

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

THE RECORDERS.

A Sermon

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, JUNE 25TH, 1876, BY

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,

“To record, and to thank and praise the Lord God of Israel.”—1 Chronicles xvi. 4.

DAVID took care of every part of divine worship; he saw that nothing was neglected in the service of the God in whom he delighted. Let this stand as an example to us to be careful about everything which concerns the honour of God. Do not allow any one of the duties of your holy faith to be forgotten, but seek to exhibit harmonious and entire obedience to the divine will. Do not merely attend to what are called religious duties, but with equal religiousness regard your social duties, and present to the Lord as far as you can a complete service. Such David desired to do. You observe that he had those about him who offered burnt offerings unto the Lord continually, morning and evening, as God had commanded—these things were not to be left undone. And then he set apart certain others to attend to the service of song. Theirs it was to sound the trumpets and to call the people together; theirs to touch the harmonious strings of harps, or to sound with cymbals of brass, or to lift their voices on high in the sweet praises of Jehovah; for God is to be served with sacrifice, and praised with song. Our God accepts us when we labour for him, and when we praise him: let both be done heartily. It were a pity if we worked so hard that we could not sing; it were equally unhappy if we sang so much that we idled away our time; there must be a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate, music and fruit, service and song. There was also a third company set apart for a somewhat extraordinary work, namely, as our text tells us, *to record*. They were to take notes of what God had done, and was doing; they were to be the chronicles of the nation, and out of their chronicles they were to compose the psalms and songs. Perhaps that is the meaning of the word “record” here, but the original bears another meaning—“to bring to remembrance.” If they were not to act as historians to record, they were as minstrels

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to tell out what had been written in old time, and bring it to remembrance. I rather prefer the idea that their duty was to do both—to record the lovingkindness of the Lord and to bring to the remembrance of the people what the Lord's right hand had done in former times. Now, if you think a minute, this third class of people who are placed between the Levites before the ark, and the singers who thanked and praised the Lord would be useful both to those who went before and to those who followed after. Those who had to serve before the ark of the Lord are mentioned first. Now, what could so cheer them in their service as to read of the goodness of the Lord? What so inspire them to attend reverently to the service of the Lord's house as to remember the former lovingkindnesses of the Lord? What arguments could they have for fidelity that should be more powerful than the record of his mercy which endureth for ever? Those who were to conduct the praising and the thanksgiving are mentioned after these recorders. But what is the raw material of which praise is made but the record of what God is and of what he has done for his people? Methinks whenever they wanted to sing they would turn to these remembrancers and recorders, and say to them "Tell us something of what God has done, for the simple record of Jehovah's acts is the noblest psalmody." Do you notice that, whenever we praise God best, we simply declare what he is, for the bare fact about God is the highest praise, and you have only to mention what he does in order to produce the sublimest poetry: the grateful mention of his glorious acts is in itself adoration. You cannot adore the Lord better than by devoutly rehearsing his mighty acts—so good is his name, so blessed are his deeds. "Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can shew forth all his praise?"

Now, from the fact that David set apart certain Levites to record, I gather three or four thoughts, of which I am going to speak to-night. The first is,—it is implied that *there is a fault in man's memory*. It is equally clear, in the second place, that *we ought to endeavour to assist memory*. Thirdly, it is certain, too, from the appointment of recorders, that *there is a good deal worth remembering*. And, fourthly, from the connection of these recorders with the singers we see that, *to right-minded persons memory will always produce praise*: when we have recorded the great mercies of the Lord, then we shall be sure to thank and praise him.

I. First of all, we may gather, I think, without any straining of the text, that if recorders were appointed, **THERE IS SOME FAULT IN OUR MEMORY TOWARDS THE LORD.**

