

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

DAVID'S HOLY WONDER AT THE LORD'S GREAT
GOODNESS.

A Sermon

DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 19TH, 1867, BY

C. H. SPURGEON,

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!"—
Psalm xxxi. 19.

You will observe in reading this Psalm, that David was in deep distress; these are the words of his lamentation: "My life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed. I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without fled from me. I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel." In this forlorn condition he found consolation by turning his contemplations away from his present trouble to the goodness of his God, even as a mariner turns the helm, and so escapes the rock. Herein he was wise, and instructed us to be wise also. To ruminate upon our sorrows is but to increase them; to turn them over, and over, and over again, is but to express from them the bitterest drops which they contain. The more the turbid pool is stirred, the blacker will it become. Relieve your thoughts, then! Trade in another market! Let your minds exchange the pressing dolour for sustaining consolation; and what can be better, what nobler as a theme for inspiring hope, what mightier as a lever for uplifting the mind, than reflection upon the amazing goodness of God?

It has been said by a great physician, that when persons find much difficulty in sleeping, they have sometimes been able to win the embrace of "tired nature's sweet restorer," by fixing their minds upon a single sublime subject, a grand absorbing topic, a master-theme for thought. As soon as the mind has been thoroughly absorbed in contemplation, it has been at rest, and the body has rested too. I know not how that may be, but certainly, when God would give "his beloved sleep" in times of distraction, and would lull their souls into a calm repose, there is no better sleeping-draught which his hand can administer to the troubled spirit than a meditation upon the amazing goodness of the Lord our God. Or, to change the metaphor, we know that when young lads first go to sea, if they have before been unaccustomed to
No. 773.

climb to elevated places, they are apt to grow dizzy when called to perform their duties on the mast; then the experienced captain instructs them to "*look up*," for, if they look down, and measure timidly the height of the mast, and count the waves as they roll against the sides of the vessel, and terrify their minds with thoughts upon the heaving of the ship, and the terrors of falling from their hold, they are most likely to fall; but, looking to the motionless stars, and the calm, blue sky, the brain grows calm, and the foot maintains its standing. We would say, then, to any who are tossed upon the sea of trouble to-night, imitate the example of David, and "*look up*." Turn away your minds from the slanderer and the persecutor; forget awhile the fever and the want, and remember the lovingkindness of Jehovah. You may find it almost impossible to keep your minds always tending upwards, but at any rate, while you are here, "*look up*" with eyes uplifted to the hills whence cometh your help. Happy will it be for you, if by the good Spirit of God you can but get the eye so fixed upon the goodness of God now, that you shall become so fascinated, that your attention cannot be taken off that glorious object; it will be a blessing to you, a great blessing which will bear you through all your trials, and make you suck honey from the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock.

Now, note the text carefully, David thought of the goodness of God till he was lost in wonder, and being quite unable to express his feelings, he uttered an exclamation, "Oh, how great is thy goodness!" We will consider, first, *the subject of holy wonder mentioned in the text*; secondly, *the partakers of this divine goodness*; then, thirdly, *we shall note some general matters which tend to enhance our admiration of the goodness of God*; and fourthly, *notice sundry teachings which flow from the whole subject*.

I. In the first place, observe in the text THE SUBJECT OF HOLY WONDER—"Thy goodness."

We here perceive God's goodness in a twofold aspect, as laid up in store and already displayed in a measure, "Oh, how great is thy goodness which thou hast *laid up*!" and secondly, "Oh, how great is thy goodness which thou hast *wrought* before the sons of men!"

1. We shall devoutly take the first of these. David is astonished at *the great goodness of God which is laid up*; the goodness of God which David had not as yet tasted, had not actually received, but which his faith realised, and looked upon as its fixed and settled heritage. The spirit of our text is that of Miss Waring's delightful hymn, in which she exclaims—

"And a 'new song' is in my mouth,
To long-loved music set;
Glory to thee for all the grace
I have not tasted yet."

