

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

HEAVEN BELOW.

A Sermon

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“They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters.”—Revelations vii. 16, 17.

LET us think of this felicity, that we may be comforted in the prospect of it. All this is already enjoyed by tens of thousands of the redeemed. Some of those who were very dear to us on earth, whose faith we desire to follow, are now for ever with the Lord, and this is their joyful portion—“They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.” Our comfort lies in the sweet reflection that we are journeying to this goodly land. This divine inheritance is ours: we have the seal of the Holy Spirit upon our title-deeds; we have tasted of the grapes of its Eshcol; we already rejoice in the light and warmth of its celestial city to which we draw near. In a little time we shall be actually within the gate of pearl, and shall know in an instant infinitely more of its glory than an apostle could teach us here below. We are like to one who hath in his hand the guide-book of a country to which he is journeying; he finds in it fair pictures of the scenery of the land and the architecture of the cities, and as he reads each page he says to himself, “I am going there! This is what I shall soon behold!” It would be a wretched thing to have such a book in one’s hand and to be entering upon a life-long banishment from home and the home-country. Then should we have to say, “This was my country once, but I shall never see it again. Fair are its skies and lovely are its vales, but mine eye shall ache in vain to gaze upon them. I am exiled for ever from my own dear land!” It is not so with us who are believers in Christ: our faces are towards Immanuel’s land, the land which floweth with milk and honey, and we have a portion among the blessed; a mansion is being made ready for each one of us, and we have this promise: “Go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.” Rejoice, then, beloved, for if your portion on earth be slender, if your condition here be sorrowful, if your trials multiply, if your strength declines, yet it is but a

little while and he that will come shall come, and shall not tarry. Well doth our hymn tell us that—

“An hour with our Lord will make up for it all.”

We shall forget the pains of a long life in one half-hour of the vision of the Well-beloved. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words. Look before you. It is brightness beyond though it be darkness here. Anticipate your sure reward, it cometh with all speed. I speak but sober truth; it seems but a day's journey from this spot to the heavenly highlands. It is so little a while since I was a boy, and yet in less space I shall be with God. It seems but a few days to you who are aged people since you climbed your mother's knee, and yet in far less time you will behold the face of your soul's Bridegroom. Then all trouble will be ended, and eternal joy will crown your head.

But I want you to do this morning, and by God's grace I think we shall accomplish it, a little more than receive comfort. I long that we may “sit together in the heavenlies” even now. It seems to me that this world, if Christians lived as they should do, would become a nether heaven. The true Christian life, when we live near to God, is the rough draft of the life of full communion above. We have seen the artist make with his pencil, or with his charcoal, a bare outline of his picture. It is nothing more, but still one could guess what the finished picture will be from the sketch before you. One acquainted with the artist could see upon the canvas all the splendour of colour peeping through the dark lines of the pencil. Now, I want you to-day to see “the patterns of things in the heavens.” We have much of heaven here; at any rate, we have the Lamb who is the glory of the eternal city; we have the presence of him that sits upon the throne among us even now; we have if not the perfect holiness of heaven, yet a justification quite as complete as that of the glorified; we have the “white robes,” for “the blood of the Lamb” has washed them even now; and if we have not yet the palm branches of final victory, yet, thanks be to God, we are led in triumph in every place, and even now “this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” Therefore—

“I would begin the music here,
And so my soul should rise;
Oh, for some heavenly notes to bear
My passions to the skies.”

Our voices are not clear as yet, they are half-choked with the fogs and smoke of earth. They will be perfectly attuned ere long; at any rate, let us go over the notes, and if we cannot reach to the full melody of the heavenly music, yet let us run up and down the scale, and try some easy passages. Come, let us worship, and adore, and rejoice as our departed ones are doing, and thus enjoy some of “the days of heaven upon the earth.” That shall be my drift this morning, as the Holy Spirit shall instruct me.

I. Keeping to the text, however, I want to speak, first, of THE PERFECTION OF THE PROVISION which is enjoyed in heaven—“They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.” This is the perfection of the provision.

