

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

MORNING AND EVENING SONGS.

A Sermon

DELIVERED BY

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night."—Psalm xcii. 2.

It is a notion of the Rabbis that this Psalm was sung by Adam in Paradise. There are no reasons why we should believe it was so, and there are a great many why we should be sure it was not; for it is not possible that Adam could have sung concerning brutish men and fools, and the wicked springing as grass, while as yet he was the only man, and himself unfallen. Still, at least the first part of the Psalm might have fallen as suitably from the lips of Adam as from our tongues, and if Milton could put into Adam's mouth the language—

"These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,
Almighty; thine this universal frame.
Thus wondrous fair, thyself how wondrous then!"

He might with equal fitness have made him say, "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High: to shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night; for thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands." The Jews have for a long while used this Psalm in the synagogue-worship on their Sabbath, and very suitable it is for the Sabbath-day; not so much in appearance, for there is little or no allusion to any Sabbatic rest in it, but because on that day above all others, our thoughts should be lifted up from all earthly things to God himself. The Psalm tunes the mind to adoration, and so prepares it for Sabbath worship. It supplies us with a noble subject for meditation,—the Lord, the Lord alone; lifting us up even above his works into a contemplation of himself and his mercies toward us. Oh, that always on the Sabbath-day, when we come together, we might assemble in the spirit of praise, feeling that it is good to give thanks unto the name of the Most High: and would God that always when we were assembled we could say,

No. 1,138.

"Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work : I will triumph in the works of thy hands."

There is no doubt that in this second verse there is an allusion to the offering of the morning and the evening lambs, for, in addition to the great Paschal celebration once a year, and the other feasts and fasts, each of which brought Christ prominently before the mind of those Jews who were instructed by the Spirit of God, a lamb was offered every morning and every evening, as if to remind them that they needed daily cleansing for daily sin ; for then there was always a remembrance of sin, seeing that the one great sacrifice which puts away sin for ever had not yet been offered. Though now, in these our days, we need no morning or evening lamb, and the very idea of a repetition or a rehearsal of the sacrifice of Christ is to us most horribly profane and blasphemous, yet would we remember continually the one sacrifice, and never wake in the morning without beholding "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," nor fall to sleep at night without turning our eyes anew to him who on the bloody tree was made sin for us.

Our text, however, is meant to speak to us concerning praise. Praise should be the continual exercise of believers. It is the joyful work of heaven, it should be the continual joy of earth ; and we are taught by the text, I think, that while praise should be given only to One who is in heaven, and we should adore perpetually our Triune God, yet there should be variety in our unity. We bless the Lord and the Lord alone ; we have no music but for him, but we do not always praise him after the same fashion. As there were different instruments of music—the ten-stringed instrument or decachord, the psaltery, the harp,—so, too, there are different subjects, a subject for the morning and a subject for the evening ; lovingkindness to be shown forth at one time, and faithfulness to be sung at another. I wish that men studied more the praise they profess to present unto God. I sometimes find, even in our own public song, simple as it is, that there is a want of thought evidently among us : for time is not maintained with the precision which would grow out of thoughtfulness, there is a tendency to sing more slowly, as if devotion were wearying, if not wearisome, and too frequently I fear the singing gets to be mechanical, as if the tune mastered you, and you did not govern the tune by making those inflections and modulations of voice which the sense would suggest, if you sang with all your hearts and with your understandings also. The very posture of some people indicates that they are going through the hymn, but the hymn is not going through their hearts, nor ascending to God on the wings of soaring gratitude. I have also noticed with sad reflections the way in which, if there happen to be a chorus at the close—a "Hallelujah" or "Praise God"—some will drop into their seats as if they had not thought enough to recollect that it was coming, and then, with a jerk, all in confusion, they stand up again ; being so asleep in heart that anything out of the common way is too much for them. Far am I from caring for postures or tones, but when they indicate want of heart, I do care, and so should you. Remember well that there is no more of music to God's ear in any service than there is of heart-love and holy devotion. You may make floods of music

with your organ if you like ; or you may make equally good music—and some of us think better—with human voices ; but it is not music to God, either of instrument or of voice, unless the heart be there ; and the heart is not fully there, the man, the whole man, is not fully there, unless the soul glows with the praise.

