

# Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

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THE BLESSING OF THE HIGH PRIEST.

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## A Sermon

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 26TH, 1890, BY

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

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“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them.”—Numbers vi. 22—27.

THE Lord has blessed his people, and he would have them know it. He has blessed them with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and it is his wish that they should experience the fulness of this blessedness. Are any of the Lord's people without a sense of his blessing? It is not the will of God that you should continue in this low condition. If you are cast down, he has said to his prophets, “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem.” Have you sinned, and wandered into the darkness? The Lord bids you return, and encourages you to pray, “Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.” The happy God would have you happy in the enjoyment of his blessing.

To bring this blessing constantly to the remembrance of his chosen, the Lord appointed a representative of himself who should publicly pronounce his blessing upon the people. He chose Aaron, and he bade Moses instruct him. Aaron was not only to offer sacrifice, and to make intercession, but he was to take a higher stand, and bestow blessings, in the name of God, upon the assembled people. Those who are old may fitly pronounce a blessing upon their children, as Jacob did upon his twelve sons; and the minister of Christ may, in God's name, pronounce a benediction upon the people. This was the custom in early times: the congregation was dismissed with the gracious words: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.” Our God has appointed One above all others to bless his people, even our great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the antitype of Aaron and his sons; and in the exercise of his high office continually blesses his people. He began his ministry with the Sermon on the Mount, and the word “Blessed.” His whole life was a stream of blessing; for “he went

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about doing good." When he rose to heaven, having completed his ministry, it was as "he lifted up his hands, and blessed them." He "shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven," bringing blessings with him, even gifts for men. In the name of the triune God, the Lord Jesus, from the highest glory, effectually blesses us to-day. Let not your hearts be troubled, as though you were beneath the storm-cloud of the curse. Know ye not that the curse is altogether turned away from us; for he was "made a curse for us"? The blessing alone remains, and Jesus himself remains to repeat it.

Remember, with solemn awe and heart-searching, that this blessing was for the children of Israel, and for them only. Aaron was not appointed to bless the nations who were without God; but to bless the children of Israel. The great blessing which our Lord Jesus Christ pronounces is for his people, even for those to whom he gives eternal life. Ask yourselves whether you are believers, as Jacob was? Are you pleaders with God, as Jacob was? It was through his triumphant wrestling with God that he won the princely name of Israel: have you ever prevailed in prayer? If so, though you may feel very feeble, and halt as you come from the scene of conflict, yet to you, even to you, as being spiritually of the seed of Israel, the Lord Christ, the "high priest of our profession," has given the blessing. But if any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ there is no blessing for him, since that awful text thunders at him: "Let him be Anathema Maranatha"—accursed at his coming. The Lord grant that such a curse may lie on none of us; but may we, as we hear the priestly benediction, be able by faith to receive it as our own!

In handling my text, I shall first dwell for a few minutes upon *the general character of this benediction*. Much is to be gathered here. Secondly, we shall review *the blessing itself*, weighing its three clauses, and gathering instruction from each word. Thirdly, we will hearken to *the divine amen*, which is at the close of it: "And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them." May the Holy Spirit aid us in this meditation!

I. First, then, consider THE GENERAL CHARACTER OF THIS BLESSING.

It was a blessing, in the first place, *given through a priest*. Not every man might take upon himself to bless the people: it was Aaron—God's high priest, who offered sacrifice for the people—who was called to bless the tribes. The hands which had been stained with the blood of the victim, were outstretched in blessing. Once in the year the Lord's high priest went in unto God for the people, not without blood; and when his solemn duties within the veil had been duly done, he came forth, and put on those glorious garments which for a while he had laid aside, and he blessed the people, as he was authorized to do. From which I gather that we can get no blessing from God, except through the priesthood of Christ. There must be the sacrifice, and the sprinkling of the blood, before the music of the blessing can sound in our ears. God bestows all spiritual blessings upon us in and through the Lord Jesus, who died for us, and is ordained to be the one mediator between God and man. Christ as the great high priest, who offered himself without spot unto God, is the divine channel of blessing. Do we know the Lord's Anointed? Are we resting in the sacrifice which

