

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

DELIGHT IN THE ALMIGHTY.

A Sermon

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"For then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God."—Job xxii. 26.

THE Lord said to Eliphaz and his friends, "Ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath"; and therefore we must always regard what they said with careful discrimination. They were wise men according to their light, but they were quite at sea in their judgment of Job. However, in this particular verse Eliphaz declared that which is taught in many other parts of Holy Scripture, and we may profit by his utterance. God grant that by his Spirit we may fully experience the joys described in the words before us.

Eliphaz and his friends had judged Job from their own point of view, making their own experience to be the standard. They themselves, had prospered, and therefore they inferred that if a man served God he must necessarily prosper in worldly things; and that if he did not succeed as they had done, he must have been guilty of great crimes. Though they could not discover any actual fault in Job, they concluded without further evidence that he must have been a hypocrite, and have acted oppressively to his servants, or have been unmindful of the claims of the poor, or in some other way have brought upon himself the wrath of God. It never entered their mind that so terrible a sickness and such a list of dreadful calamities could have befallen any man except as a punishment for special sin. They inferred virtue from prosperity, and sin from adversity. Unrighteous and cruel logic! At once false and brutal! It renders men at once false witnesses and Pharisees; condemning the innocent because of their sorrows, and flattering themselves because of their ease. To judge according to outward circumstances has been the tendency of men in all times; even David could not understand how it was that the wicked were so free from troubles, while all the day long he was himself plagued, and chastened every morning. A right principle lay at the bottom of this wonder; for, indeed, the Lord will reward the good and will punish the wicked; but a great mistake is made when we suppose that this life is the time for meting out rewards and punishments. God will, un-

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doubtedly, when the time shall have fully come, discharge the full vials of his wrath upon the ungodly, but the present is a period of long-suffering, wherein the wicked spread themselves like a green bay tree. Except God's mercy shall lead them to repentance, they are in the same wretched condition as bullocks which are being fattened for the slaughter. Who envies them? The ungodly have their portion in this life; they increase in riches; their eyes stand out with fatness, they have more than heart can wish. As for the children of God, it often happeneth that gall and wormwood are mingled with their drink: waters of a full cup are wrung out to them. We must not judge according to the sight of the eyes, or according to present conditions, or we shall make gross mistakes. The richest may be the most wicked, and the poorest may be the most gracious; those who suffer least may deserve to suffer most, and those who are most afflicted in this life may have the highest glory in the life to come.

I suspect that Eliphaz and his friends had enjoyed smooth sailing. How should they judge the man who had done business amid tempests? Their mental life was not disturbed by great conflicts; they had not gone deeply into things, nor searched to the bottom of spiritual matters; they had no knowledge of their own hidden corruptions, and had endured but little of the rod of chastisement, and, consequently, they had been at ease. Their mistake was that they sat in judgment upon another who was more tried than themselves, and condemned him for being in sore distress. Their own serenity led them to judge the troubled one very harshly. This ought not to be. If any of us are inclined thus to judge and condemn, it is time that we put this mischievous spirit far from us. If we judge others, others will judge us. Two can always play at that evil game. I remember a company of terribly despondent believers who were for years a severe scourge to their happier brethren. Having a deep sense of their inward corruptions, being sorely tempted of the devil, and having only a weak and trembling faith, they tyrannized over others who were more happy than themselves. They judged that those who were not as much tempted as themselves did not exhibit the spot of God's children. None were more bitter than these humble people in denouncing those who had not been as much humbled as themselves. Those who did not sit in the dust, and groan to the same tunes as themselves, they judged to be very dubious Christians, and took care to scald them with that kind of hot pity which is not much different from contempt. This was as wrong as wrong can be. It is not to be endured that the sick should make themselves the standard of health, that dwarfs should set up to be the models of manhood. These worthy people set up a standard marked in very black ink, and those who did not come up to so much grief and so much unbelief, they set aside as very questionable members of the divine family. This is manifestly vicious; but it is equally evil when judgments are pronounced from the other side. For persons in good health, whose livers act well, who have abundance of this world's good, and very little care and trial, who have not often had to stand by the grave and weep because the arrows of death have struck their dearest ones, who have never known what it is to be wounded in spirit,—for these to set up their standard and condemn the weak and the sad, is