In our private praise, also, we ought to think more of what we are doing, and concentrate our entire energies for the sacred exercise. Ought we not to sit down before we pray, and ask our understanding, “What am I going to pray for ? I bow my knee at my bedside to pray : ought I not to pause and consider the things I ought to ask for ? What do I want, and what are the promises which I should plead, and why is it that I may expect that God should grant me what I want ?” Should we not pray better if we occupied more time in consideration ? And so when we come to praise we ought not to rush upon it helter skelter, but engage in it with prepared hearts. I notice that when musicians are about to discourse sweet music there is a tuning-up ; there is a preparation ; and there are rehearsals, which they perform before they go through their music in public ; so our soul ought to rehearse the subject for which it is about to bless God ; and we ought to come before the Lord, both in public and in private, with subjects of praise which our thought has considered, not offering unto the Lord that which has cost us nothing, but with a warm heart pouring out before his throne adoration grounded upon subjects of thanksgiving appropriate to the occasion. So it seems the psalmist would have us do : “To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night.” It is not mere praise, but varied praise, praise with distinct subjects at appointed seasons. Upon this we are about to speak for a little while.

And we shall speak thus : first, here is *a subject for morning worship* ; secondly, here is *another for evening devotion* ; and this last, ere we close our discourse, *we shall try to practise*.

I. First, then, notice MORNING WORSHIP : “To show forth thy lovingkindness in the morning.”

“In the morning.” There cannot be a more suitable time for praising God than in the morning. Everything around is congenial therewith. Even in this great wilderness of brick the gleams of sunlight in these summer mornings seem like songs, songs without words, or rather music without sounds : and out in the country, when every blade of grass twinkles with its own drop of dew, and all the trees glisten as if they were lit up with sapphire by the rising dawn, and when a thousand birds awake to praise their Maker, making harmonious concerts, all with all their hearts casting their entire energies into the service of holy song, it seems most fit that the key of the morning should be in the hand of praise ; and that when the daylight lifts its eyelid it should look out upon grateful hearts. We ourselves have newly risen from our beds, and if we are in a right state of mind we are thankful for the night’s sleep.

“The evening rests our wearied head,
And angels guard the room :
We wake, and we admire the bed
That was not made our tomb.”

Every morning is a sort of resurrection. At night we lay us down to sleep, stripped of our garments, as our souls will be of their bodily array when we come to die ; but the morning wakes us, and if it be a Sabbath morning we do not put on our work-day clothes, but find our Sabbath dress ready to hand ; even thus shall we be satisfied when we wake up in our Master's likeness, no more to put on the soiled raiment of earth, but to find it transformed into a Sabbath robe, in which we shall be beautiful and fair, even as Jesus our Lord himself. Now, as every morning brings to us, in fact, a resurrection from what might have been our tomb, and delivers us from the image of death which through the night we wore, it ought to be saluted with thanksgiving. As the great resurrection morning will be awakened with the sound of the trumpet's far-sounding music, so let every morning, as though it were a resurrection to us, awaken us with hymns of joy.

"All praise to thee who safe hast kept,
And hast refreshed me while I slept ;
Grant, Lord, when I from death shall wake,
I may of endless life partake."

"To show forth thy lovingkindness in the morning." We are full of vigour then ; we shall be tired ere night comes round : perhaps in the heat of the day we shall be fagged ; let us take care, while we are fresh, to give the cream of the morning to God. Our poet says :—

"The flower, when offered in the bud,
Is no mean sacrifice."

Let us give the Lord the bud of the day, its virgin beauty, its unsullied purity. Say what you will about the evening, and there are many points about it which make it an admirable season for devotion, yet the morning is the choice time. Is it not a queenly hour ? See how it is adorned with diamonds more pure than those which flash in the crowns of eastern potentates. The old proverb declares that they who would be rich must rise early ; surely those who would be rich towards God must do so. No dews fall in the middle of the day, and it is hard to keep up the dew and freshness of one's spirit in the worry, and care, and turmoil of midday ; but in the morning the dew should fall upon our fleece till it is filled therewith ; and it is well to wring it out before the Lord, and give him our morning's vigour, our morning's freshness and unction.