What faults there are in our memory touching the work and word of God! Perhaps some of you have very powerful memories, and may be able to treasure up whole volumes as some have done. It might be said of you as it was of Dr. Lawson, that if the whole Bible had been destroyed, he could have reproduced it from memory. This is a great gift and a worthy use for it, but I fear that few of us have it. It is not likely that men could say of us as of the famous Grecian, that out of ten thousand soldiers he knew every one of his men by name. I do not find fault with short memories, but with good memories which are treacherous towards divine things. What I complain of is that

memory may be very strong concerning self-interest, grievances, and trials, and yet towards God's mercies it may be very weak. I am not going to speak about memory in general, I speak only of that faculty as it is exercised towards the favours and lovingkindnesses of the Lord—and I am sure there is a fault in it, for, first of all, *it has been prejudiced by the fall*. Do you not know that if anything bad ever reaches your ear you cannot forget it. That lewd song which you heard in your youth—in your unregenerate times; you would give everything to forget it, but it will come up—a snatch of it has perhaps been suggested by a hymn tune sung in worship, or even by the language used in prayer. What a grasp memory has for things that never ought to have crossed the mind at all, and which, though they have crossed the mind, ought to be forgotten. Well said an old divine, “Man's memory is a pond in which all the fish die and all the frogs live.” I am sure it is so. The bad remains and the good—ah, how you have to charge and constrain yourself to recollect a tithe of it. The filth of Sodom is drawn to shore by memory, but the fair products of Jerusalem are permitted to glide down the stream to the ocean of oblivion. The fall has given a sad bias to memory; like a strainer it lets the good liquor run through and only retains the dregs.

Again, memory towards God's mercy has been *very much impaired by neglect*. Any one part of the body left unused will lose power, and any faculty of the mind which is never exercised will gradually become weak. Now you may have very powerful memories, as I said before, towards earthly things, but I will venture to say that some of you have never sought to remember the mercies of the Lord. Nay, you have not seen them to be God's mercies. It has never occurred to you to try and recollect what God has done for you. I would not bring a harsh impeachment, but I suggest the question,—Have you not lived as if there were no God? as if the mercies of every day were indeed of your own procuring? as if you had no indebtedness to God, and were under no obligation to be grateful to him? I do not wonder that your memory towards divine things is weak, for you have never exercised it—never thought of exercising it; and consequently, my friend, if ever you are to learn to praise the Lord you will have need of great helps in the work, for your memory will not furnish you with materials. It has no store of good things with which to feed your devotion, you have kept its chambers empty by neglect.

Memory, touching God's mercy, too, is often *overloaded with other things*. Memory can only carry a certain amount, but, oh, what waggon-loads of mischief memory is freighted with! Some of us can remember so little that it is a pity for us to try to recollect anything trifling or of minor importance. It might be well to dedicate that faculty to the weightiest things only: to things imperative for this life, to things essential for the life to come. How foolishly some will stuff up their memory with rubbish that is not worth harbouring. There are songs and pieces of “poetry,” so called, and scraps taken from novels, and I know not what besides, with which poor memory is gorged, till it is blown out as a balloon with foul gas. It is fed upon mere husks till it is surfeited, stuffed, and crammed, and labours under an indigestion. I think Aristotle used to call memory the

stomach of the soul, in which it retains and digests what it gathers ; but men cram it full of everything that it does not want—upon which the soul cannot really feed, and thus they ruin it for remembering the best things. Some people can hardly carry home the text of the discourse. Is it likely they would ? Other thoughts choke up the memory and put the good thing, the gracious thing, the grateful thing, the right thing, entirely out of the mind. Unload thy memory to-night, man, if thou canst, even of thy necessary cares. It is good when a sermon helps to unload you. You recollect the man who said that when he went to church generally he used to calculate how many looms the building would hold, and how many workmen might be employed in it ; but, said he, “ When I heard Mr. Whitefield I forgot that there was a loom in the whole world.” I wish it was always so in God’s house. But there, the good woman recollects her household, she does not know whether she put the guard on the fire ; she wonders what may have become of the baby while she is away. Another misses a ring from her finger ; did she leave it in the basin when she washed her hands before she came away ? The merchant is worrying about that bill which is coming due to-morrow : he wishes that he could forget it, but the business will come in. And this is why you cannot remember God’s mercy, because your memory is occupying itself with a host of earthly things which ought not to intrude into God’s day and into God’s worship ; or if they do should be treated as Abraham treated the carnivorous birds when they came down upon his sacrifice. The ravens and the kites came to defile and eat what he had offered unto God, but we read that “ when the birds came down upon the sacrifice Abraham drove them away.” So must you try to do. When the time has come to remember God’s mercies and to worship him, you must keep the birds away, or else they will devour the ripe fruit of your praise before you can gather it.