he has presented, even his own blood? Without Christ no blessing can come to us. O my hearers, do not remain without the precious blood, if that be your present condition; but may the good Spirit of God lead you to hear the voice of love, which cries, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world"! Jesus saith, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." You cannot know the Father as a God of infinite blessedness except through the Son, who is the priest with the one effectual sacrifice. It is a priestly benediction, sealed with sacrificial blood; and it can only be bestowed by the hand of our glorious Priest.

Next, *this benediction is of the nature of intercession*. There lies within these words a prayer. "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee" is the cry of the man of God to Jehovah, that he would bless and keep his people. The priest's office was to make intercession for the people, and we have in our Lord Jesus a high priest who pleads evermore for his chosen. We have a high priest, through whom all that come to God will be accepted, "seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Never forget that "he made intercession for the transgressors." He has, moreover, a special pleading for believers. Concerning them there is a peculiar exercise of intercession; for he says, "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me." The high priest had a peculiar office in reference to the seed of Israel, and our Lord makes special intercession for his saints. He is exercising that office now. How much we owe to his intercession no tongue can tell. Try to learn a little of it from these words, "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." "I have prayed for thee": here is our safety. Believe, my brethren, that our Lord has prayed for us, is praying for us still. With his quick eye of love he has perceived our danger long before we have dreamed of it; and with his eloquent tongue of earnestness he has pleaded the causes of our soul at the throne of grace, before we were aware of our peril. "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him"; and even so your heavenly High Priest perceives what you have need of, and asks for it long before you think of presenting such a petition. Blessed be the name of him who is the Advocate with the Father on our behalf!

"He ever lives to intercede  
Before his Father's face:  
Give him, my soul, thy cause to plead,  
Nor doubt the Father's grace."

But, next, *this benediction is yet of a higher order than intercession*. Every man in the camp might have prayed—The Lord bless and keep his people, and lift up his countenance upon them. But no man in all the camp would have dared to say, in the same authoritative style as Aaron did: "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." Here is not only faith pleading, but faith receiving and bestowing. "Without doubt," says Paul, "the less is blessed of the greater"; and thus Aaron was

greater than the people, being set apart to a high and honourable office, into which none else might intrude. He was God's representative, and so he spoke with the authority of his office. To-day our Saviour's intercession in the heavenly places rises far higher in power and glory than that of any ordinary intercessor. He blesses in fact, while the greatest saints on earth and in heaven can only bless in desire.

“ With cries and tears he offer'd up  
His humble suit below ;  
But with authority he asks,  
Enthroned in glory now.”

This benediction wears the form of a fiat as well as of a prayer. The priest here speaks the blessing for which he asks. Turning to the Father, our Lord Jesus cries, “ Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me.” Turning to us he says, “ The Lord bless thee, and keep thee.” What he prays for of God he distributes among men, by an authority vested in him by the Father. “ For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.” My heart delights to think of the Lord Jesus Christ at this hour, not as a Gethsemane pleader, with groans, and agony, and bloody sweat ; but as one who has finished his work, and who now reigns in the glory of the Father, having all power in heaven and in earth. He sends the blessing to those to whom it comes. His prayer is so infinitely effectual, that he practically gives the blessing himself. Has he not said, “ If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it ” ?

Notice, in the next place, that *this blessing is sure*. Aaron did not bless the people of his own will ; he did not utter good words of his own composing ; but there went forth a divine power which made the form of blessing to be a blessing indeed.