I must, by your permission, go a little further back to make my

description of this provision more complete. Notice the last sentence of the fifteenth verse: "He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." In the reading we interpreted according to the Revised Version, which gives a more correct rendering: "He that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them." The glorified dwell under the shadow of God. It is for this reason that "the sun shall not light on them, nor any heat," because *they dwell in God*. Oh, what a dwelling-place that will be! You and I are often like Noah's dove, sent out flying over a weary waste, and finding no rest to the sole of our foot; but they dwell in the ark for ever. We go in and out and find pasture, but in that going in and out we are sometimes troubled; up yonder they "go no more out for ever," but eternally behold the face of the King, and for ever dwell at God's right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore. Oh what a joy this must be in heaven, to be always within the circle of the eternal presence, which is always seen, always unclouded, always enjoyed! Such a dwelling means transformation, for none can dwell with God but those who are like him, free from sin, and perfect in holiness. We cannot abide in God for ever unless we are like him, and this in itself is boundless bliss. The abiding in the outspread pavilion of Jehovah will certify a similarity of sanctity and purity between the redeemed and the great Father who becomes their dwelling-place. The Lord shall tabernacle over his glorified people: he shall be their eternal home.

Next we are assured that they shall have *all their necessities prevented*. "They shall hunger no more." To be supplied when we hunger is the mercy of earth: never to hunger at all is the plenitude of heaven. God shall so fill the souls of his redeemed that they shall have no longings: their longings shall be prevented by their constant satisfaction. That which they enjoy will be more than they ever desired to enjoy, or ever imagined that they could be capable of enjoying. Imagination's utmost height never reached to the exceeding bliss and glory of the world to come. The saints confess in the glory that it never entered into their hearts to guess what God had prepared for them that love him. Heaven shall exceed all the desires of God's people; they shall not, even with their enlarged capacities, be able to wish for anything which they do not already possess; so that they shall hunger no more, in the sense that they shall never pant for more than they have.

They shall have done with the desires which it is right for them to have here—desires which intimate their present imperfection. Here it is their duty and their privilege to long after perfection, to be sighing and crying for a perfect deliverance from every shade of sin; but they shall not sigh and cry for this in glory, for they shall be without fault before the throne of God. None of them shall cry, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" This on earth is one of the most deeply spiritual of cries, never heard from any but those whose sanctification is greatly advanced. None will ever utter that bitter exclamation but men like Paul, to whom the slightest speck of sin has a horror about it akin to death itself. Fanatical persons talk about being perfect; it is the talk of blind men: but those whose eyes have seen the Lord abhor themselves, and sigh and cry over what other men call failures, and mistakes, and infirmities. To them

their heart sins and unseen faults are things to weep over; they have sharp hungerings and piercing thirsts after complete likeness to Christ. This likeness the saints possess before the throne; and they shall not thirst any more, even after this best and most desirable of attainments, since they shall enjoy it to the full.

Beloved, observe that, as they have no kind of hunger, so they have also no measure of thirst; that is to say, they have no needs, no unsatisfied wishes of any sort. In whatever form a need might approach them, it is excluded, for both hunger and thirst are shut out. Oh, brothers, it has been blessed to hunger and thirst after righteousness, what must that higher blessedness be which rises above even these holy desires!

We have wishes here which ought not to be gratified; these occasion us our sharpest pangs of hunger; but there they shall never know an unlawful wish, a wandering desire, or even an unwise longing. They shall have all things that a renewed heart can enjoy. All that their perfected nature can yearn after they shall possess; there shall be no unsatisfied craving of their manhood, neither their risen body nor their sanctified spirit shall be moved to hunger or thirst after any evil, for there shall be nothing about them which has a tendency that way. The provision made for them shall be so absolutely complete that before they can desire any good thing they shall find it; before they know a need they shall have enjoyed the supply. This is wonderful! Yes, but all I can tell you is not the half of the truth.