Memory has also suffered from another cause, namely, from *its connection with the other faculties*. Every power of the mind has been injured by sin. The evil results of the fall went through the entire system, and weakened and perverted our entire nature, so that the whole head is sick. *The understanding* among the rest, a very noble power, has been very much darkened, and, as every single part of a man operates upon the rest, the darkening of the understanding has caused a grievous weakening of the memory with regard to divine things. You will see this in a minute, for what a man does not understand he does not readily remember. Many forget God’s mercies because they do not appreciate them when they have them. They do not see the mercy of them ; they have not the power to see how much love there is in them, and how little they deserve them, and therefore they are not impressed by them so as to make a note of their being received. When daily favours come such men take them into stock as wholesale dealers receive parcels of goods, and send them out again without so much as opening them, or taking their quantity. They scarcely know the meaning of the lovingkindness of the Lord, for he is not in all their thoughts. Of course, a man does not remember what he does not understand. If you set a boy to learn a passage without any meaning in it, he may be able to repeat it to you the next time he

says his lesson, but before long it must glide out of his memory, because he does not understand it. Becloud the light of the understanding, and the image formed upon the memory will be dull and indistinct, and very apt to vanish away.

Again, *the affections* have been perverted, as well as the understanding. Man, by nature, does not love God. I tremble when I think of that sad truth, for it seems to me the most awful thing that can happen to an intelligent being not to love God. That would be my hell. I count it the hell of hell not to love God: to be in such a condition that the infinitely lovable one, so perfect, both in his character and his actions, so divinely fitted to be adored, should not be loved is horrible. It is death, and worse than death. I will not say it is blindness, deafness, and the loss of every honourable moral power: it is utter death not to love God. It is partly because we do not love him that we forget his mercies. Reflect a moment, and you will soon see. Here is a present which has been given you by an entire stranger, and though it may be of some value, you do not think much of it; but there is a ring that was given you by your mother—your mother now among the angels. Ah, you will not forget that gift, love has registered it among your richest possessions. I have many things that have been given to me by divers friends, and I value them all: I never forget them, I never can because of my esteem and affection for those who gave them to me. And so when you view divine mercy as given you by your dear and ever blessed Father in heaven, then you do not forget it; but if it is merely regarded as a passing stranger's gift, you care not for it. If you think of a blessing as "the gift of fortune," as the world generally does, or look upon it as a windfall from the tree of luck, you will not remember it. See in the bread you eat a Father's hand supplying you; see even in the cup of cold water the bounty of your God; see in the comforts of home and health, and the sparing of your reason, the goodness of him who loves you and whom you love; and memory will put forth her strength. Want of love breeds want of recollection in us, and so the memory grows faulty.

And, alas, one thing more. Our memory of God's goodness is often *crushed down by a sense of present pain*. When you suffer from sharp pains and weary aches and a fevered brow, you are prone to forget the days of health and strength, and only recollect the sharp intervals of weakness and sorrow. When you stand over the grave of one you love, you are apt in the loss to forget the loan. When a dear one is taken away, the right way to look at it is, that a precious loan has been called in by its owner. We ought to be very grateful to have been allowed to borrow the comfort so long, and ought not to repine when the owner takes back what he so kindly lent. The husband to whom you have been married these ten years, or the child that has nestled in your bosom two years, or the friend that communed with you half a lifetime, or the brother who was such a comfort all his days—when these are gone, do not look at the going only, but thank God that you ever had them. Be honest enough to acknowledge the good as well as to lament the evil. Bless a taking as well as a giving God, for he takes but what he gave. It is not so with us as a rule. We are living in the present too much; we strike a mark of oblivion across the happy

past, we look with dread upon the unknown future, and dwell on the troublous present, and so we forget the Lord's mercy to us. You are getting old now and you are feeble, but bless the Lord you had fifty years of manly vigour. You cannot now do what you once did, and your mind is enfeebled, but bless God there was a time when you could serve him with body and soul without fatigue. Perhaps you are brought low in estate and are afraid of poverty; be grateful that you have had enough and to spare for many long years. Perhaps you are now a little sad. Ay, but recollect the days when you used to praise the Lord on the high-sounding cymbals, and stood upon the high places of the earth. Do not let memory fail you because of the present crushing sorrow, but bless the name of the Lord for what he has done. May the Holy Spirit help your infirmities, and bring the lovingkindness of past years to your remembrance.