a crime against the Lord. To say,—If you do not believe as firmly as we do, if you do not rejoice as we do, if you are not as sensible of sanctification as we are, you are not in Christ at all, is a piece of arrogance very grievous to the Spirit of the Lord. Oh, my strong brother, listen to one who knows by experience the heaviness of a child of sorrow. Who made thee a ruler in Israel? God's children always play the fool when they play the judge; they are never in order when they act as if they were the head of the family of grace. The Father knows all his children. All who observe carefully will also know that while some are strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, others are weak in faith and mere babes in grace. These little ones are not one jot the less precious in the sight of the great Father than the more fully grown ones. Let none of the strong cattle push the weak cattle with horn and with shoulder; for when the weak ones complain unto God he will regard them, and will avenge them upon the proud. If thou be strong, God keep thee so, and make thee stronger; but use not thy strength for treading down the weak. If thou be weak, the Lord strengthen thee, and deliver thee from this malady; but do not envy the strong, and begin to speak lightly of those who excel thee. The more of light, the more of joy, the more of holy confidence, the more of faith, the more glory to God: therefore covet these things earnestly as among the best gifts. May the Holy Ghost help us to attain to the highest degree of grace; but may he ever prevent us from judging our brethren. Here was the fault of Eliphaz. He was right in many of his statements, but he was wrong in his ungenerous application of them to holy Job.

I want this morning, as God shall help me, to lead you up to the pastures on the hill tops. I pray that I may help you to a higher and joyful experience in the things of God, whilst I shall speak, first, of *a desired position* towards God,—“Then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God”; and, secondly upon the question—*when can this happy experience be realized?* “Then,” says the text, and, therefore, there is such a time when we can have delight in the Almighty and lift up our face unto God.

I. First, here is A DESIRED POSITION TOWARDS GOD.

Many men forget God: he is no object of delight to them, for they ignore his existence, and they would even think it a great relief if it could be proved that there were no God,—no God to observe them, no God to record their misdeeds, no God to call them to judgment, no God to punish them for their iniquities. Let us pity the multitudes who claim to be happy without God; for it is the last extreme of depravity when, blotting out God from his soul, a man obtains a wretched comfort as the consequence of his folly. To be without God is to be without rest in the present and without hope for the future.

Great numbers of men go a stage further: they believe in God, they cannot doubt that there is a Most High God who judgeth the children of men; but their only thought towards him is that of dread and dislike. They do not want to hear of him: if the things of God are forced upon their attention they are soon weary of such distasteful themes, for they only look upon God as a just and terrible Judge, who will certainly punish them for their transgressions. It is woe to them even to think of the

great God. Though this dread of God and this neglect of God cannot deliver them out of his hands, yet they find a kind of comfort in it. As we are told of the ostrich—I know not whether it be true or not—that when it cannot escape the hunter it buries its head in the sand so as not to see its pursuer; so these foolish persons blind their own eyes, and thus produce a foolish security of heart. They think of God with dread, dismay, despondency, and despair. I am grieved to add that this principle even tinctures the thoughts of true friends of God: for when they bow before God it is not only with the reverence of a loving child, but with the terror of a slave; they are afraid of him who should be their exceeding joy. Their view of God is incorrect, for it is not such as the Spirit of adoption would give them. They are really trusting in him and in the great propitiation which he has set forth, but they have not come to know him under that blessed term which our Saviour puts into our mouth when he bids us say, “Our Father, which art in heaven.” Such trembling ones are still under the spirit of bondage, which causes them to fear, as condemned persons dread the executioner. They stand like Israel trembling at the foot of Sinai; they have not come unto Mount Zion and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel. God is still to them exceeding terrible, so that they fear and quake. Even though they are his children, they are not able to lift up their faces unto their own Father. They haunt the outer courts of the sanctuary, but into the most holy place they do not dare to enter: they see the smoke of the burnt-offering, but they have not learned to feed upon it, and so to have happy communion with God. These people may be safe, but they are not happy: they may be saved from sin, but not from sorrow. Faith, if it were stronger, would effectually slay and bury servile fear.

