring others to heaven, you are not going there yourself.

Try and impart this knowledge in the way in which you received it. You received it by the Holy Spirit; then go and teach it, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but in the power of the Spirit of God. Last night I felt so unwell that I thought I should not be able to preach to-day; but I cheered myself with this reflection—if you cannot give wealth of illustration, if you can display no beauty of style, never mind, you can tell out the soul-saving truth in plain words, and God will own it. Holy Spirit, bless my feeble words this morning! Thou canst do it, and thou shalt have all the praise. Go to your Sunday-school class this afternoon, dear friend, and say, "Lord, put words into my mouth, and teach me, that I may teach others. Enable me to labour, not in the power of my knowledge, eloquence, or experience, but under the guidance of thy Spirit." Better five words in the Spirit than a long oration in your own power.

Lastly, if the Lord has given us all these things freely, *let us praise him*. I did not mind hearing our brother over there cry out "Amen." He may do it again, if he likes. Sometimes it is well to let the living water of praise to God burst the pipes, and flood the streets. What a dumb set we are! The Lord has to pull hard at the rope before our bell speaks at all. Let us praise him for what he has done for us, and make this vow this morning:

"I will praise him in life, I will praise him in death,  
And praise him as long as he lendeth me breath;  
And say, when the death-dew lies cold on my brow,  
'If ever I loved thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.'"

The Lord himself bless you all, according to the riches of his grace.  
Amen.

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PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 Cor. i. 18—31; ii.

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HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—386, 491, 236.