Further, as we read we discover a third blessing, namely, that *every overpowering influence is attempered*;—"Neither shall the sun light on them." What if by that "sun" is meant the full glory of God! If you and I could be introduced into the divine presence at once and as we are, the first result upon us must be a swoon, and the second must be death. We are not able to endure the blaze of Deity as yet; its glory would cause a sunstroke to the soul. We might well cry with good Mr. Walsh, "Hold, Lord! Hold! Remember I am but an earthen vessel, and I cannot as yet hold much of thee." We are not prepared to endure the Lord as our Sun, in meridian splendour. In heaven they are able to endure the immediate presence of God, not only because of the Mediatorship of Christ, through whom the glory of God shines with tempered splendour upon the saints, but also because they themselves are strengthened. From all this earthly grossness quit, they are enabled to stand in that light to which no mortal man can now approach. To us even "our God is a consuming fire" while we are here; but in the saints there remaineth nothing to consume. The light of God is not too bright for eyes that Christ hath touched with heaven's own eye-salve. The vision of the Infinite is not too glorious for those whom the Lord has prepared to be with him and to see his face. What John of Patmos could not bear, the weakest saint in heaven can endure, not for an hour, but for the whole stretch of eternity. Blessed, indeed, are they who shall behold the King in the ivory palaces above!

When it is added, "Nor any heat," we learn that *injurious influences shall cease to operate*. By our surroundings here we are troubled with many heats. The very comforts of life, like warm weather, tend to dry us up. A man may have gold, a man may have health, a man may have

prosperity and honour till he is withered like the heath in the desert in the day of drought. Unless a dew from the Lord shall rest upon the branch of the prosperous he will be parched indeed. We have need of grace whenever God gives us blessings of a temporal kind. But no heat of that sort shall happen to saints in heaven : they can be rich, and honoured, and perfectly beautiful, and yet under no temptation to self-exaltation. Here the heats which are around us tend to fever us. Our fellow-men grow hot about this and that—the pursuit of wealth, the triumph of party politics, the honour of a family, and so forth ; and we are all too apt to feel the common ague. Within ourselves, heats arise : unhealthy and unholy heats. We cannot go through this plague-smitten world altogether unscathed : every now and then we return to our quiet chamber, and feel that we have sickened, sickened in the company wherein we have tarried for an hour, sickened even in contact with those whom we sought to bless. Up yonder no fever shall burn the hearts of the glorified. Travelling through the wilderness of this world, on a sudden the hot sirocco of worldliness sweeps over us, laden with the burning dust of the desert, bearing death beneath its wings ; God only can keep us in that evil hour ; only as we lie on our faces before him can we hope to outlive the blast. Many are the temptations of this life : some of them soft and deceptive, others fierce and terrible ; but up yonder no sirocco shall ever blow, and the inhabitant shall no more say, “I am sick.”

See, then, the perfect provision which is made by Christ for his saints above, and listen while we try to show that this same provision, in a modified way, lies to our hand even now. Come, beloved, do we not dwell in God ? Do we not sing, “Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations” ? If any of you believers have wandered away from your resting-place, whose fault is that ? Has not the Lord given you yourself to be your perpetual pavilion ? Has not Jesus said, “Abide in me” ? Have you not sung in that sweet twenty-third Psalm, “I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever” ? What more do you want ? The Lord hath spread his tabernacle over you ; you abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

Whenever you dwell in God and the Lamb feeds you, do you not also realize that next expression, “they shall hunger no more” ? Can you not sing when Christ is with you and you dwell in God—

“I thirst, but not as once I did,
The vain delights of earth to share ;
Thy wounds, Immanuel, all forbid
That I should seek my pleasures there.

“It was the sight of thy dear cross
First wean'd my soul from earthly things :
And taught me to esteem as dross
The mirth of fools and pomp of kings.”

A child of God in communion with Christ would not lift his finger to possess a world, nor wink his eye to see all the pomp of kings, nor move a step to enjoy all the honours of rank, nor rise from sitting at Jesus' feet to learn all the wisdom of philosophy. He is already filled ; what can he have more ? The best of the best has fallen to his portion, and shall he change it ? No ; like the olive tree, he saith, “Should I leave

my fatness, and go to be promoted over the trees?" and with the fig, he cries, "Should I forsake my sweetness, and go to be promoted over the trees?" He that eateth of the bread which Jesus gives him shall never hunger more after a painful sort. The husks of carnal joy have no attractions to the son who banquets at his father's table.