You will see, I think, without my enlarging, that there is a fitness in the morning for praising God. But I shall not merely confine the text to the morning of each day ; the same fitness appertains to the morning of our days. Our youth, our first hours of the day of life, ought to be spent in showing forth the lovingkindness of God. Dear young friends, you may rest assured that nothing can happen to you so blessed as to be converted while you are young. I bless God for my having known him when I was fifteen years of age ; but I have often felt like that Irishman who said that he was converted at twenty, and he wished it had been twenty-one years before. I have often felt the same desire. Oh ! if it could have been so, that the very first breath one drew had been consecrated to God ; that it had been possible for the first rational thought to be one of devotion ;

that the first act of judgment had been exercised upon divine truth, and the first pulsing of affection had been towards the Redeemer who loved us and gave himself for us ! What blessed reflections would fill the space now occupied with penitent regrets. The first part of a Christian life has charms peculiar to itself,—in some respects

“ That age is best which is the first,
For then the blood is warmer.”

I know the afterpart is riper, it is more mellow ; there is a sweetness about autumn fruit, but the basket of early fruit—the first ripe fruit—this is what God desireth : and blessed are they who, in the morning, show forth the lovingkindness of God !

Or the words may be explained mystically to signify those periods of life which are bright like the morning to us. We have our ups and downs, our ebbs and flows, our mornings and our nights. Now, it is the duty, and the privilege, of our bright days, for us to shew forth God's lovingkindness in them. It may be some of you have had so rough a life that you consider your nights to be more numerous than your days. Others of us could not, even in common honesty, subscribe to such a belief. No, blessed be God, our mornings have been very numerous ; our days of joy and rejoicing, after all, have been abundant—ininitely more abundant than we might have expected they could be, dwelling as we do in the land of sorrows. Oh, when the joy days come, let us always consecrate them by showing forth God's lovingkindness. Do not as some do, who, if they are prospering, make a point of not owning to it. If they make money, for instance—well, they are “doing pretty well.” “Pretty well,” do they call it ? Time was, when, if they had done half so well, they would have been ready to jump for joy. How often the farmer, when his crop could not be any larger, and when the field is loaded with it, will say, “Well, it is a very fair crop.” Is that all ? Oh, what robbery of God ! This talk is far too common on all sides, and ought to be most solemnly rebuked. When we have been enjoying a long stretch of joy and peace, instead of saying that it is so, we speak as if—well, well, God hath dealt very well with us upon the whole, but at the same time he has done for us nothing very remarkable. I saw a tombstone the other day which pleased me ; I do not know that I ever saw an epitaph of that kind before ; I think it was for a person of the age of eighty, and it said of her, “who after a happy and grateful enjoyment of life, died,” and so on. Now, that is what we ought to say, but we talk as if, really, we were to be pitied for living, as if we were little better off than toads under a harrow, or snails in a tub of salt. We whine as if our lives were martyrdoms, and every breath a woe. But it is not so. Such conduct slanders the good Lord. Blessed be the Lord for creating us. Our life has mercies, yea innumerable mercies ; and, notwithstanding the sorrows and the troubles of it, there are joys and benedictions past all count. There are mornings in which it becomes us to show forth the lovingkindness of the Lord. See, then, the season, the morning of each day, the morning of our days, and the morning of our brightness and prosperity.