Let us meditate a while upon what is here meant by *delighting in the Almighty*. The man who experiences this delight is glad *that there is a God*. That atheistic philosophy which makes the whole world to be a chance production which grew of itself, or developed itself by some innate force, is a very dreary piece of fiction to the man who delights himself in the Almighty. I tremble at any teaching, religious or scientific, which seems to place God further off than we have believed him to be. To draw him nearer to me, and myself nearer to him, is the innermost longing of my soul. Do you not feel the same? I know you do if you have a child-like spirit towards him. We delight to see God in the shadow of every passing cloud, in the colouring of every opening flower, in the glitter of every dewdrop, in the twinkling of every star. The Lord is personally at work in all the processes of nature, and natural laws are simply the Lord’s usual method of operation. Our God is so near us that in him we live, and move, and have our being. At this spring tide, in the fragrance of the flowers and the song of birds, we perceive God everywhere present, renewing the face of the year. Beloved, the thought of God is to the souls of those who know and love him the most delightful that can cross the mind. To put God away from us is injury to our happiness, as well as treason to our duty; but to get nearer and clearer views of his omnipresence, his omniscience, his omnipotence, is to increase the joy of our heart.

To go a step further, the delight of the believer in his God is a

delight in God *as he really is*; for there are in the world many false gods of men's own manufacture. Remember that your own thoughts of what God is are far from being correct unless they are drawn from his own revelation. This sacred book is infallible, but not our thoughts; and wherein we differ from God as he has revealed himself we differ from the truth. It is as easy to make an idol out of your own thought as it is for the Hindoo to make a god of the mud of the Ganges. There is but one God revealed in Holy Scripture, and in nature, and in providence: his name is Jehovah, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, who has still further declared himself as the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He is God in undivided unity of essence, in the trinity of his persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. With all our souls we worship and adore him. Just as God appears in Holy Scripture we are to delight in him; regarding him as love, as mercy, as long-suffering, as justice, as power, as purity, as all goodness and greatness in one. The characteristic which seems to cause most delight to perfect saints in heaven is not love alone, nor mercy alone, but that which comprehends grace and mercy, and much more; I mean holiness. This is the perpetual cry of the seraphim, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth." The holiness of God, or, if you will, the wholeness of God, the completeness of God, the perfection of God, is the delight of all believers. We would not tone down a single attribute, we would not disturb the equilibrium of the divine perfections; but we delight in God in all those aspects of his character which are mentioned in his Holy Word.

Further, he that delights in God delights not only in God as he is, but *in all that God does*, and this is a higher attainment than some have reached. "It is the Lord," said one of old, "let him do what seemeth him good." Too many would call God to their bar, and hold a trial upon what he does with men in this life, and with the wicked in the world to come. Far other was the spirit of the apostle when he said, "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" Concerning any event we simply ask,—Has God done it? Then we bow before his decree, and say no more; for what he has done must be right and wise. When the Lord afflicts us, and hides the reason from our eyes, let us not contend with him; but if we cannot go further, let us be silent before him; even as was the afflicted man of God of whom we read, "Aaron held his peace." Better still will it be if we can complete our confidence, and say with Job, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord." He that delighteth in the Almighty will delight in him even though he smart beneath his hand, and will bless him even when his dispensations are killing ones: as said the patriarch of Uz, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

Practically put, this delight in the Almighty *shows itself in the Christian when nothing else remains to him*. If he be stripped of everything, he cries, "The Lord is my portion." When the cupboard is bare, and the garments are worn out, and poverty stares the man in the face, he says, "My God is such a satisfactory and all-sufficient portion that I am rich and increased in goods while possessing nothing but my God." The same is true when such a man is surrounded with

every earthly comfort, for he still feels, "The Lord is my portion." The saint begs vehemently of his God that he may not have his portion in this life. If God were to multiply his stores beyond his power to count them, he would be dissatisfied unless in all these he saw his Father's covenant love. One saint, who suddenly became poor, was still as happy as ever, for he said, "When I had abundance, I saw God in all things, and now that I have lost my property I see all things in God." These are equally blessed states of mind. It were well to combine them, and see God in all things, and all things in God, at the same time! So it should be with the believer. "Why," saith he, "these earthly comforts never were my delights; these were not my daily manna, but only little staybys for the time; sips of sweetness while I pass through the barren wilderness." The Lord was and is my chief portion, my well of comfort, the rock of my salvation. If we make props of our outward joys, we shall fall when they are taken away; but if we rest wholly upon the foundation of divine love, altogether apart from external things, we shall never be moved. Happy is the Christian who can practically enjoy delight in the Almighty by making him to be his all in all, all the day, and every day.