Memory is defective—this is our first inference, and I think it is clear enough.

II. Now, secondly, as David appointed recorders, this proves, in the second place, that WE OUGHT TO DO ALL THAT WE CAN TO ASSIST OUR MEMORIES TOWARDS GOD. We should not allow the mercies of the Lord to lie forgotten in unthankfulness and without praises die, if we can help it. How can we strengthen memory?

I conceive that sometimes it is a good thing to *make an actual record* of God's mercy—literally to write it down in your pocket-book, so as to look at it another day. I am sure it is a proper thing to do, and often it will prove to be a very useful memento. I do not believe in keeping diaries and putting down every day what you feel, or what you think you feel but never did feel. I fear it would become a mere formality, or an exercise of imagination to most of us; for when I read very pious people's diaries they always seem to me to have had an eye to the people who would read them, and to have put down both more and less than the truth; I am a little frightened at the artificial style of experience which it must lead to. The fact is that we have not a great deal to put down every day if we lead an ordinary life; but there are days which ought to have a memorial. Days of sore trouble and of great deliverance, days of sharp temptation and of wonderful help: these must needs be chronicled. Some days of brilliant mercy are like seven days in one. There are days which seem like chips of heaven, fragments of eternity, stray days of delight which have broken loose from the days of heaven and wandered down to earth. Make a note of the favoured day. Put the event down in black and white just as it occurred. Never mind if nobody else ever reads it: *you* will read it one of these days; and thank God that it stands recorded for the strengthening of your faith. Therefore make a record. "I cannot express myself well in writing," says one. Well, you know, Jacob used to set up a stone and pour oil on the top of it; this was his way, though he knew little or nothing about pen and ink. You can invent some way surely by which you can remember choice favours. You can make a notch somewhere, a mark on an old tree, a line on the margin of the Bible over against the text that blessed you. You can put a scratch somewhere of which you shall say afterwards, "I know what that means. I did not want to forget the divine goodness, and there

is the record. Glory be to God, it comes fresh to my soul again as I look upon it."

Another help to memory is to *be sure to praise God thoroughly at the time you receive his goodness*. You will not forget it if, when it has come, your mind is in a suitable condition of gratitude; and, indeed, if you use the mercy at once to God's glory you will do better still. Days that are full of thanksgiving will be remembered, and those mercies around which we burned the incense of praise will leave their fragrance in the heart's secret chambers. Take care that if your memory is weak, you praise God while the mercy is newly born in your house.

Frequently it will help memory much to *set apart a little time for meditation*. A godly man and his wife were accustomed to take half-an-hour on Saturday evening to go over the mercies of the week: this is a good example. But, says one, "I could not spare so much time." No, no, I do not suppose you could, but you spare hours to grumble over the miseries of the week. Oh, yes, we talk freely when we get together about our pains and our losses, and about the bad times. They are very bad now, are they not? And you have all talked about them seven days a week for many a long week together. You have said fifty times, "I never saw such a season, there is no business, there is nothing stirring; there never was such stagnation." Now, as we all know all about that, and are pretty well agreed that it is true, could we not now go on to something else, and could not the time which we waste in telling out our troubles be spent in meditating on our mercies? Try if you cannot spare half-an-hour with your wife for such an exercise as I have mentioned, and I believe that you would never spend half an hour more happily and profitably. Say, "Come, wife, and help me; help my memory, and I will help yours. Let us remember what God has done for us this week": then go over your own story, and listen to her pleasant annotations. I do not hesitate to say that my life-story is as full of mercy as a honeycomb is full of sweetness when it drips with honey. How God has treated you I do not know, but he has indulged me with such love that if he will only let me get into a corner in heaven and praise him to all eternity, I will scarcely ask him for anything else but the opportunity to adore him: I mean to bless him whatever comes to me: I cannot help it. I have been so favoured of providence and grace that, if I were crushed in a mortar, I think every little bit and fragment of me would bless and praise his holy name, "for he is good, and his mercy endureth for ever." This is my advice, and I have not given it you without having tried it myself—often meditate on what the Lord has done, and that will help your memory.