The psalmist suggests that the best topic for praise on such

occasions is lovingkindness. And truly I confess that this is a theme which might suit nights as well as days, though doubtless he saw an appropriateness in allotting this topic to the morning. Verily it might suffice for all the day long. Was there ever such a word in any language as that word lovingkindness? I have sometimes heard Frenchmen talking about their language, and I have no doubt it is a very beautiful tongue; and Germans glorify the speech of the Fatherland, and I have heard our Welsh friends extolling their unpronounceable language, and crying it up as the very tongue that was spoken in Paradise. Very likely indeed. But I venture to say that no language beneath the sky has a word in it that is richer than this—*loving-kindness*. It is a duplicate deliciousness. There are within it linked sweetnesses long drawn out. *Lovingkindness*. It is a kind of word with which to cast spells which should charm away all fears. It was said of Mr. Whitefield that he could have moved an audience to tears by saying the word “Mesopotamia”; I think he could have done it better with the word “lovingkindness.” Put it under your tongue, now. Let it lie there. **LOVINGKINDNESS.** *Kindness*. Does that mean *kin*-ness? Some say that it is the root-sense of the word—*kin*-ness, such feeling as we have to our own kin, for blood is ever thicker than water, and we act towards those who are our kindred as we cannot readily do towards strangers. Now, God has made us of his kin. In his own dear Son he has taken us into his family. We are children of God—“heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus;” and there is a *kin*-ness from God to us through our great kinsman Jesus Christ. But then the word is only half understood when you get to that, for it is *loving-kindness*. For a surgeon to set a man’s limb when it is out of joint or broken is kindness, although he may do it somewhat roughly, and in an off-hand manner; but if he does it very tenderly, covering the lion’s heart with the lady’s hand, then he shows *loving-kindness*. A man is picked up on the battle-field, and put into an ambulance and carried to the hospital, that is kindness; but oh, if that poor soldier’s mother could come into the hospital and see her boy suffering, she would show him *loving-kindness*, which is something far more. A child run over in the street outside yonder, and taken to the hospital, would be cared for, I have no doubt, with the greatest kindness; but, after all, send for its mother, for she will give it *loving-kindness*. And so the Lord dealeth with us. He gives us what we want, in a fatherly manner. He doeth to us what we need, in the tenderest fashion. It is kindness; it is *kin*-ness; but it is *loving-kindness*. The very heart of God seems written out in this word. We could hardly apply it in full force to any but to our Father who is in heaven.

Now, here is a subject for us to sing about in the morning.

How shall I begin, with the hope of going through this subject? It is an endless one. Lovingkindness begins,—ah, I must correct myself: it never did begin. It had no beginning. “I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.” Everlasting love, therefore, is what we must begin to sing of. And that everlasting love was infinite in its preparations, for before we had been created the Lord had made a covenant on our account, and resolved

to give his only-begotten Son, that we might be saved from wrath through him. The lovingkindness of God our Father appeared in Jesus Christ. Oh, brethren, let us always be talking about this ! I wonder why it is, when we meet each other, that we do not begin at once to say, "Brother, have you been thinking over the lovingkindness of the Lord in the gift of his dear Son ?"—for, indeed, it is such a marvellous thing that it ought not to be a nine-days' wonder with us. It ought to fill us with astonishment every day of our lives. Now, if something wonderful happens, everybody's mouth is full of it, and we speak to one another about it at once, while like the Athenians all our neighbours are greedy to hear ; let our mouths, then, be full of the marvellous lovingkindness of God, and for fear we should leave the tale half untold, let us begin early in the morning to rehearse the eternal love manifested in the great gift of Jesus Christ. If we have already spoken about these things, and wish for variety, let us speak concerning the lovingkindness of God to each one of us in bringing us to Jesus. What a history each man's own life is. I suppose that if any one of our lives should be fully written, it would be more wonderful than a romance. I have sometimes seen a sunset of which I have said, "Now, if any painter had depicted that, I should have declared that the sky never looked in that way, it is so strange and singular ;" and in the same way, should some of our lives be fully written, many would say, "It could not have been so." How many have said of Huntingdon's "Bank of Faith," for instance, "Oh, it is a bank of nonsense ;" yet I believe that it is correct, and bears the marks of truth upon its very face. I believe that the man did experience all that he has written, though he may not always have told us everything in the best possible manner. Many other people's lives would be quite as wonderful as his if they could be written. Tell ye, then, the lovingkindness of God to yourself in particular. Rehearse, if to no other ear, to your own ear, and to the ear of God, the wondrous story of how—

"Jesus sought you when a stranger
Wandering from the fold of God."