You will see this delight in God exhibiting itself in frequent meditations upon God. Such a man has pleasure in being alone with God, and his sweetest occupation is meditation upon the years of the right hand of the Most High. He finds in holy contemplation pastures large and green, in which his soul doth feed and lie down.

"My God, thou art mine, what a comfort divine!
What a blessing to know my Jesus is mine."

These happy meditations very soon show themselves in words. The man that delights in the Almighty delights to speak about him. That which is in the well will before long come up in the bucket, and that which is in the heart will soon display itself in the tongue. Is there any conversation more elevating, more consoling, more strengthening, than conversation about the Lord our God? And when you go home from such society do you not feel it sweet to fall asleep with the savour of it upon your lips? Is not holy converse infinitely better than all the mirth and merriment of the world's amusements? Here is something to feed upon, something solid, something real; saints delight to contribute to such conversation and to receive instruction from it.

"Delight thyself in the Lord." This will give you pleasure in the midst of pain. Do you know what it is to have many aches, and sufferings, and, perhaps, a throbbing head, and yet to feel that you have another self which has no pains, because it dwells in God, where all is calm and quiet? You felt that it would be a great mercy to be released from this painful life; and yet you have not raised the question with your God, but have waited his good pleasure. Faith has made you feel, "Wherever I am, whatever I feel, so long as God is near me, and his sweet love fills my bosom, I will greatly rejoice and triumph in the God of my salvation."

This will show itself in your life, for it will be a pleasure to do anything to exalt the name of God. It will gild your ordinary conversation with heavenly splendour, if in it you adorn the doctrine of God

your Saviour in all things. You will march to heaven beneath the spell of celestial music, and the bliss of the glorified will stimulate your spirits, when you can feel that all is for God, and that God is all in all to you. This is to delight yourself in the Almighty. God give us to get into that state, and to keep there till we leap to heaven, and are in that state.

I call your attention to the special name by which Eliphaz describes the ever-blessed God: he says, "Delight thyself in *the Almighty*." Is it not singular that he should choose a term descriptive of omnipotence as the paramount cause of the believer's delight? God is love, and I can readily understand how one might delight himself in God under that aspect; but the believer is taught to delight himself in God as strong and mighty. What a mercy it is that there is a power that makes for righteousness!—that at the back of all these wars and confusions, and behind all sin and false doctrine, there is an infinitely powerful God! During the last few weeks you have felt an intense joy in the omnipotence of God. You have whispered to your forebodings,—“It is all right. The Almighty is not paralyzed, his arm is not shortened: the Lord reigneth.” Brethren, the pendulum swings to and fro, advancing and retreating, but yet there is a real progress made: you cannot see it by watching the pendulum, but up higher on the face of the clock there is evidence of an onward march, and of a coming hour. The kingdom of God is coming; righteousness shall prevail. Delight also in the fact that Jehovah is almighty in mercy—mighty to save. He can forgive the greatest sin; he can change the hardest heart; he can help us to fight out unto victory the sternest of our battles against unrighteousness; he is stronger than sin and Satan; for all power dwells with him. When you look at this phase of it, and think of his dear Son exalted on high to give repentance and remission of sins, you may indeed delight in the Almighty Redeemer, as “able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.” Surely, when you see omnipotence linked with righteousness and mercy, you will delight yourself in the Almighty.