We magnify the Lord for the grace which is yet to come; the laid up goodness; the corn that is in the granary, which the good Joseph is keeping till the time of famine comes; the water which is but just bubbling from the spring, and has not yet come streaming down to the plain, where our thirst will by-and-by require it. Now think, Christian, of what God has laid up for them that fear him! First, how much he laid up *in his eternal purpose*, when he chose his people, and

laid up for them the grand intention, "They shall be mine, saith the Lord, in the day when I make up my jewels." Think of electing love, and of all the consequences which well up from that eternal fountain head. Here you have a subject for a life-long wonder—

"Father, 'twas thy love that knew us
Earth's foundation long before :
That same love to Jesus drew us
By its sweet constraining power,
And will keep us
Safely now, and evermore.

God of love, our souls adore thee !
We would still thy grace proclaim,
Till we cast our crowns before thee,
And in glory praise thy name
Hallelujah !
Be to God and to the Lamb !

Oh, how great is thy goodness, which thine eternal purpose ordained and settled upon thy saints by an everlasting entail that it should be theirs, for so thou hadst decreed it, according to the counsel of thine own most wise and sovereign will. How great is thy goodness that thou shouldst choose us, and predestinate us to be conformed into the image of thy Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren, and we the happy brethren who should be transformed into his likeness !

How great is the goodness of God, *which he laid up in the covenant of grace* ! He determined to bless us in a way of covenant relationship, into which he entered on our behalf with our federal head, the Lord Jesus. To attempt, my dear brethren, to read to you the treasures which God has made over to us in the covenant of grace, were to attempt an impossibility. The catalogue is far too comprehensive. Behold, he has given all things to you in the covenant of his eternal love, for all things are yours, whether things present or things to come—life and death, time and eternity; nay, more, God himself is yours ! "I will be their God, and they shall be my people." The Father is *your* Father; the Son of God is *your* Brother; the Spirit of God is *your* Comforter, who abides with you for ever. In that golden casket of the covenant of grace, all the wealth of the Eternal is stored up for the chosen. David laid up in store for the temple, but Jesus has treasured up far more for his church; Jacob gave to Joseph one portion above his brethren, but our heavenly Father has given to all the family an inheritance surpassing all conception. Nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, can fully estimate the infinite wealth of blessedness laid up in the everlasting covenant.

Think, too, of what God has laid up *in the person of his Son*—the same treasure, only now more clearly revealed to us, and brought forth in the person of the well-beloved, so that we may the more readily partake of it. In the ark of old, there were laid up the golden pot of manna and sundry other marvellous things, but what is there laid up in the ark of our covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ? Beloved, there is laid up in him all things that are necessary for you. Pardon for all your sins; justification through faith in his sacrifice; life through his death; sanctifying power is in the blood of Jesus; your preservation

is in Christ's hands; your acceptance depends upon him; a daily intercession goes up from the heart of your Lord Jesus on your behalf, and he constantly represents you before the golden throne. All that you can want, for the whole journey from the place where you now are right up to the right hand of the Most High—all this is laid up for you. "Ye are complete in him." "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." If you fear him and trust him, though meanest of all his people, yet all needful grace and promised glory is laid up for you in the person, and work, and offices, and relationships of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And think, beloved, of what is laid up for you *in the work, and office, and mission of the Holy Spirit*. You have not yet realised what the Holy Spirit can do. You have been regenerated by him; you have been made to pass from death unto life; you have been taught somewhat of the truth—he has revealed some of the things of God unto you; you have been somewhat illuminated, somewhat strengthened, somewhat comforted, somewhat assisted in prayer, but none of you are aware of all that the Holy Spirit can do. When we see some men who have become eminent in grace, when we read their heavenly biographies, and observe how they walked with God, and seemed to live a life above the common lot of earth-born mortals, we should remember that they enjoyed no monopoly of grace; the bread on which they fed is common to all the household: whatever grace the best of men have had, you may have as much and more. When we measure the abundance of divine power in the Holy Spirit by what we see in eminent martyrs, confessors, apostles, and saints, we may cry with the psalmist, "Oh, how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee!" How happy, how blessed, how holy, might believers be if they would but come and receive out of the fulness of the Spirit's power. Do not imagine, my beloved friends, that the standard of your attainment is the maximum of a Christian. Do not consider that you have obtained all that God is willing to bestow. "Ye are not straitened in him, but ye are straitened in your own bowels." There are loftier degrees of sanctification, there is a more eminent nearness of communion than the most of us are aware of. The laid-up treasures in the Holy Spirit are probably vastly greater than any of us have ever been enabled to conceive.