How his grace brought you to himself and so into eternal life. And then, brethren, sing of the lovingkindness of God to yourselves since your new birth. Remember the mercies of God. Do not bury them in the grave of ingratitude. Let them glisten in the light of gratitude. I am sure that you will find this a blessed morning portion, it will sweeten all the day. The psalmist would have you begin the day with it, because you will need all the day to complete it ; indeed, you will want all the day of life and all eternity ; and I am half of Addison's mind—though the expression is somewhat hyperbolic—

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

What a blessed subject you have before you—the lovingkindness of the Lord. Not yourself—not yourself. That is a horrible subject to speak upon. When I hear brethren get up and glory in their own attainments and graces, I remember the words of the wise man, "Let another praise thee, and not thine own lips." Above all things, when a man says that he has made great advances in sanctification it is sickening,

and clearly proves that he has not learned the meaning of the word "humility." I hope the eyes of our friends will be opened, and that they will come to loathe the devil's meat which now deceives them; may we no longer see spiritual self-conceit held up among us as a virtue, but may it be shunned as a deadly evil. No, let my mouth be filled with God's praise, but not with my own.

My brethren, let not our tongues be always occupied with our griefs. If you have a skeleton in your house, why should you always invite every friend who calls upon you to inspect the uncomely thing? No: tell what God has done for you: tell of his lovingkindness. I have heard—and I repeat the story because it ought to be repeated, simple as it is—of a pastor who frequently called upon a poor bedridden woman, who very naturally always told him of her pains and her wants. He knew all about her rheumatics: he had heard of them fifty times, and at last he said to her, "My dear sister, I sympathise with you deeply, and I am never at all tired of hearing your complaints; but could you not now and then tell me something about what the Lord does for you—something about your enjoyments, how he sustains you under your pain, and so on?" It was a rebuke well put and well taken; and ever afterwards there was less said about the griefs and more heard about the blessings. Let us henceforth resolve, Great God, "To show forth thy lovingkindness in the morning."

Thus we have considered the time and the topic, and now we are bound to observe the manner in which we are to deal with the subject. The psalmist says we are to *show it forth*, by which I suppose he means that we are not to keep to ourselves what we know about God's lovingkindness.

Every Christian in the morning ought to shew it forth first in his own chamber before God. He should express his gratitude for the mercies of the night and the mercies of his whole life. Then let him, if it be possible, show it forth in his family; let him gather them together and worship the Lord, and bless him for his lovingkindness. And then when the Christian goes into the world, let him show forth God's lovingkindness; I do not mean by talking of it to every one he meets, casting pearls before swine as it would be to some men, but by the very way in which he speaks, acts, and looks. A Christian ought to be the most cheerful of men, so that others should say, "What makes him look so happy? He is not rich: he is not always in good health: he has his troubles; but he seems to bear all so well and to trip lightly along the pathway of life." By our cheerful conversation we ought to show forth in the morning God's lovingkindness. "Ah," says one, "but when you are depressed in spirit?" Do not show it if you can help it. Do as your Master said: "appear not unto men to fast." Do not imagine that the appearance of sadness indicates sanctity; it often means hypocrisy. To conceal one's own griefs for the sake of cheering others betokens a self-denying sympathy which is the highest kind of Christianity. Let us present the sacrifice of praise in whatever company we may be, but when we get among God's own people, then is the time for a whole burnt offering. Among our own kith and kin we may safely open our box of sweets. When we find a brother who can understand the lovingkindness of the Lord let us

tell it forth with sacred delight. We have choice treasures which we cannot show to ungodly eyes, for they would not appreciate them ; but when we meet with eyes which God has opened, then let us open the casket, and say, "Brother, rejoice in what God has done for us. See his lovingkindness to me his servant, and his tender mercies which have been ever of old."

Thus, beloved friends, I have set before you a good morning's work ; and I think, if God's Spirit helps us to attend to it, we shall come out of our chambers with our breath smelling sweet with the praises of God. We shall go down into the world without care, much more without anger. We shall go calmly to our work, and meet our cares quietly and happily. The joy of the Lord will be our strength. It is a good rule never to look into the face of man in the morning till you have looked into the face of God ; an equally good rule always to have business with heaven before you have any business with earth. Oh, it is a sweet thing to bathe in the morning in the love of God ; to bathe in it, so that when you come forth out of the ivory chambers of communion wherein you have been made glad, your garments shall smell of the myrrh and aloes and cassia of holiness. Do we all attend to this ? I am afraid we are in too much of a hurry, or we get up too late. Could not we rise a little earlier ? If we could steal even a few minutes from our beds, those few minutes would scatter their influence over the entire day. It is always bad to start on a journey without having looked to the harness, and to the horse's shoes ; and it often happens that the time saved by omitting examination turns out to be a dead loss when the traveller has advanced a little on his journey. Not one minute, but a hundred minutes may be lost by the want of a little attention at first. Set the morning watch with care, if you would be safe through the day ; begin well if you would end well. Take care that the helm of the day is put right, look well to the point you want to sail to, then whether you make much progress or little, it will be so far in the right direction. The morning hour is generally the index of the day.