Think also of the Lord's almightiness in the matter of the keeping, preserving, defending, and perfecting of all his people. The sheep of his pasture shall not perish; for the good Shepherd is omnipotent to smite the roaring lion who would devour them. None that trust in him shall ever be ashamed or confounded, world without end. All the elect are well secured within the fold of Jesus, neither shall any pluck them out of his hand. Delight yourselves in the Almighty; for all the power of God is enlisted on the side of the believer. To me, I confess, it is an intense joy that he is almighty to carry out every one of his eternal purposes. Jesus shall not fail nor be discouraged. That which Jehovah hath willed shall be; in the unfolding of the great roll of history it shall be found that it tallies exactly with the divine purposes and immutable decrees. He that sitteth on the flood reigneth King for ever and ever. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Let our hearts delight that the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth already, and let us pray that in yet a further sense his kingdom may come, as come it will. Let us delight ourselves in the Almighty, linking that word to every other attribute, and rejoicing that he has almighty love, omnipotent grace. Again let us say “Hallelujah!”

Now, let us turn with intense satisfaction to the other expression used by Eliphaz : "*Thou shalt lift up thy face unto God.*" What does it mean ? Does it not mean, first, joy in God ? When a man hangs his head down he is unhappy : it is the attitude of misery ; but oh, when our thoughts of God are changed, and our relationship to God is different, we lift up our faces and sun our countenances in the light of God's favour. The face of God in his Anointed is toward the believer, and therefore the believer's face is toward the Most High. He hath said, "Seek ye my face," and how can we seek his face but with our own faces ? "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth," is the divine call ; and the believer looks to God with intense joy, knowing that in him is his salvation.

Does it not signify, also, that this man is reconciled to God, and clear before him ? How can he look up who is guilty ? Guilt makes a man hang his head. "Conscience doth make cowards of us all" ; but oh, my brothers, when the atoning sacrifice has come with all its power to us, when we are washed in the blood of the Lamb, and we are clean every whit, then we lift up our face unto God. In that tremendous day when heaven and earth shall flee before the face of the Judge, we shall be bravely calm, fearing no word of doom, because we are cleansed by the atoning sacrifice, and justified by the righteousness in which we put our trust. What a blessed thing to lift up one's face unto God in confidence towards him through Christ Jesus !

Does not our text indicate fearlessness ? Fear covers her face, and would fain hide herself altogether, even though to accomplish concealment the rocks must fall upon her. That sacred bravery which the Holy Spirit breathes into the child of God makes him cry, "Abba, Father," and, in the spirit of adoption he lifts up his face unto God.

May it not also signify expectation ? "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help." "My expectation is from him," says David. Oh, to lift one's face toward God, looking for deliverance, safety, and rest, and expecting both grace and glory from his right hand !

Brethren, I am talking very simply of things well known to me, and yet I cannot convey to you a sense of the joy of a face uplifted unto God. You must feel it for yourselves, by lifting up your own faces. Some of you poor creatures cannot lift up your faces unto God by reason of despondency ; but we pray that you may yet do so. If you have ever looked unto the Lord through the glass of the atonement you will then be able to lift up your faces towards him with a calm delight. As for you who are God's own people, and yet go through the world in bondage, I charge you, cry unto the Lord to change your condition, and fill you with his joy, for then your faces will shine in the light of his face.

I am sure that he who has this delight in God, and this lifting up of the face towards God, is a man that has wonderful peace with regard to the past : the past is forgiven, its iniquity covered, for the Lord has looked in love upon him. The man who walks in happy communion with God has a wonderful peace with regard to the present. Is it well with thee ? "Exceedingly well. God loves me, and I love him ; I am brought into fellowship with him by Christ Jesus my Lord, and we are friends, with a friendship which is secured by mutual delight and sealed by covenant

engagements, so that it can never cease to be." Such a man has peace with regard to the future. He has no fear of evil tidings ; his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. He is not afraid of coming dangers in life, nor of the pangs of death, nor the terrors of judgment. When you delight in the Lord, nothing can disturb the unbroken current of your joy ? The sublime serenity of the heavens which arch above your head enters into your own spirit when the Lord who made the heavens dwells in your heart. Strive after this sacred peace : delight in the Almighty, and lift up your faces unto God.

II. I must close by noticing our second point, and that is, **WHEN CAN WE REALIZE THIS ?** I have not confidence enough in Eliphaz to make his answer to the question the only one that I shall give you : I must give you something fuller and better than was known to him.