There was power in the priestly benediction. First, because Aaron was appointed by God himself to bless the people, and when he pronounced the benediction over the assembled multitude it was not Aaron's blessing, but the blessing of Jehovah, who had sent him. The God who set him apart to bless the people in the divine name was, by that very act and deed, engaged to make good his servant's words. Even so our blessed High Priest took not this office upon himself, but he was called thereunto ; and his call is abundantly certified, “ For him hath God the Father sealed.” What our Lord says must stand, for he is commissioned of the Father ; and anointed of the Spirit, as the ambassador of peace. God is in Christ Jesus, and the Godhead stands at the back of every word of mercy, every syllable of blessing which is uttered by the ever-blessed Son. I delight to think of my Lord as no amateur intercessor, taking up a work on his own responsibility without heavenly sanction ; but he was appointed before all worlds to bless us, and God will confirm every benediction which his Son pronounces upon us.

But there is another reason for being certain that the benediction is sure to all the seed. Not only was the person chosen to bless the people, but the very words which he should use were put into his mouth. “ On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them.” Here we have a fixed form of benediction, to which Aaron

was to restrict himself. Forms of prayer are not in themselves sinful : in some instances, forms are given in the Word of God, as in the Book of Psalms, and elsewhere. Free prayer is most useful, and it will ordinarily consort best with the movements of the free Spirit ; but in the case of a benediction, it is well that it was dictated to the man of God. The children of Israel might miss blessing through the ignorance, or forgetfulness, or unbelief of Aaron ; and therefore it was not left to him ; but he had to learn by heart each word and sentence. In this wise, and in no other, was he to bless the people. I like this ; for if God himself puts the very words into the mouth of his priest, then they are God's words. God himself arranged the three wonderful stanzas of blessing, and commanded Aaron to say so much, and no more. Not according to his own mind, or wish, or tenderness, or narrowness, does Aaron bless ; but according to God's own mind must the fixed and predetermined benediction be given forth. Blessed be the name of God ; the benediction is thus assured to us, for the words are his own. Even so the Lord hath put into the Saviour's mouth the words of blessing for us. Jesus said, " I speak not my own words, but the words of him that sent me." Every glorious proclamation of grace from the mouth of our Lord Jesus is a word given him by the great God himself. How our souls delight in this ! I have heard people talk about the limitation of Christ's nature while he was here ; and I fear their next step will be Socinianism. Beloved, every word that our Lord Jesus uttered was infallible. He fell into no errors of any sort. If he did err and *you* find it out, it is clear that you know more than your Master ; and that sounds very like blasphemy. Christ is the wisdom of God, and the power of God ; in the wisdom of God there can be no mistake, and in the power of God not one word shall fall to the ground. Wherefore, beloved, concerning this blessing, and every other that you find in God's Word, be certain that it is true. Rest in quiet assurance ; for if God himself has appointed the priest to bless, and has given the very words which he is to utter, the Lord would compromise his own honour and glory if he were to run back therefrom. God himself in Christ Jesus declares that he will bless his people : yea, and they shall be blessed !

While dwelling upon the form of this benediction, observe that *it was to be continued*. It was not dependent upon the life of one man ; for Moses was to speak unto Aaron " and to his sons." Aaron could not continue for ever by reason of death : in due time he must be stripped of his official garments, and die, like the rest of men ; but then his son came in his stead, and the perpetual oblation and benediction were maintained. The blessing was not to cease from generation to generation. This was always to be one of the glorious offices of the high priest, that he should bless the people. Here I would dwell with pleasure upon my subject : the blessing of the Lord our God was upon his ancient people ; but it is also upon us on whom the ends of the world are come. That blessing fell upon us in the beginning, when we were converted ; and it has never ceased. The blessing of the Lord falls on us now as a refreshing dew, or as the golden rain when the corn is springing. The saints are for ever the blessed of the Lord. He blesses us to-day. There was a day when you felt very near

to the Lord your God, and you remember the Hermons and the Hill Mizars with regretful fondness. You enjoyed the divine blessing more that day than perhaps you do this morning; but, in very truth, the blessing is always the same. The sun's light is always the same, only our mists and fogs come in to hide his face. Our great Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, shines evermore with fulness of favour upon his people; but our doubts and fears, our worldliness and sin, come in like mists and hide his brightness. God towards his people is of one mind, and who can turn him? He blesses ever: he curses never. You can never say of the Lord that, towards his chosen, "out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing." No bitter waters are intermixed with the sweet streams of his grace.