I shall pause but a moment, to observe, that the greatest goodness of all, we sometimes think, but perhaps improperly, is *that goodness which is to be revealed when this life is over, which God has laid up for them that fear him*. I am not sure that this is the greatest, since eternal love itself, as a cause already given, is greater than the effect which is to follow. Courage, my brethren! The night lasts not for ever: the morning cometh. See you not the day star? Do you not see the hind of the morning leaping over the hills of darkness? The Lord Jesus Christ has said, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Now, whatever may be the splendours of the millennial reign, we shall share in them; and I confess that the word of God seems to me to reveal much of coming glory, but to reveal it in such a manner that it is not possible for any of us to cast it into a mould, and to say, with decisive certainty, "That is just what the prophecy means." The glory that

cometh is too excessive for us to point to details. It is a blaze that might well blind those who seek to look upon it, and count the flashing beams. But there is a glory coming, such as the world never saw, and a kingdom which will swallow up all other kingdoms as Aaron's rod swallowed up the rods of the pretenders. There is a glory to come that shall be brighter than the glory of the sun, though that sun should flash forth with the light of seven days. A glory cometh which excelleth and endureth, and in this believers shall all of them have their share. I am inclined to think that they do err from the truth, and pierce themselves through with many sorrows, who teach that some of God's people will be shut out from this glory. There is nothing which God will give to some of his people which he will not give to all his people. They shall all be with Christ where he is, that they may behold his glory. They shall all have a share, and I think an equal share too, in all the excellent things which God has laid up for them that fear him. Whatever those things may be, and surely the most glowing language fails to picture them, they are all too rich and rare for words, we can say of them, without fear, "Oh, how great is thy goodness!"

Then ponder well the glories of *the eternal state*. Think of

"Jerusalem the golden,
With milk and honey blest."

Let your faith bear you on its wings to the bejewelled city where

"They stand, those halls of Zion,
Conjubilant with song,
And bright with many an angel,
And all the martyr throng."

Those many mansions, the haven of rest, the shrine of holiness, the home of happiness, the summit of perfection, the abode of love, the royal palace, the throne of the great King. Long ye not to soar? Pant ye not for the better country? Do not heart and voice feel the sweet oppression of too much anticipated joy? Is it not a relief to cry, "Oh, how great is thy goodness, *which thou hast laid up* for them that fear thee?"

Let us, dear friends, before we leave this subject, *rejoice in what God has laid up*. It is a pity that we should rejoice in nothing but our own experience, for this will sadly narrow the sphere of our praise. Our experience may be very slender as yet, but we should rejoice in what is laid up. If I cannot rejoice in what I am, I will rejoice in what I shall be; remembering the precious thought, that "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." If I cannot rejoice in what I have in the hand of experience, yet will I glory in that which I can grasp with the hand of faith; for even now it is mine, though it is laid up till I reach my majority, and have come to years when I shall be fit to receive it.

2. Now we must note that it is not all laid up. It is not all light that is sown for the righteous. We have some wheat that has grown up and yielded sheaves. There are some treasures which we enjoy now, and therefore we find David saying, "Oh, how great is thy goodness, *which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!*" The last few words look in our translation as if they

belonged to the words, "Them that trust thee," but this is not the correct reading. There are certain reasons which render it necessary to read the sentence thus—"Which thou hast wrought before the sons of men for them that trust thee."