"Neither shall they thirst any more;" they shall feel that the Lord Jesus is such an all-satisfying, all-sufficient portion that their desires can go no further. I have sped across the sea with flying sails, bidding each gale waft me according to its will, hoping that I might somewhere find a port. Restlessly have I hastened to and fro, and been tossed up and down, the sport of every wave. My spirit has sped on and on through fair and foul, never abiding long in one stay. Happily there came a day when I found a fair haven. Down went my anchor; it took fast hold and held my barque. Under the lee of Calvary I found rest. Now blow ye winds, or cease to blow as shall best please you. I stir not out to sea again. In the fair haven of the love of God in Christ Jesus shall my spirit abide for ever. If we could but reach this resolve, dear brethren, and hold to it, we should have no more anxieties and longings; we also should hunger no more, neither thirst any more.

And then how blessedly true it is to those who dwell in God and live near to Jesus that now the sun doth not light on them. God in his infinite majesty and holiness does not overwhelm us.

"Till God in human flesh I see,
My thoughts no comfort find;
The holy, just, and sacred Three
Are terrors to my mind.

"But if Immanuel's face appear,
My hope, my joy begins;
His love forbids my slavish fear,
His grace removes my sins."

What a blessing it is to see God in Christ, and to rejoice in him.

And, now, beloved, if you are being daily fed by Jesus and are dwelling in God, the light of the sun, as to temporal prosperity, will do you no harm. You may be rich, but you will not trust in uncertain riches; you may be famous, but you will be as humble as if you were obscure; you may be learned, but you will sit at Jesus' feet; you may be indulged with all kinds of worldly prosperity, and yet these things will not prove a snare unto you. "Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat."

Those who dwell in God are not now parched with inward heat. We notice people of God who are anxious and fretful, and cause a great deal of misery for people round about them by always worrying, fidgetting, and being in a state of nervous excitement. But holy souls, who abide in Christ, take everything calmly. You can remember such persons, both men and women;—whatever happened they remained unmoved, patient and cheerful. Great losses came in the course of business, but the brother did not lose his balance; sad bereavements came, but the sister did not repine. If the believer endured a sharp affliction, his chief concern was that the Lord would sanctify it to him: if people persecuted or slandered him he was not surprised, for he expected to be hated of the world when he became a follower of Jesus.

If he prospered, he did not get into a heat of pride, and begin to crow over everybody else like a cock on his dunghill. In patience he possessed his soul. God's good gift of the Holy Spirit comforted and strengthened him. He could say, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise." "Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat." How much of mischief comes to the human body through its heats! The doctor looks hopeful when our blood grows cool again and the fever ceases. The best cure for the fever of the soul is to be made to dwell under the shadow of the Almighty, and to be fed by the Lord Jesus Christ; for that sacred shadow, and that health-giving food, prevent the burning sickness from coming near the chosen of the Lord. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee." Safe, calm, happy, restful shalt thou be: thy soul shall dwell at ease, and with the meek thou shalt inherit the earth.

"Ah," says somebody, "you are setting us up an exceedingly high standard." I am setting up a standard to which multitudes of God's people have attained, to which I would have you all attain. If this blessed bribe of heaven below does not make you ambitious to rise to this level, what more shall I say? It is for your own profit and for God's glory that you should not rest content short of this. Rise from the dust, my brethren. Ascend into the hill of the Lord, and stand in his holy place. Abide in Christ, and feed upon Christ, and then all this shall be yours to-day and throughout life. So much for the provision of the provision.

II. Now will you give me your heart's attention while I touch a noble string, and that is, **THE DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER.** "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters." You see this is the reason for all the provision and enjoyment: the verse begins with the word "For," signifying that this is the cause of all the felicity of the blessed, that the Lamb doth feed and lead them.