I would add that *this blessing came frequently*. We do not know how often Aaron uttered this blessing upon the people. In this passage it is left without any determination as to times and seasons. It is something like our Saviour's Memorial Feast: we are nowhere told when and how often we are to celebrate the Supper of the Lord. Although it seems to me to have been the practice in apostolic times to break bread on the first day of the week, there is no law laid down. It is put thus: "This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." So Aaron is not told that on such a day, and at such an hour, he shall bless the people; but he may do as his heart dictates. On the day of atonement, when the high priest came out from the secret place, he put on his robes of beauty, and blessed the people. I do not find that he was commanded to do so every day; but the Jews say that Aaron always blessed the people after the offering of the morning sacrifice, when the lamb had been slain and consumed upon the altar. This was not repeated in the evening. Of this we know nothing beyond the tradition; and I mention it mainly because the older divines were wont to say that Aaron gave a blessing in the morning, that is, in the first part of time, for then the ceremonial law stood; but that he can give no blessing in the evening; for now Christ himself has come in the end of days, and we have no need of a blessing from the Aaronic priesthood, seeing the great Melchizedek has come. There may be something in that tradition, and there may be nothing; but this I know, that Aaron did often bless the people, and this is to my mind full of comfort. The Lord Jesus is ready still to bless us. Have you few blessings? You limit them yourselves. You are not straitened in him; you are straitened in your own bowels. There is for you a blessing every morning: seek it when you wake. There is for you a blessing every evening: rest not till you feel it. There is a blessing for you at midnight, when you keep the watches wearily; and there is a blessing for you at midday, when you bear the noontide heat of care and toil. "Thy blessing is upon thy people": that is to say, it is always upon them. Our great High Priest doth not now and then bless the people; but from his lips grace distils as dew, and drops as rain, without ceasing. Our Lord is always blessing, and we are always blessed. Oh, for grace to know this, and to glorify the God of our blessings!

II. We will now consider THE BLESSING ITSELF. Oh, for renewed help from the Holy Spirit!

Notice, carefully, that this benediction *passes from the priest to God*. It is not, "I, Aaron, ordained of God, bless you, and like a shepherd I will keep you, and smile upon you, and give you peace." Oh, no! the blessing falls from Aaron's lips, but it comes originally from the Lord's heart and hand. It runs thus: "*The Lord* bless thee, and keep thee: *the Lord* make his face shine upon thee: *the Lord* lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." Every blessing must come directly from God. What an honour was put on Aaron, to be made the mouthpiece of God! What an honour is put upon the preacher when he becomes the instrument, in God's hand, for cheering his people! What an honour is put upon you when, in talking with your children, or with your friends, you are privileged to be as a golden conduit-pipe, through which the holy oil of salvation flows to them! I pray you, seek much of this honour. Put yourselves in God's way, that you may be vessels for his use. Ask him to give you grace to seize upon every opportunity to speak what he would have you say. But, I pray you, never rest in the blessing of a man. Nay, if you were sure that such a man were sent of God, and he should, with all earnestness, invoke the best benison upon you, be not content with the man, but press on to the Master. Seek to have blessing first-hand from heaven. Covet a good man's blessing, and count it a treasure; but value it only because God speaks through the man.