Now, God has wrought out many marvellous things for us before the sons of men. I will not stay long, for your thoughts are often there, upon *that which Christ wrought out before the sons of men in Gethsemane's sweat and blood, in Gabbatha's scourging, in Golgotha's death.* Wrought out! Ah! indeed, he wrought out and brought in an everlasting righteousness. He hath perfected for ever them that are set apart. That one sacrifice of his secured the perfect salvation of all for whom he died as a surety. What did he not work out then! "It is finished!" said he, and he knew what he said. He knew that he had wrought out, there and then, the perfect redemption of every one of his people.

But we may remind you to-night of *what God has wrought out for you in your own experience in the work of the Holy Spirit upon your soul.* Do not forget, doubting Christian, that there was a time when you had not grace enough to doubt. Do not forget, poor trembling one, that there was a time when you had not life enough to tremble. Be thankful, then, for the little grace which you can perceive in yourself. Do not hide from your eyes what God has done. Be grateful for what you have. Remember what I have often said to you—be thankful for the starlight, and you will get moonlight; be thankful for the moonlight, and your God will send you sunlight. We must prize the smallest degree of grace. We often neglect what we have, and bemoan ourselves much because we are not perfect—though there is a measure in which we are to do that; but it were well not to do this too much or too exclusively. We must think of what God has done, and be grateful and bless his name, and then be encouraged in faith to ask for more. Blessed be God, with a thousand imperfections and faults, still I find in my soul some kindlings of love towards his name. I feel some desire for the promotion of his glory—one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see—I see my sinfulness, see my weakness, see that Christ is just such a Saviour as I want, and I do with my whole heart rely upon him—shall I not be thankful for this? Is not this far more than nature could have given me? If you can honestly use such language as I have just uttered in your hearing, be thankful, and in deepest humility rejoice. Be grateful for grace within, and say, "Oh! how great a thing is this, for a dead soul to be made to live; for a filthy soul to be washed in the blood; for a naked soul to be clothed with heavenly righteousness; for a lost sheep to be brought into the fold; for a prodigal to be made to sit at his father's table; oh! how great is thy goodness which thou hast wrought out for me, which has taken me away from my evil companions—turned me away from haunts of vice and iniquity, and made me to love what once I hated, and to delight in that which was once dreary and dull to my soul."

But, brethren, we have also another instance of what God has wrought out for us in *the shape of providential mercies.* How great is the goodness of God as shown in what he has wrought out for us in providence! We have all some providences to remember which seem very special to us;

but all providences are special if we look at them from the right point of view. A certain father had agreed to meet his son at a spot halfway between their residences, which were far removed from each other. When the son reached the halfway house, he said, "Father, I have great reason to bless God, for I have met with a very special providence; my horse stumbled and threw me three times, and yet I was not injured." "Thanks be to God," said the father, "and I have met with a very special providence too, for which I thank God, and that is, that my horse never stumbled once, but brought me safely all the way." If you happen to meet with an accident, and are almost killed, you say it is a special providence if you are preserved, but is it not a providence that you go many and many a journey, and no accident befalls you whatever? Let us bless God for the mercies we do not see—the innumerable dangers from which we are preserved; the great needs which are supplied before we know them to be needs; the wants which the Lord our God is pleased to keep from us so that we never know them. From childhood up to youth, and on to manhood, what flowers of mercy have bloomed in our pathway; what tender hands have led us; what mighty arms have upheld us; what a watchful eye has been fixed upon us! "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand."

Perhaps you do not perceive any great goodness of God in your particular position, at this present crisis. You are very poor, and very lonely. Well, there will be a day, if you be the Lord's child, when you will see superlative love in the lot marked out for you. For the present believe it, and, believing it, you have an opportunity of honouring God in your distress which would not be yours if you were in another condition. When you shall know the end as well as the beginning, you will see that it was better for you to have been poor and needy than to have been rich and increased in goods. Meanwhile, count it enough reason for perpetual song that you possess—

"What nothing earthly gives, or can destroy,
The soul's calm sunshine, and the heartfelt joy."