Then, again, *often rehearse his mercy in the ears of others*. I like to get with dear brethren who talk about God's lovingkindness, they are good company. I have noticed the difference between two farmers for instance. One of them never did have a good crop, though, to my knowledge, he had a "middling" one once, and that was at the time that he could hardly gather it, for it was too heavy for the reapers. But then it was a "middling" one. He has never made any money; I know he was a poor man when he began, and I know he has brought up a large family, and is rich now, but he never made any money—

never. Nobody ever does by farming, or by any other business, as you all know by common report. Well, I heard the grumbler's story, and I turned to another friend. This farmer says, "Well, it may not have been a very good year for wheat last year, but then there is a capital crop coming on to make up for it." Another year he said, "Well, I do not think the grain will pay, but the sheep are turning out uncommonly well." He has always something to say by way of honouring God's mercy. And is not that as it ought to be? He says, "Blessed be God, I have always had bread to eat and raiment to put on; I am a deal better off now than I thought I should be, and I have my portion to give to the work of the Lord, who has dealt so well with me." That is the way to talk, for it is truthful and it praises God, and it is the talk that God should hear from us. If you tell others your mercies you will not be so likely to forget them.

Sometimes it will help you to remember your mercies *if you use everything about you as a memento*. How can that be? Have you got a boy? Look at him and think of what mercy is bound up in that child: remember when he was little and sickly, and you prayed that he might live; when he met with an accident, and yet he was not killed, as he might have been; when he went out into life, and God kept him out of temptation; when you saw the first sign of piety; when you heard his first prayer; when you found that he was trying to be useful; when you heard his first address as he tried to speak to others about the Lord Jesus. I know the joy of such mercy, and I cannot hold my tongue when I think of it, for I am highly favoured; and I hope that you either have had the same blessing on your growing lads or will have it. Well, the boy will be a memento of God's mercy. Look at anybody's child and say, "I, also, was a child once," and then think of the mercies of God to you from childhood to the present time. Go into the street and meet a beggar. Should not that make you thank God that you are not forced to beg your bread, and wear rags, but are provided for? Turn down by Bethlehem hospital, and as you pass that institution thank God that you have not lost your reason. Look at the Blind School, and thank God that you have not lost your eyesight. Pass by the hospital, and thank God that you are not stretched upon a bed of agony, having lost a limb. Go into a churchyard, and thank God that you are yet alive. Reflect upon the judgment to come, and thank God that you are not in hell. Oh, my dear friends, everything ought to make us praise God, from the little birds that wake the morning to the twinkling stars that glad the night. Every breath of air, and drop of rain, and gleam of sunlight ought to refresh our memory and arouse us to praise the Lord.

That is the second point: we ought to do our best to assist our feeble memories.

III. Thirdly—and here I shall ask you to preach to yourselves—**WE HAVE ALL HAD MERCIES TO REMEMBER.**

I am going to include everybody in these remarks first, whether they are converted people or not.

We have all had *common mercies*. I have already hinted at them in speaking of those who are suffering from their loss. From our childhood until now we have had bread to eat and raiment to put on. Some

of us have enjoyed an abundance of common mercies ; we have not had to live from hand to mouth, nor labour like slaves. Others who have had a harder lot should thank God that there has always been deliverance in the hour of need, bread has been given, and water has been sure. They have not always had what they might have liked, but there has been enough to keep them alive ; and here they are in good health to prove it. Oh, to have your reason ; to have the use of your limbs ; to have your children about you ! Even though you be poor, these are great blessings. Even these ordinary mercies should awaken your gratitude.

Then, in addition to common mercies, we have had those of *special providence*. Is there one person here who has not been at times favoured with remarkable interpositions of God's providence ? Flavel favoured to say, "Those who notice providences will not be long without providences to notice." I think it is so. I could remember scores. If I had time to write them I could mention dozens of remarkable providences which have occurred to myself, some of which would not be believed by anybody else, and therefore shall not be told, but they are true for all that. There are matters known only to the Master and his unworthy servant for which I praise his name in my heart of hearts. Have you not had some such secrets between you and God : remarkable things, special things which, if you could write them, men would not believe them ? Well, praise his name for the peculiar favours, but do not forget the more usual ones. Recollect what the Puritan said. He and his son had to ride some twenty miles each to meet each other, and when his son came in he said, "Father, I have had a most remarkable providence. My horse stumbled badly three times, and yet he did not fall." "I am grateful," said the old gentleman, "but I have had a remarkable providence, too, for my horse never stumbled all the way." We do not think of that. If there is a railway accident, and we just escape by the skin of our teeth, we say, "What a wonderful mercy !" Ought you not to be quite as grateful when you travel without an accident ? Should you not see as much the hand of God in your perfect safety as in your rescue from danger ? Remember the hourly providence of God which watches over you when you observe it not.