Who is this that feeds them? It is *the Lamb*. I wish it were possible for me to communicate to you the enjoyment my own soul has had in meditating upon this blessed word "The Lamb," as it stands in this connection. Does it not teach us, first, that our comfort and life must come from *our incarnate Saviour*—the Lamb? The expression is very peculiar: it is a figure, and no figure; a mixed metaphor, and yet most plain and clear! It is written, "The Lamb shall shepherd them." This is an accurate interpretation. How is that? A shepherd, and that shepherd a Lamb! Here is the truth which the words contain,—he that saves is a man like ourselves. He that provides for his people is himself one of them,—“For which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.” A lamb is a member of the flock; but in this case the Lamb is the shepherd of the flock: a shepherd who is also a lamb must be the most tender shepherd conceivable, the most sympathetic and brotherly guardian that can be. When a man is shepherd to sheep

he should be compassionate, but he cannot be so tender as if he actually partook of their nature. In our case our shepherd is to the full a partaker of our nature: we are men, and our shepherd is a man.

Beloved, our soul's support, our spiritual meat, lies in this, that the Son of God is a partaker of flesh and blood, and is one of ourselves. He that sits upon the throne is our kinsman, a sharer in our nature, a brother born of adversity—why, surely this heavenly truth is manna from heaven, the food of saintly souls. The Lamb is their hope, their comfort, their honour, their delight, their glory.

Does it not mean more than that? "the Lamb" surely refers to *sacrifice*. Only run your eye back a verse or two, and you have the key of the expression, "they that washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." He, then, that feeds his people in heaven is the sacrifice, the atonement, the expiation. In heaven they glory in the cross. Each one sings "he loved me and gave himself for me." The glorified drink the deepest draughts of delight from the fact that God was made flesh, and that in human flesh he offered perfect expiation for human guilt. Brethren, these two fountains are here as well as there: come, let us drink of them; let us prevent our thirst by the water of the well of Bethlehem, and by streams from the smitten rock.

Still, there is a third meaning which must not be overlooked. "The Lamb" must refer to *the meekness of character*, the lowliness and condescension of the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus Christ on earth was "led as a lamb to the slaughter." He was "meek and lowly in heart." He walked up and down among men, the friend of sinners, the lover of little children, the companion of the poor, and to-day he is not otherwise than he was on the earth. Though heaven adores him, he is still as compassionate and condescending as he was in the days of his flesh, and this is why he can feed his people so well both here and in heaven.

I beg you to dwell upon that word "Lamb" till you feed upon it with your whole souls. Jesus has joined himself to his flock: "As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same." As surely as he is God he is also man, indeed and of a truth; not in semblance, but in reality.

"It is my sweetest comfort, Lord,
And will for ever be,
To muse upon the gracious truth
Of thy humanity.

"Oh, joy! there sitteth in our flesh,
Upon a throne of light,
One of a human mother born,
In perfect Godhead bright!

"For ever God, for ever man,
My Jesus shall endure;
And fix'd on him, my hope remains
Eternally secure."

He is also our sacrifice: "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." What rest came unto our hearts when we first understood the meaning of that word—"Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world"! Continue to behold him, and all your feverish heats will be abated, and your hunger and thirst of spirit will be gone.

Jesus is so meek and lowly, as I have said, that you may approach to him at all times, and he will manifest himself to you. He is tender and gentle, and never makes himself strange unto his own flesh. Sitting at his feet you shall find rest unto your soul. "Neither shall the sun light on you, nor any heat."

The character of our Lord, then, brings our spirit all that it needs; but yet this is not all: the text speaks of "*the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne*" as feeding them. Think of that, the Lamb in the midst of the throne. Can you put these two things together, a sacrifice and a throne? That same Saviour who opened his veins that he might cleanse us from sin now wears the imperial purple of the universe. He that stooped to be made sin for us is now supreme sovereign, King of kings and Lord of lords. Think of that and be comforted. Our Representative is glorified. Our covenant Head, our second Adam, is in the midst of the throne. God the Father hath exalted the Mediator to the place of power and honour and rule. Our Saviour hath all power in heaven and in earth. Sometimes when I think of my great King and Captain exalted to so glorious an estate, I feel that it matters nothing what becomes of me, his poor follower. The sun of persecution smites not when he is seen as God over all blessed for ever. Hunger is not hunger, and pain is not pain, for such a loved one. In blissful sympathy with the unutterable delights of Jesus, we are happy at our worst, feeling that if Christ be rich we are not poor, and if Christ be happy we are not disappointed. His victory is our victory. His glory is our glory. Feel this union with your enthroned Lord, and you will begin to be in heaven.