*This fact makes the blessing exceedingly precious.* "THE LORD bless thee." What a blessing the Lord gives! Have we not heard a mother say to her little child, "Bless you"? What a wealth of meaning she threw into it! But when God says, "Bless you!" there are infinity and immutability in it. There can be no limit to the goodwill of the infinite God. *Our* gifts are like a handful of pence. God's gifts are so rich that I dare not liken them even to silver or gold. When Jehovah blesses, it is after the manner of his sovereign Almightyness. His benediction sheds joy and glory over our entire manhood. "The Lord bless thee"—what an ocean of blessedness is in it! "And keep thee"—what safe keeping is that! "The Lord make his face to shine upon thee"—what a shine is that! "And be gracious unto thee"—what grace is that!—the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. "The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee"—oh, to be countenanced of God! what fellowship that means! "And give thee peace." What a peace is that which God gives—the peace of God which passeth all understanding!

It behoves us to interpret the words of our text in the largest possible manner, and to look upon them as being not only waters up to the knees, but waters to swim in. Here we may cry, "Oh, the depth!" The Lord blesses his people "according to the riches of his glory by Christ Jesus." Do you know what his riches are? Can you measure the estate of God? Can you imagine what the riches of his grace must be? Here you have the riches of his glory; yes, and the greatest riches of his glory, by Christ Jesus. The Lord blesses you according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus; and what can be more? Dwell on that; I say no more.

I call your special attention, in looking over this benediction, to the fact that *the name of THE LORD, or Jehovah, is three times mentioned.* "Jehovah bless thee, and keep thee: Jehovah make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: Jehovah lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." It is the remark of scholars, that each one of these names bears a different mark in the original Hebrew. I will not say that this teaches the doctrine of the Trinity; but I must say that, believing the doctrine of the Trinity, I understand the passage all the better. The shadow of the Triune God is on the sacred benediction in the name thrice repeated. Yet is the Lord but one, for he says: "I will bless thee." Here we hear the voice of One, yet Three. We sang, this morning, a hymn beginning, "Holy, holy, holy"; for thus the heavenly worshippers salute the divine Majesty. They cry, "Holy, holy, holy," three times. Why not twice? Why not four times? Why not seven times? For this last, there might be a reason, since seven is the number of perfection. Trine expressions are most frequent in Holy Scripture; and what can this mean, but that the Lord who is one God for ever and ever, is also threefold in his existence and manifestation? We are to speak of him as "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty"; and we may pronounce the blessing upon the people in the name of Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, still knowing that there is but one who has solemnly said at the close of the blessing, "They shall put my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them." Let the sacredness of that name, and its being mentioned in this way, confirm you in the belief of the inscrutable mystery of the Three in One. What is this benediction now before us but an early form of the benediction used universally in the church of Jesus Christ in all ages? "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen."

Taking the three sentences in the light now cast upon them the first sentence, "The Lord bless thee and keep thee," may be regarded as *the benediction of the Father.* It is the preservation of love. It is God who has hitherto kept you from falling. We are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." "He will keep the feet of his saints." "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep." To the Father's tender care I would, at this hour, commend each one of you: "The Lord bless thee and keep thee." May he do this when thou art in great temptation, that thou yield not! May he keep thee from thine own evil heart of unbelief, that thou turn not aside! Contending with a sinful world, may he keep thee from its snares! Marching through a region full of seductions to error, may he keep thee from quitting the truth, even as he keepeth his own elect! The Lord bless thee with all good, and keep thee from all evil! They are well kept whom God keeps, and none are kept besides. There is no keeping like divine keeping. He saith: "I will be a wall of fire round about them"; and again, "He kept him as the apple of his eye"; and again, "I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." "The Lord is thy keeper." "The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy

soul." We pray, "Lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil," and the prayer is directed to "Our Father in heaven." I think you will find a depth of meaning in this first line of the holy hymn of blessing, if you regard it as the benediction of the Father. Do not so regard it exclusively, for there is no clear line of demarcation; each of the three stanzas melts into the other two, and the blessing is still one.