I should like to remind every unregenerate man here present of *the longsuffering mercy of God*. You have not loved him, but he has blessed you. You have sometimes spoken very sad things against his gospel, but he has not resented it. Possibly I speak to some who have even cursed his name, but he has not cursed *you*. You have defied him ; and oh ! it often seems to me to be a wonderful thing that a man should lift his hand to heaven and defy God, and that God remains quiet in pitying patience. Do you think that God—the infinite God—is going to be put into a passion by such a puny thing as you are ? No, he has appointed a day in which he will settle these matters with you by his son Jesus Christ who will judge the quick and the dead. He will not stir himself out of his sublime compassion for you. But what a wonderful thing it is that he does not ! Why there are thousands of men who, if we had done a hundred thousandth part as much evil towards them as we have done towards God,

would have fallen upon us with a word and a blow, or rather there would not have been any word, there would have been two blows ; and if it had been in their power to take our lives they would not have hesitated. Men could not have borne such provocation as sinners heap upon the Lord. You have provoked Jehovah to his face and thrust your finger into his eye. "Nay," say you, "how is that?" Why, when you mock religious people,—when you make jests and mirth about those who fear him you do this. Recollect that text, "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of my eye." That is an irritating thing enough, is it not? and yet you have touched the apple of Jehovah's eye ; and instead of smiting you into nothingness in return, or sending you down to hell, he has still had mercy upon you. Let us gratefully remember this almighty patience, and bless his name, whoever we may be.

"Lord, and am I yet alive,
Not in torment, not in hell?
Still doth thy good Spirit strive—
With the chief of sinners dwell?
Tell it unto sinners, tell,
I am, I am, out of hell."

Furthermore, we should all praise God, or at any rate the most of us here, that we have enjoyed *gospel privileges*. If you have not believed in Jesus, yet you have heard of him. If you have rejected his grace, yet the kingdom of God has come nigh unto you. The door has been set open if you have not entered ; and the call of the gospel has been given though you have not accepted it. You are still on praying ground and pleading terms with God. You are still where you are wooed by a Saviour's love. Do thank God for this ! Do thank God that you are not living in the dark ages, or in a far-off heathen land where the saving name is not known ; but you are where the brazen serpent is lifted high, and the message comes to you—"Look and live." "To you is the word of this salvation sent."

Dear brethren, though I have thus spoken to everybody in the place, there is a special class to whom I must address myself. You, my brethren in Christ,—you have, above all others, ten thousand times ten thousand reasons for remembering the past and blessing the name of the Lord. Look back to the hole of the pit whence you were digged. Remember him who digged you thence. Look to the blood that bought you. Look to the Holy Spirit who renewed you. Look at the pardon which absolved you ; look to the grace that changed you ; look to the love that saved you ; look to the wisdom that has guided you ; look to the power that has upheld you. The life of a Christian should be unbroken gratitude, for it is a life of unceasing mercy. While others should praise God as creatures we must praise him as new creatures. They can praise him because he made them ; we must praise him because he hath "begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Therefore, lift up your hearts and voices, beloved, and praise the Lord at the remembrance of his goodness.

IV. The last thing is to be this—that ALL OUR MEMORIES SHOULD TEND TO MAKE US PRAISE AND BLESS GOD. We can rest but a minute here.

Remember your mercies. Remember there is not one you have deserved. That bread which does not choke the sinner might justly do so, for he is an unworthy recipient of it. The earth which does not open to swallow you up must often wonder why it is not commissioned so to do, for you are so rebellious against God. We do not deserve the air we breathe, or the water we drink. Everything we have is sweetened with unspeakable mercy.