There are other respects in which I might have brought out the text, but I prefer to leave each one among you to tune his own harp, and give to his Lord the sweet spontaneous music of a soul aglow with gratitude.

II. I shall now, very briefly, take you to the second point, and that is, THE FAVOURED PERSONS WHO ENJOY THE LORD'S GREAT GOODNESS.

"Oh, how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up *for them that fear thee*; which thou hast wrought *for them that trust in thee*." As you know, the phrase, "the fear of God," is used, especially in the Old Testament, for the whole of piety. It does not signify merely the one virtue of fear—it does not signify that feeling at all in the sense of slavish fear—but it takes a wide sweep. The man who had the fear of God before his eyes, was one who believed in God, worshipped God, loved God, was kept back from evil by the thought of God, and moved to good by the desire to please God. The ungodly were the wicked ones, those who had no God. Those who had a godly fear, were found

diligently walking in holiness. The fear of God, I say, was the expression used for the whole of religion. Still, fear itself is a very important element in the Christian's character, if it be the right kind of fear. We have nothing to do with the terror of the bond-slave, for we are free, and "have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear." Blessed be God, we have no fear of hell. It is not possible for a believer to be there. Talk of casting a believer into hell! As well talk of casting the Redeemer himself there! It is impossible. We have no fear, even, of losing our standing before God, for we do not stand before him in ourselves, but in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot fall, finally and fatally, unless Jesus can fall. "Because I live," says he, "ye shall live also." But this is our fear—the fear which a dear child has of a tender father. It is not afraid that its father will kill it, or cease to love it, or banish it, and turn it out of his house. It knows better; it trusts its father too well to indulge in such mischievous suspicions; but because it loves him, it fears to offend him. This is the very atmosphere in which a Christian breathes. He fears God, and consequently desires to keep his commandments.

But you notice that the synonym used in the text is "*trust*," and hence it is plain that trust in God is the sum-total of religion. Why is it put so—"Laid up for them that fear thee; wrought for them that trust in thee;" unless it be true that he who trusts God fears God? The whole compass of the fear of God is gathered up into a centre in that point of trust. Why so? Why, my brethren, *because trust is the root of true fear*. To trust God is the root of all genuine religion. "Without faith, it is impossible to please God." Faith is the foundation of all the other graces. Faith unites us vitally to the Lord Jesus Christ, and then from him, as from the trunk, the sap of grace flows into the branch, and the fruit is produced; but take away faith, and we are separated from Christ, and then there can be no fruit. Hence, because faith is the root, the seed containing the whole of the substance and essence of piety, it is put for the entire fear of God.

Then again, faith, or trust, is the *test of the genuineness of religion*. He whose religion is everything else but trust in God, has no true religion. He may be very precise in ceremonials; he may be exceedingly exact in morality, but if he be relying upon these things, then he has no true trust, and he has no right fear of God. But he who observeth the Lord's will, and at the same time resteth upon God, and upon him alone, depending upon the precious blood of Jesus as his only confidence, he is the man whose fear of God is such as God can accept: because trust is thus the touchstone of true religion, therefore it is put for the whole thing.

Moreover, *trust is the flower of the fear of God*. After all, the grandest thing that a man can do is to trust God. I should be prepared to prove, if there were time to-night, that there is in trust in God the whole compass of all the other virtues; or, that, to put it in other words, if you will put trust under the conditions necessary, it will educe out of its own loins all the other attributes of the perfect man. Only let a man trust in Christ, and he has done the grandest thing that can be done. The highest morality is to trust Christ. What did the

Master himself say? The Jews asked him, "What is the work of God?" They wanted to know what was that highest work which man could do that was worthy to be called God's work, the work of God, the highest work and the best; and he said, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Jesus Christ, whom he has sent." When you have trusted God, you have done more than they who have kept the ceremonies of the law to the letter. When you have trusted God, you have done more than they who cringe at Moses' feet, and shake and quake before the mountain that was altogether on a smoke. They crawl like slaves, abjectly, at their Master's feet, but you stand up like free-born sons. You do the Lord far higher homage when you trust his love, his power, his truth, than legalists do with all their toilings and their moilings, their strivings and their workings. The grandest virtue, the very highest point of all excellence, is to trust in God as he reveals himself in his word.