Yet further remember that when we read of "*the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne,*" it must mean that our Redeemer is the most conspicuous of persons. In the forefront of the throne is Jesus. He is seen of angels; he is beheld continually with wonder by all the servants of our God. The sovereignty of God, his royal power, his eternal majesty are at the back of Christ to sustain his cause and make his name illustrious. He must reign. Every eye must see him, every knee must bow to him, and every tongue must call him Lord, to the glory of God the Father. He shall have all enemies under his feet, and shall be extolled, and exalted, and be very high. My heart rejoices to remember this fact in this cloudy and dark day. Though our modern thinkers sneer at the gospel, and sceptics scoff at the doctrine of the Nazarene, and all manner of scorn is poured upon our holy faith, yet the Lord hath set his Son upon his holy hill, and he is there with him to secure his everlasting dominion, despite the assaults of men and devils.

In all this I see the choicest food for the flock of God. To them Jesus speaks from the throne, and uses to-day words like those which he spoke on earth. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Out of the glory he saith, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

The "*midst of the throne*" seems to signify also that Jesus has become the very centre of all things. "Unto him shall the gathering of the people be." He is lifted up, and all men are drawn to him. He is the great central sun, and all other lights revolve about him. He is the

heart of the eternal purpose, the hinge of history, and the climax of revelation. He reigns in the midst of heaven, even as at this day upon earth he is in the midst of two or three who are met together in his name. Our joy is like that of the just made perfect. In this delight we unite with the general assembly and church of the firstborn. Jesus on the throne is to our hearts and songs the central person, and the centre shall never be removed, neither shall the gathering of his people be scattered.

Thus you see who it is that feeds the saints in heaven, and I desire you to feel that if you are to be fed and comforted here below, it must be by the same great Shepherd of the sheep, in the same character. There are no stores for you other than those which are in the hands of Jesus, in whom all fulness dwells; there are no comforts for you except as they are given from the throne where the Lamb is reigning. Turn ye away, my brethren, turn ye away from all the frothy novelties of modern thought, and the vain inventions of man, and behold the crown of your adorable Lord, the Lamb of God's Passover, the Lamb who shall overcome all the powers of evil and stand in the midst of the throne. Dwell on the literal, historical incarnation of the Son of God; believe in his literal death, in his actual substitution, his complete and perfect atonement; dwell on his rising from the dead, and his ascent to the right hand of God, and never doubt it that he is now the supreme object of heaven's adoration, the Lord of all things that are or shall be, sure and certain to be in the latter days exalted above all principalities and powers, and every name that is named. If we can but live on these truths, and delight ourselves in them, we shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on us, nor any heat, but even here we shall find living fountains of water, and tears shall be wiped from our eyes.

III. I finish by giving a hint or two only upon the third point; that is to say, THE MANNER OF THIS PROVIDING. We have considered the provision in its perfection, and the Provider in his glorious character, now let us see how this provision is given to the saints, for in the same manner is it brought to us.

In two ways the saints in heaven enjoy it,—the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them. Go over this, and think first of *the feeding* of them. The Greek word is “shall shepherdize them.” In heaven Jesus is a shepherd ruling over all his flock with a happy, genial, sympathetic sovereignty, to which they yield prompt and glad obedience. There the Lord Jesus cares for his people immediately and personally. He himself bestows upon them all that they require. Here he has under-shepherds, and he hands out the food by our poor instrumentality; and, alas, sometimes we are found incapable, or forgetful, and the flock is not fed: but it is never so in heaven, for the Lamb himself maintains the pastorate, and acts the shepherd in a manner which none of us can emulate. What saith the prophet Micah? “And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth.”

All else of care and feeding that saints can require in glory is in Christ. I know not what it may be, but this I know, that while they worship him he cares for them. He is among them as the Chief

Shepherd, at whose appearing the under-shepherds shall appear with him in glory.