All the good that we enjoy comes from God. Recollect that! Alas, most men forget it. Rowland Hill used to say that worldlings were like the hogs under the oak, which eat the acorns, but never think of the oak from which they fell, nor lift up their heads to grunt out a thanksgiving. Yes, so it is. They munch the gift and murmur at the giver. Would God we did begin to remember that every good gift comes to us from the Divine hand, and that therefore the Lord is to be praised. We have received mercies at times, when, if we had not had them, the absence of them would have ended our lives, or would have involved us in misery worse than death. Do you not, some of you, remember now when you said in your soul, "O Lord, if thou dost but help me this time, I will praise thee as long as I live"? Yet, when you received the benefit you rendered no fit return. For the time you were grateful after a sort, but, as bread eaten is soon forgotten, so your remembrance of the mercy of God passed away. It ought not so to be.

I am now going to put a few questions to all present. First, *have you ever lived in gratitude?* Are you now living to God's praise? Are you now conscious of your obligations, and anxious to show that you feel them? If not—if not, I would like you to *feel how mean you are*. Does that offend you? I would like you to be offended with yourselves. What do you think of those who are ungrateful *to you* when you have been kind to them? Ah, you look upon them with indignation. Sometimes when I know that a man has been ungrateful to a friend of mine, very ungrateful, I cannot help looking upon him with contempt. If you have lived in this world for fifty years, and have never shown any gratitude to God in life, *feel mean*. Feel what a miserable wretch you are to be living wholly for yourself, while the God who has fed you and blessed you all your life long has not had the turn of a penny from you in the way of real praise and true gratitude. I say again, *feel mean*, and then go to Jesus' feet and tell him that you feel it, and cry, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." If you have never been a drunkard or a swearer, or unjust, think it bad enough to have been ungrateful. If you have lived without serving your God, think it sin enough to have made yourself as base as the dirt beneath your feet, and, at the thought of it, humble yourself before your gracious God.

Next if you are able to say "Through divine grace I have praised God, and I do desire to live entirely to his glory," yet, dear brother, *have you or I ever praised him enough? Have we ever praised him as we ought?* "Oh, no," say you, "and we never shall." And I agree with you: we never shall. The poet stretched words a little, but his meaning was right enough, when he said—

"But, oh, eternity's too short,
To utter all thy praise."

We must feel, we ought to feel, the happy burden of the Lord's praise to be too heavy for us. We confess that we cannot bless the Lord enough, either as to heartiness, frequency, or service. No human strength can praise God sufficiently, but still let us be doing something more for God than ever we have done. We sang just now, and we sang, I think, very fairly; but let us act as well as sing. Let us consecrate ourselves and our substance far more fully to God. What are you doing for God? What are you doing for my Lord Jesus? Have you a precious alabaster box at home which you would like to break, that you might pour the ointment on his head? Do it, and do it soon. Some are very choice about their alabaster boxes, and keep them under lock and key. They take their friends upstairs and show them their rare treasures. They ask them to visit their houses to see their alabaster boxes, and they even talk of what will be done with their choice things when their estate shall go through the Probate Court. That is what they are talking about, but as to actually pouring the costly perfume on the head of the Lord Jesus personally, in their own lifetime, it has not entered into their heads yet. God lead you to honour your Redeemer at once with the best you have. Give to God your best—your very best. Give God yourself: your all. He is worthy of it. And, oh, count it a high honour if he accepts it at your hands through Jesus Christ your Saviour.

Lastly, if anybody here says, "I would like to begin to remember the Lord's mercies, and to praise his name," then you must begin at the cross. The centre of everything that is good is the cross of Christ. No man begins a life of praise, or a life of prayer, or a life of holiness aright unless he begins within sight of the crucified Saviour, led there by the Holy Spirit. Go there with your ingratitude like a burden on your heart, and look to the flowing of the Redeemer's precious blood, and the load of ingratitude will roll into his sepulchre and will never be laid to your charge. And then when you get rid of the guilt you can begin—yea, you will begin—henceforward to praise him and magnify his name. God give you a memory capable of treasuring up his favours. May he enrich you with the benedictions of his covenant that you may have much to treasure up; and may the whole of the sweet canes and precious spices which memory has laid up be used as fuel for the flame of thanksgiving in life, and in death, and through eternity.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 Chron., xvi. 1-36.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—130, 229, 720, and the
DOXOLOGY.