Now, it appears that the goodness of God is laid up for them that fear him, and wrought for them that trust him. Dear hearer, will you ask yourself anxiously whether you do fear God, and further, whether you fear him in such a way as to have trust in him? Have you these two indispensable spiritual gifts? Are you believers in Jesus Christ, dear hearers? Some of you are, I know. I rejoice with you that God has brought you into the ark of salvation by the door of faith. But are you all such as shall be saved? There is no salvation except by faith, remember, all other methods are delusions. It is faith in Jesus Christ which brings eternal salvation to you; without this, despair is your portion. If you have not this precious grace, may the Lord bestow upon you the faith which works by love and purifies the soul, that you, believing in him, may have the power given you to become the sons of God, which power he gives to as many as believe on his name.

III. And now, only two or three words upon the third point, and that is coming back to the first reflection—the greatness of God's goodness to the people who have been described. There are **ONE OR TWO THINGS WHICH MAKE US SEE THAT GREATNESS.**

First, *observe the multitude of these people.* God's people have been ten thousand times ten thousand in number. They are a "little flock" in comparison with the outside world, but no doubt they shall be at the end "a multitude that no man can number." Now, the goodness of God to any one of them is quite unsearchable, and not to be estimated; but what must be the great goodness which he has laid up for all his people, for all them that fear and trust him!

"Great God, the treasures of thy love
Are everlasting mines!"

It is no small task to water one garden, in the heat of the summer time, so that every flower shall be refreshed, and no plant overlooked. How great is the might of him who, from the salt sea, extracts the precious clouds of sweet rain, to fall not only on gardens, but the pastures of the wilderness, and the wild forest trees, till all nature laughs for joy, the mountains and the hills break forth into singing, and the trees of the field clap their hands. Brethren, it is a great thing to put a cup

of cold water to the lips of a disciple; it shall not lose its reward. To refresh the bowels of one of God's saints is no mean thing; but how great is God's goodness, which puts a cup of salvation to every Christian's lips, which waters every plant of his right-hand planting, so that every one can have his leaf continually green, and his fruit ever brought forth in due season.

Think again, dear friends, of *the undeservingness of each one of these*. There is not one of those who feared and trusted him that was worthy of the least grain of his mercy. They were many of them the chief of sinners—some of them peculiarly so—and yet this goodness, this great goodness, came to them, exemplifying its greatness because of the greatness of their transgressions. Was there aught of worthiness about the prodigal who had devoured his substance with harlots in his riotous living? Was not his prodigality a fire to set off the brightness of the father's love, who said, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found"? When God saved Jonah by the whale which was prepared for him, did he do it because Jonah was deserving of it? Very far from it. He was fleeing from God's presence and the path of duty, and God's goodness to him is thrown out in bold relief by the dark unworthiness of that unfaithful and timid prophet. Well may we say, as we notice our own waywardness and folly, and contrast it with the divine mercy, "Oh, how great is thy goodness!"

Remember, too, *the need they were in*. You can measure the greatness of the goodness of God by the distance from the place where Adam left his fallen posterity, broken by the fall, to the position at the right hand of Christ, where God's eternal mercy shall place them for ever. Picture to yourself a lazar-house, full of all manner of vile and loathsome diseases, where the deadly fever, and the living-death called leprosy, are found. See yon man who enters, braving all the dangers of infection, that he may heal the sick and restore the wretched ones to health and life! How great his goodness! but is that to be compared to the goodness of God's Son, who not only ran the risk, with some chance of escape, but deliberately "was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." "He bore our sins in his own body on the tree" willingly, deliberately, and came of set purpose to die for us.

"This was compassion like a God,
That when the Saviour knew
The price of pardon was his blood,
His pity ne'er withdrew."