Up yonder Jesus still communes with them very closely, else were it not written, "The Lamb shall feed them." I remind you again of what we have said: he feeds them, therefore he is their Shepherd; yet still it is the Lamb that feeds them, therefore he is one with them; as if he fed with them, as if their food was his food, and his food their food, and they were one with him in all respects. But what must fellowship with Christ be in heaven! I do protest I have sometimes had, and many of you have had, such communion with Jesus here that, if I could but have continued to enjoy it, it would not have concerned me the turning of a penny whether I were here or among the angels, for it was bliss enough for me to be with Jesus. But, oh! when we shall have enlarged our capacities, when our understanding shall have been cleared, and our affections purified, and all our manhood shall be made innocent and Christlike, what must it be then to behold his glory, to commune with himself, to lean our head upon his bosom, to bask in his love, and to feel our hearts on fire with love in return! Oh to be with him for ever, to see no intervening cloud, to feel no wandering wish, no thought of future declension, no possibility of grieving him by sin! What must it be to be for ever one with him in his glory! That is bliss above conception. He shepherdizes them, he himself does it, and therefore they are supremely blessed. Now do you not think we can enjoy some of this to-day? Do you question it? What does the tenth of John mean, if Jesus is not the good Shepherd of his sheep at this day? Read it through when you get home. What does the twenty-third Psalm mean? Is that a psalm for another world, or for this? Does it not say, "The Lord *is* my shepherd; I shall not want. He *maketh* me to lie down in green pastures: he *leadeth* me beside the still waters"? Why, one would think from the look of your doubtful face that it ran thus—"The Lord has forgotten to be my shepherd. He has given me over to the wolf. He has driven me into a wilderness, and left me among the dark mountains. I perish in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is." It is not so; we must not think it so, for even here our great Lord is our Shepherd, and he careth for each one of the flock.

Then it is added, "*He shall lead.*" That is another work of the Shepherd, to lead his flock,—“He leads them to living fountains of waters.” You may read it, “he shall guide them to fountains of waters of life”; it is but a variation of the same thought. Now, even in heaven the holy ones need guiding, and Jesus leads the way. While he is guiding, he points out to his people the secret founts and fresh springs which as yet they have not tasted. As eternity goes on, I have no doubt that the Saviour will be indicating fresh delights to his redeemed. “Come hither,” saith he to his flock, “here are yet more flowing streams.” He will lead them on and on, by the century, aye, by the chiliad, from glory unto glory, onward and upward in growing knowledge and enjoyment. Continually will he conduct his flock to deeper mysteries and higher glories. Never will the inexhaustible God who has given himself to be the portion of his people ever be fully known, so that there will eternally be sources of freshness and new delight, and the Shepherd

will continue to lead his flock to these living fountains of water. He will guide them,

“ ‘From glory unto glory’ that ever lies before,
 Still widening, adoring, rejoicing more and more,
 Still following where he leadeth, from shining field to field,
 Himself our goal of glory, Revealer and Revealed ! ”

He will also cause them to drink of the river of his pleasures, so that they shall be full of bliss. Can we not grasp a little of this to-day? If we will but follow Christ we may drink of the water which he freely gives to all who believe in him, even as he gave to the woman of Samaria. “I cannot see any joy,” cries one. No; but Jesus will lead you to it. “Oh, but I read my Bible this morning, and I did not get anything from it.” That may be; but if Jesus had been there and led you to the fountain, you would have been refreshed. How the texts open up when Jesus touches them! You are like Hagar; you have laid your child down among the shrubs to die; you are perishing of thirst, and yet if you would but listen you might hear the splash of the falling waters just behind you. You only need the Lord to speak and open your eyes and you will see rich supplies, for the living fountain is near at hand. Go you to the Saviour to-day, and say, “Lord, lead me to living fountains of water. I drank years ago, and I have been drinking all along, but Lord I want deeper draughts. I desire to know more and love more.” Jesus will lead you. He will do it *now*, and when he does so you will realise to the full how like this earth may be to heaven above. Let us commit ourselves like sheep to our great Shepherd. Come, ye wanderers, return to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls. You that have been in him these many years and fed in his pastures, come near to him and follow him yet more closely, and your eyes shall be opened to see new rivers of delight where all seemed dry. You shall find in the valley of Baca a well, and drinking of it you shall go from strength to strength, till every one of you in Zion appeareth before God. How long will it be, O ever-blessed One, till we behold thee? Even now the day breaketh!

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Revelation vii.

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