The next clause is *the benediction of the Son*, or the joy of grace: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." "The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee": this means the favour of God; may it be given to each one of you! You know where God's face is: we read of "The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." He that hath seen Jesus hath seen the Father. When our Lord smiles on us, we see the face of God—that face not veiled with frowns, but bright with smiles: a face full of love and favour, a face which was once turned away, but is now turned towards us in peace. "The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee." Dearly beloved, is there any grace conceivable like the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ? and is there any light conceivable like the shining of the love of God? A few moments ago the fog surrounded this place, and we seemed as if we were descending into pitch darkness; but, in an instant, light poured in through yonder windows, and there was an immediate change; and now the sun is shining upon us—a thing to be noted in this rarely sun-lit land. In this I see a symbol of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. We come upon a period of gloom and deep depression, and midnight lowers upon our day; and then a breath of the heavenly wind chases away the fog, and the Sun of Righteousness rises, and the scene is changed. Let us have the favour of God, and all our troubles are less than nothing.

" In darkest shades if he appear,  
My dawning is begun."

May we always walk in the light, as God is in the light; but that must be through the shining of his face. Through Jesus Christ we may enjoy an eternal sunshine. Even in heaven, "The Lamb is the light thereof." There is no light for us except through Jesus Christ. May the Lord Jesus be gracious to you! He is full of grace. To you that are in trouble to-day, may he be gracious with his consolations. To you that are fighting for him, may he be gracious in covering your head in the day of battle. To you that labour, may he put underneath you the everlasting arms of grace; and so may you have grace upon grace, and all the graces that you want till you enter into glory. Surely this second benediction is as full as it is brief. It is a box wherein all sweets compacted lie. Given the love of God the Father, and the grace of God the Son, our bliss runs high.

The third blessing is surely that of *the Holy Ghost*. "The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." Here is the fellowship of peace. For God's face to shine is one thing, and a very precious thing; but for God to lift up his countenance upon us, is a still richer boon. To feel that God is dealing graciously with me, and

shining upon me, is very delicious; but to know that he countenances me, that he supports me in my acts, and is in fellowship with me—this is best of all. Oh, to think that, looking upon me, the Lord says, “Yes, my child, you are doing right; I countenance you in what you are doing.” This is joy. Every servant has seen her mistress’s face fall; but she is glad when the same face is lifted up upon her, because she has done well, and has given pleasure. I do pray that the Holy Ghost may countenance all of you who work for the Lord Jesus Christ. I pray that you may say, “I have the countenance of God. No one applauds me: I am obscure. Many criticize me, and say that I am mistaken: others cavil and abuse. But, Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me, and it will more than suffice.” To be countenanced by God is better than being commended by princes. Then follow the words, “And give thee peace”: for when a man knows that God countenances him, then he enters into peace. Why should he fret when God smiles? What matters though all the world should censure, if Jehovah countenances his servant. A look of approval from God creates a deep, delightful calm within the soul. Brothers, may the Holy Comforter work this peace in you all!

But now, very briefly, notice that *this benediction is all along in the singular*. It is not, “The Lord bless you, and keep you”; but, “The Lord bless thee, and keep thee.” Why? Because the people of God are one, and he views them as one; and so the blessing comes upon the entire church as a whole. But, next, I think it is that every individual believer may take the whole of this benediction home to himself. The high priest seems to say, not—“The Lord bless Ephraim and Manasseh, Judah and Benjamin”; but, as if he singled out each one of the assembly, he says, “The Lord bless thee, and keep thee.” Dear brethren, I will not call you out by name, but I would say to each brother, “The Lord bless thee.” I cannot, my sisters, name you in public, though you serve the Lord so well; but I will speak to you individually, and say, “The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; and make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; and countenance thee, and give thee peace.” The blessing is meant for the appropriation of each one. While it embraces the whole church in one word, it yet distributes a full portion to each individual. We may each one take to himself the whole of this great benediction.

III. More I might have said upon this Old Testament benediction; but time fails me, and so I must conclude, by a word or two, in the third place, upon **THE DIVINE AMEN**.

The divine Amen is in the last verse: “And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them.” Only two or three words will suffice.