Think, brethren, of the great goodness of God to his saints—and this will help to make it greater—in *contrast to the great evil of man to them*. Some of these saints have died cruel deaths. The most of them have had to pass through obloquy and scorn; but oh! how great is *thy* goodness which thou hast wrought in them, sustaining them all, and making them more than conquerors through him that loved them! David speaks in one of his Psalms of his enemies as besetting him "like bees;" and in another place he says of his God, "Thou hast beset me behind

and before, and laid thy hand upon me." Now, how great the divine goodness must have appeared to him in contrast with the stinging malice of his foes. Or, when the Master said to Peter, "Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." The love of his Lord must have appeared to him, if not at that time, yet afterwards, in brighter colours, because of Satan's dark designs against him. If Daniel mused in the lions' den, or the three holy children in the fiery furnace, they must have thought, all of them, as we should amidst all our trials and conflicts, "How great is the goodness of God in opposition to the cruelty of man!"

There was a great purpose; there was a great covenant; there was a great sacrifice; there is a great providence; there is a great heaven; and there is a great Spirit to bring them there. Oh, how great is thy goodness to thy people!

I shall not further preach on that topic; I put you at the river's edge and bid you wade in, hoping that you may proceed as far as the apostle, when he said, "Oh, the depths!"

IV. And now, lastly, WHAT SHOULD THIS TEACH US?

Should not this make us grateful to God for such wondrous kindness? The Lord has not given his people to drink of a twinkling rivulet, but he has been pleased to give the river of himself to them, that they may drink to the full. Did you ever get the meaning of that passage, "That ye may be filled with all the fulness of God"? Oh! that is a text that one would like to preach from in heaven. If there are pulpits there, and congregations, give me that for a text above all others, except that best of all, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, to him be glory." "Filled with all the fulness of God!" Beloved, have you learned this wonder? Will you now bless the Lord that there is such a marvel of love for you to learn? You have already had as much as you could bear of God's goodness. You have had providential goodness, and spiritual mercies. Is there no spark of gratitude in your soul? Can you not afford a song—at least, a stanza? O you who think yourselves banished to-night, and are in the dark, lift up your heads. Sing of the light you once had, and of the light that is yet to be revealed, that is laid up for them that fear him, and which shall yet bless your eyes. Be grateful.

In the next place, when you think of the great goodness of God, *be humble*. I know of no consideration which tends more to humble us than the great mercy of God: like Peter's boat, which floated high in the water when there was nothing in it, but when it was filled with fish it began to sink, our minds are humbled by a sense of undeserved love.

"The more thy mercies strike my eye,
The humbler I shall lie."

A sense of divine goodness will never puff us up, but will mightily pull us down. It tends to make the believer say, "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant!"

And, lastly, *let this inspire us with confidence*. If, to-night, we are bowed down and distressed, let us think of the laid-up goodness of God.

and go to him for it. He will surely give, for he has laid it up. He will not deny, for he has prepared it. God seemeth to say to his people to-night, as of old he said to the multitudes outside his banqueting hall, "My oxen and fatlings are killed, come ye to the supper!" All that you can want is provided in Christ. Come in, come in! "Eat, eat," saith the spouse in the song, "drink, yea, drink abundantly." O beloved, you cannot diminish the fulness of Christ! Come, now, and put your mouths down to the well-head, and drink a draught such as old behemoth drank when he said he would drink the Jordan dry at a draught. You may have all you can take, believer; there is no stint or limit here! "Open thy mouth wide," saith the Lord, "and I will fill it." Be not slack concerning the promise in receiving it, for God will not be slack in keeping it. Only be thou strong, and full of trust, and thou shalt live to bless the Lord thy Rock, in whom is no unrighteousness nor unfaithfulness, but who keepeth truth unto his people for evermore. I would to God that all of you had experienced this great goodness of God, but if you have not, and I know some of you have not, there is one thought that at least I would leave upon your minds, which should make you feel that he is great and good, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." Trust the Master, and you are saved.

May boundless goodness magnify itself in us all, for Jesu's sake.
Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON.—Psalm xxxi.