II. Now, let us turn to the second part of our subject very briefly. The psalmist says, "To show forth thy faithfulness EVERY NIGHT.

Now, the night, beloved, is a peculiarly choice time for praising God's faithfulness. "Oh," says one, "we are very tired." Well, that may be ; but it is a pity that we should be reduced to such a condition that we are too tired to praise God. A holy man of God used always to say, when they said to him, "Can you pray ?" "Thank God, I am never too tired to pray." If anything can arouse us the service of Christ should do it, there should be within us an enthusiasm which kindles at the very thought of prayer. Have you never known an army on the march weary and ready to drop, and the band have played some enlivening tune which has bestirred the men afresh, and they have gone over the last few miles as they could not have done if it had not been for the inspiration of the strain. Let the thought of praising God wake up our wearied energies, and let not God be robbed of his glory at the close of the day. The close of the day is calm, quiet, and fit for devotion. God walked in the garden in the

cool of the day, before man fell, and Adam went forth to meet him; Isaac walked in the fields at eventide, and there he received a blessing. The evening is the Sabbath of the day, and should be the Lord's.

Now, notice the topic which is set for the evening; it is *faithfulness*. Why? Why, because we have had a little more experience of our God. We have a day's more experience than we had in the morning; therefore we have more power to sing of God's faithfulness. We can look back now upon the day and see promises fulfilled. May I ask you to look over to-day, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ. Can you not notice some promises which God has kept towards you? Show forth his faithfulness, then. Provision has been given you: he promised to give it; he has given it. Protection has been afforded you: more than you know of, infinitely more. Guidance also has been given in points where you otherwise would have gone very much astray. Illumination has been granted you: comfort also in a season of depression; or upholding in a time of temptation. God has given you much to-day. If he has taken anything away from you, yet still bless his name; it was only what he had given, and he had a right to take it. Look through the day, and you will find that God has acted towards you as he promised that he would act. You have had trouble, you say; did not he say, "In the world ye shall have tribulation"? Has he not spoken concerning the rod of the covenant? Affliction only illustrates his faithfulness. Carefully observe the fulfilled promises of each day: it is a good custom to conclude the day by rehearsing its special mercies. I do not believe in keeping a detailed diary of each day's experience, for one is very apt, for want of something to put down, to write what is not true, or at least not real. I believe there is nothing more stilted or untruthful, as a general rule, than a religious diary; it easily degenerates into self-deceit. Still, most days, if not all our days, reveal singular instances of providence, if we will but watch them. Master Flavel used to say, "He that notices providences shall never be without a providence to notice." I believe we let our days glide by us, unobservant of the wondrous things that are in them, and so miss many enjoyments. As in nature the uneducated person sees but little beauty in the wild flowers—

"The primrose by the river's brim,
A yellow primrose is to him,
And it is nothing more;"

so we, for want of thought, let great mercies go by us; they are trifles to us, and nothing more. Oh, let us change our ways, and think more of what God has done, and then we shall utter a song concerning his faithfulness every night.

Do you notice in the text that word "*every*." It does not say, "to show forth his lovingkindness every morning," though it means that; but concerning the nights it is very distinct. "And his faithfulness *every* night." It is a cold night. Did he not promise winter? and now it has come the cold only proves his faithfulness. It is a dark night; but then it is a part of his covenant that there should be nights as well as days. Supposing that there were no nights and no winters, where were the covenant which God made with the earth?

But every change of temperature in the beautiful vicissitudes of the year, and every variation of light and shade, only illustrate the faithfulness of God. If you happen now to be full of joy, you can tell of divine faithfulness in rendering love and mercy to you ; but if, on the other hand, you are full of trouble, tell of God's faithfulness, for now you have an opportunity of proving it. He will not leave you : he will not forsake you. His word is, "When thou passest through the rivers I will be with thee : the floods shall not overflow thee." Depend upon it that promise will be faithfully fulfilled.