Here is *the authority repeated*, by way of confirmation of what has been said: “They shall put my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them.” The priest does his part, and then the Lord makes the blessing effectual. Christ is authorized of God to put the name of God upon his people. It is a delightful thing for the Lord to call us by our own name, as it is written, “I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine.” It is even more soul-enriching to have the divine name put upon us, so as to be called Sons of God,

Joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. Herein is condescension on God's part, and honour and security for us. When the Lord's name is named upon anything, he will guard his own dedicated things. The name of the Lord is a strong tower, and within it we are safe.

I think I see here a confirmation of those blessings which are pronounced by good men. "They shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them." I loved to have my grandfather's blessing, when I was preaching the Word in early days. He has now gone into the glory; but he blessed me, and none can take away the name of God from me. Most of you will remember the blessings of good men who are now gone to glory; and God confirms those blessings. He allows his people, whom he has made priests and kings unto God, to put his name upon others, and to pronounce blessings upon them. Their word shall stand, and what they bind on earth shall be bound in heaven. The blessing of your father and of your mother shall come upon you. The blessing of the angels of the churches, whom the Lord holds as stars in his right hand, shall fall on faithful believers and helpers as a dew from the Lord himself.

And then comes, best of all, *the blessing of our God most surely promised*: "And I will bless them." I will not attempt to preach from that little, great text—"I will bless them." I could enlarge upon it by the month. "I will bless them": they shall have their troubles; but I will bless them through their troubles. When they have earthly goods, I will bless them and make them real comforts. I will bless their basket and their store. If those earthly comforts are taken away, I will give them compensation a thousand-fold in myself. I, who gave the mercies, will allow no one but myself to take them away; and this shall only be done in love, that I may bless them still more. Brethren, the world may curse us; but if God bless us, the curse will be as the whistling wind. Friends may become enemies, or may forget us; but, if God blesses us, we can bear the wound. God blessed us when we were young, he kept us in the giddy paths of youth; he blessed us in our hale manhood, and helped us when our family cares were upon us; and he will still sustain us now that we lean heavily on the staff, and find the grasshopper to be a burden. He will bless us when sickness lays us low; and when we come to die Jesus will bless us with dying grace for dying moments, and hand us out our best things last. We shall wake up in the likeness of Christ, and then we shall be satisfied with his blessing, being transformed into the image of him by whom the blessing comes. The judgment-day shall dawn, the earth shall pass away, but the Lord will bless us. God's "will" has an eternal range. When God saith, "I will," all the devils in hell cannot turn aside the blessing, and all the ages of eternity cannot change the King's word. "I will bless them." How much he will bless them he does not say; but the great I who makes the promise blesses like a God. God himself will bless his people, directly, and personally. "I will bless them." Here is absolute certainty based on the faithfulness of the Lord: here is endless mercy certified by the divine eternity and immutability. Do you whisper, "But the Lord sends us trials"? I answer, It is true. What son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But in this is a covenant blessing;

for every twig of the rod shall bring forth to them the comfortable fruits of righteousness ere many days are past. You do not need that I should say another word. Go home with this celestial music in your ears, "I will bless them."

This blessed assurance does not belong to you all indiscriminately. We have no blessing for those who are not believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. O sinners, God make you conscious that you are outside of the blessing; and may that terrible fact create in you an aching heart, and a longing soul, which nothing can ever rest but the blessing of the Lord God.

You that are resting in Jesus, hear these words, which I have read you from the inspired Book, and may the Holy Ghost write them on your minds. Thus saith Jehovah of his people, "I will bless them." The Lord has caused his servants to bless us by the testimony of the gospel, and now he himself blesses us by his Spirit. He will himself bring his precious things to our door. He will himself feast us at his table, yea, he will himself become our food, our bread, and our water. Come, let us bless the Lord. Since he has so blessed us, let us heartily bless him. We will wind up our meditation by singing—

"Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise him all creatures here below;  
Praise him above, ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!"

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PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm lxxx.;  
Numbers vi. 22—27.

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