First, a man can realize all this *when he knows that he is reconciled to God*. What is God's way of effecting reconciliation between a sinner and himself ? Every sinner is under the curse of the broken law ; for it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." No one of us has continued in the perfect observance of the whole law, and therefore God's righteous verdict is against us. The only way of escape from the curse is through the glorious Son of God, who took our nature, and was made a curse for us, as it is written, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." He stood in our room and stead, bore the punishment due to our guilt, and thus became a curse on our behalf. All the sacrifices of the Jews were types of this : they were fingers of light pointing to the one all-sufficient sacrifice. That sacrifice the Lord has accepted for men, and he has set forth the Lord Jesus to be the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world ; so that whosoever believeth in Jesus Christ, God's appointed sacrifice, is set free from sin, and being set free from sin he can then delight in the Almighty, and lift up his face unto God.

Yet even this could not effect our delight in God unless there was something else ; so there must be, in the next place, *a renewed nature*. Our old nature will never delight in God. The carnal mind is enmity against God, it is not reconciled to God, neither indeed can be ; it is an alien from the life of God, and an alien it will always be. So, then, ye must be born again : but when a man is born again of the Spirit of God, and receives a new nature, that new nature delights in the Almighty. There is an old nature in us which fights against God still ; but the new nature, which is of divine origin, cries after God as a child after its mother ; it lives in God as fish live in the sea ; God is its element, its life, its all-in-all. So, beloved, if you have been both reconciled and renewed ; if you have felt the power of the blood of Jesus and the power of the Holy Ghost begetting in you a new nature, then you can delight yourselves in God.

In addition to this, you will delight in God much more fully when *the Spirit beareth witness with your spirit* that you are born of God. The spirit of sonship is the spirit of delight in God. What son is afraid to behold his father's face ? A loving child suns himself in his father's smile. How have I seen little children clambering up their father's knees, and looking into his face, and saying, "What a dear face it is !"

This is a faint picture of our joy in God through Jesus Christ, by whom also we have received the atonement. What would some of you give to see the dear face of that dear father who was taken from you years ago ! I can understand Cowper saying of his mother's picture,

"Oh, that those lips had language !"

Oh, that our departed ones could speak to us again ; but our heavenly Father ever lives ; and never let it be said that we dare not lift up our faces unto him. We look up, and say in our darkest moments,

"For yet I know I shall Him praise,
Who graciously to me,
The health is of my countenance,
Yea, mine own God is He."

I cannot tell you the inexpressible sweetness of that last line to my soul. Thousands of times it has fallen from my lips. If I have nothing else I have a God, and my soul lays hold on him as Jacob grasped the angel. I will not let him go. Whether he bless me or do not bless me, still will I cling to him with desperate resolve, and cry, "my Lord and my God." This God is our God for ever and ever, he shall be our guide even unto death.

To come to Eliphaz, and to conclude with him. We shall delight ourselves in God, and lift up our face when we do as Eliphaz here tells us. First, *when we live in communion with him*. "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace." If we do not know God how can we delight in him ? What delight can there be in an unknown God ? Brothers, you are not half as happy as you might be, because you do not study this Book, wherein, as in a glass, you may see the face of Jehovah your God. Oh, that you knew more of his dear Son, for he that hath seen him hath seen the Father ! Take God for thy daily company. "Acquaint now thyself with him." Great as he is, dare to be free with him. Though thou be but dust and ashes, yet, like Abraham, speak with him as a man speaketh with his friend, for as thou knowest thy God so shalt thou delight in him, and lift up thy face unto him.

Then, further, we must, if we are to know this delight, *lay up God's words in our hearts*—(verse 22). "Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart." Your neglected Bibles hide your God. When dust falls on the Scriptures dust falls on the eyes of those who have neglected them, and then they cannot behold the glory of the Lord God. The more of Scripture understood, fed upon, and received into the inward parts, the more will be your delight in God. You can have no pleasure in the speaker if you despise the word spoken : let it be to you as marrow and fatness.