Beloved friends, you who are getting old are nearing the night of life ; and you are peculiarly fitted to show forth the Lord's faithfulness. The young people may tell of his lovingkindness, but the old people must tell of his faithfulness. You can speak of forty or fifty years of God's grace to you, and you can confidently affirm that he has not once failed you. He has been true to every word that he has spoken. Now, I charge you, do not withhold your testimony. If we, young people, should be silent we should be guilty, but we might speak, perhaps, another day ; but for you advanced Christians to be silent will be sinful indeed, for you will not have another opportunity in this world of showing forth the faithfulness of God. Bear witness now, ere your eyes are closed in death ! The faithfulness of God every night is a noble subject for his greyheaded servants.

And this it is our great business to *show forth*. O beloved, do let us publish abroad the faithfulness of God. I wonder sometimes that there should be any doubts in the world about the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints, and I think the reason why there are any is this—those professors who fall are very conspicuous, everybody knows about them. If a high-flying professor makes a foul end of his boastings, why, that is talked of everywhere. They speak of it in Gath, and publish it in the streets of Askelon. But, on the other hand, those thousands of true believers that hold on their way, they cannot, of course, say much about themselves ; it would not be right they should, but I wish they could sometimes say more about the unfailing goodness and immutable truthfulness of God, to be a check to the effect produced by backsliders, so that the world may know that the Lord doth not cast away his people whom he did foreknow, but that he gives strength to them even in their fainting, and bears them through. If there is any one topic that you Christians ought to speak about thankfully, bravely, positively, continuously, it is the faithfulness of God to you. It is that upon which Satan makes a dead set in the minds of many tempted ones, and therefore to that you should bring the strength of your testimony, that tried saints may know that he doth not forsake his people.

III. And now, to close, I desire in the name of God's people here present, TO SHOW FORTH GOD'S FAITHFULNESS THIS VERY NIGHT.

My brethren, as a church, let us declare how faithful God has been to us ! Our history as a church has been very wonderful. When we were few and feeble, minished and brought low, God appeared for us. Then we began to prosper, and we began also to pray. And what prayers they were ! Surely the more we prayed the more God blessed us. We have now had almost twenty years of uninterrupted blessing. We have had no fits and starts, revivals and retreats, but onward has

been our course, in the name of God, a steady, continued progress, like the growth of a cedar upon Lebanon. Up to this time God has always heard prayer in this place. This very building was an answer to prayer. There is scarcely an institution connected with it but what can write upon its banner, "We have been blessed by a prayer-hearing God." It has become our habit to pray, and it is God's habit to bless us. Oh, let us not flag! Let us not flag! If we do we shall be straitened in ourselves, but not in God. God will not leave us while we prove him in his own appointed way. If we will but continue mighty in earnest intercession, we may, as a church, enjoy another twenty years, if so it pleases God, of equal or greater prosperity. If ever there was a spot on earth where it became men to speak well of a faithful God, it is the spot whereon I stand, and I do speak of it to his glory. We have used no carnal attractions to gather people together to worship here, we have procured nothing to please their taste by way of elaborate music, fine dresses, painted windows, processions, and the like; we have used the gospel of Jesus without any rhetorical embellishments, simply spoken as a man speaketh to his friend; and God has blessed it, and he will bless it still.

Now, dear friends, each one of you can say of yourselves, as well as of the church, that God has been faithful to you. Tell it to your children; tell them God will save sinners when they come to him, for he saved you. Tell it to your neighbours; tell them he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins if we confess them to him, and to save us from all unrighteousness, for he forgave you. Tell every trembler you meet with that Jesus will in nowise cast out any that come to him. Tell all seekers that if they seek they shall find, and that to every one that knocks, the door of mercy shall be opened. Tell the most desponding and despairing that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, even the very chief. Make known his faithfulness every night. And when your last night comes, and you gather up your feet in the bed, like Jacob, let your last testimony be to the Lord's faithfulness; and like glorious old Joshua, end your life by saying, "Not one good thing hath failed of all the Lord God hath promised, but all hath come to pass."

The Lord bless you, dear friends, and give you all to know his lovingkindness and his faithfulness. Amen and Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm xcii.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—193, 675, 34.