There must be added to this delight in the word *a constant cleansing of the way*. "If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles." God cannot manifest himself to us if we continue in sin. If you professing Christian people are as greedy and hard as other people in your dealings with the world, and if in your families you are as quarrelsome and untruthful as the ungodly, God cannot come to your tabernacles. There must be

purification of life, or there cannot be fellowship with the Lord. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"; impurity of heart will cause blindness of the eyes as to spiritual things. Careful walking will bring joyful walking; but if you lose your purity you will lose your peace. If you are a child of God you cannot sin without feeling the rod: you must obey the Lord in order to enjoy the Lord. Walk in the footsteps of Christ, who did always the things which pleased the Father, and you will receive the joyful witness—"This is my beloved son!" Put away sin wherever you perceive it, and ask for grace to be helped to detect it in all its lurking places. Seek out the Babylonish garment and the wedge of gold which Achan has hidden, for else the Lord cannot abide with you. Get rid of your idols.

"So shall your walk be close with God,
Calm and serene your frame;
So purer light shall mark the road
That leads you to the Lamb."

In addition to this, there must be *a constant trust*. "Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence, and thou shalt have plenty of silver." (See verse 25.) He who does not trust God cannot delight in him. You cannot lift up your face to him while you think him untrue. A childlike confidence is essential to a holy joy. Let us throw ourselves upon God, as a swimmer casts himself upon the water, that it may bear him up; let us trust in God as a child trusts its mother, without the shadow of a question. We sometimes know a great deal too much of what we ought not to know. I see some of God's children very anxious to feed upon the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; but as for me, I am content with the tree of life. The old serpent still persuades men to pluck forbidden fruit from that evil tree. I know children of God who hold their hands to their heads and cry, "Would God we had never read that sceptical book, and never learned how to distrust the Lord!" Let the time past suffice for the feeding of doubt. Let us eat no more carrion, but feed upon the salted meat of the Word. Let us quit the garlick of Egypt, and feed on the manna of heaven. We do not want to know what the world believes or does not believe, for the world lieth in the wicked one. We do not care what may be the spirit of the age, for the spirit of the world in all ages is the Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. Be it yours and mine to come to Christ, to live on him, and to believe on him with unstaggering faith; so shall we delight ourselves in God, and lift up our faces to him.

Lastly, let us abide in *continual prayer*. Verse 27: "Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows." Want of prayer is a great want indeed; slackness at the mercy-seat will soon take away the spring and elasticity of our spiritual walk. If we are to have a closer walk with God, we must have closer communion with God in supplication.

Now, dear children of God, I have set all this before you, but what power can be in my word unless the Holy Ghost blesses it? I have watered this sermon with strong desires for the spiritual benefit of you all, and now I am mourning over the many who do not know anything

at all about it. They are still devoid of the knowledge of God, and of all desire for him. I am very, very sorry for you. My heart pities you. We have heard of "the Bitter Cry" from the slums of London, and a bitter cry it well may be; but there is a poverty, compared with which mere want of bread is riches; there is a degradation, compared with which the low estate of the pauper is nobility itself. To live without your God—how terrible a death! You know not what joy means; you have not begun to spell the word "delight" until you have begun with God. True joy comes only from a true knowledge of the true God. Oh, sirs, if I had to die like a dog, I should wish to be a Christian, for the sake of the bird in the hand of present delight! If there were no hereafter, the immediate peace and joy of trusting my God are an overflowing reward. But there is a hereafter, and what will you ungodly ones do when that hereafter dawns upon you? You have done without God all your days, and God will do without you to all eternity. What terror lies in that fact! He will say, "Depart!" because you always did depart; he will decree your continuance in the path which you chose, and bid you keep on going away from him for ever. He will say, "He that is filthy, let him be filthy still," and what more dreadful doom can fall upon any one of you? O! ye immortal spirits, ye need an immortal God! O! ye, that cannot cease to be, ye need the Highest of all Beings in whom you may hide yourselves from ceaseless anguish. Trust in God, and then shall you be filled with infinite felicities, but not till then. God bring you to himself, that he may bring you to delight! May the uplifted Saviour draw you and uplift you! May you begin the life of heaven by an immediate delight in the Almighty, and from that delight may you never cease! To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

SCRIPTURES READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalms lxii. and lxiii.

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