

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

A WORTHY THEME FOR THOUGHT.

A Sermon

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DELIVERED BY

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“We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple.”—
Psalm xlviii. 9.

WHO were these people who declared to the Lord that they had thought of his lovingkindness in the midst of his temple? According to the title of the Psalm, they were the sons of Korah. And who were the sons of Korah? They were the singers in the house of the Lord, those who took the principal part in sounding forth the praises of Jehovah. I think it is suggestive that they did not say, “We have sung of thy lovingkindness.” They had done that, and it was their constant employment; but they said, “We have *thought* ;” and there are some singers who have not done that, for they have sung solemn words thoughtlessly, caring only for the music, and not for the meaning. One who is not a skilled musician, or trained vocalist, can tell when his ear is pleased with what he hears, and I think that such a person will say that the very sweetest music he has ever heard has come from sincere hearts, even if the voices have not been in complete harmony. If you hear Christians sing when they are in the spirit, and sing what they really feel, their singing may not be artistic, and it may not be accurate; but, if your own heart is right with God, it will have such an effect upon you as no other music can have. Singing from the heart is the noblest form of praise to God. Some people would not shout so loudly where the words should be uttered softly, or sing so harshly where pathos is required, if they were thinking while they were singing; but it is quite possible for us to be uttering sweet sounds without our mind and heart being really occupied in the exercise. Let it not be so with us, dear friends; but, whenever we sing, may we so praise God in our spirit that, at the close of every psalm and hymn, we may be able to say, with these sons of Korah, “We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple.”

But why did they write this? For, according to the title, this
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is "A Psalm of (or for) the sons of Korah." It was, probably, written by them because this fact was so refreshing to their memory. Possibly, at the time the Psalm was written, they were not in the house of the Lord, nor able to go there to sing, so they recorded their past experience to cheer them under their present trial: "We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God. There have been, in days gone by, happy times when we have rejoiced in thy great love to us; and although we are now debarred the privilege of sounding forth thy praise in the midst of thy temple, our memory recalls the glad seasons of the past, and our soul is, for a while, content to sup upon these cold meats, and to look forward to the day when once more we shall be banqueted in the house of the Lord." Sometimes, dear friends, when you get into the wilderness, it is sweet to remember that you were once an inhabitant of Zion; especially when you feel such an inward longing to get back again that you can say, with the psalmist, "As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" In this very house of prayer, have not our hearts burned within us, many a time, as we have praised our great and gracious God? Have not our souls then been ready to dance with ecstasy? If so, we may well pray to the Lord, and say, "Renew thy former mercies to us. Quicken us again, we pray thee. O restore unto us the joy of thy salvation, and cause our hearts again to shout aloud with grateful thanksgiving for all thy lovingkindness towards us!"

To help us to receive an answer to the prayer which I have just uttered on your behalf, as well as for myself, let us look at our text very carefully, and seek the Holy Spirit's guidance in explaining it. Doing so, I think we shall learn, first, that *the occupation of these sons of Korah was gracious*: "We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God." Then, secondly, *the place was appropriate*. Where could they be, to think of the lovingkindness of the Lord, better than in his temple? When I have spoken on these two points, I will try to show you, thirdly, that *the result was beneficial*. The Psalm itself shows us how much they were profited by thinking upon the lovingkindness of the Lord, and it also reveals to us the blessing which came to others through them.

I. So, first, we learn that THEIR OCCUPATION WAS GRACIOUS: "We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God."

Thought is a noble faculty; the power to exercise it distinguishes men from the brute beasts. We grovel when we are under necessity to perform the acts that relate only to the body; we rise as we are able to perform the functions of the mind and heart. Really to think, is an ennobling employment; yet it is not everybody who cares to think. There are many, who regard themselves as religious people, who like to pay somebody else to do their thinking for them, so it is theirs only at second-hand. They are not like the noble Bereans, who "received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so;" thus going to the fountain-head, instead of drinking of the streams

which have, probably, been polluted in their course. You may rest assured of this, that you do not really know anything until you have thoroughly thought it out. You say, perhaps, "I believe such-and-such a creed;" yet you hardly know what is stated in that creed, and you certainly do not know what the words mean; and, therefore, you do not really believe it in the right fashion. If you would truly know it, you must study and labour to understand it; in fact, you must think over it. But the singular thing is, that many people will do almost anything except think. A pretty service, to which the flowers from Covent Garden lend the chief attraction, or in which the millinery makes the greatest show, pleases a great many; and to have the ears charmed with the melodious sounds of vocal or instrumental music producing a sensuous feeling which they suppose to be true devotion, but is not,—how many there are who will give almost anything for this; but as for thinking, they cannot do that. Such work is too hard for their mental constitution; they do not think, and they cannot think. Yet, brethren, no man can be a strong Christian unless he is able to say, in the words of our text, "We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God." What is needed is that we should believingly think in harmony with the great thoughts of God, thinking them over again after him, as it were; not endeavouring to think anything contrary to what is revealed, or seeking to be inventors of truth,—which we can never be;—but reading, marking, learning, and inwardly digesting what we find recorded in the Sacred Scriptures. This is the kind of thought that we must exercise if we are to grow in grace, and to make advances in the divine life.

Not only, however, is thought a noble faculty, but *God's loving-kindness is a theme that is specially worthy of thought*. If there is any subject that may be neglected in our meditations, this must never be. The commonest ties of gratitude bind us at least to think about the great goodness of God to us. It is an amazing thing that he should ever have so highly favoured such unworthy persons as we are, and favoured us so long, so tenderly, and so perseveringly. Truly, the mercies he hath bestowed upon us should never be—

"Forgotten in unthankfulness,
And without praises die."

Besides, if we do not at least think about God's lovingkindness to us, we may well tremble lest he should no more think upon us for good, and find more grateful recipients of his lovingkindness. Not think of his lovingkindness? Why! there are some of us who cannot help doing so, for it continues to be manifested to us every day. We cannot forget the past mercies, for the present ones are so abundant. Fresh oil to anoint us is ever flowing from the good olive tree which is one of the symbols of our Saviour. How can we forget what the Lord has done for us? I might slightly alter that striking expression of captive Israel, and say, "If I forget thee, O thou lovingkindness of the Lord, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof

of my mouth." The beam out of the wall, and the stones on which we rest our feet, might well cry out against us if we did not think of the lovingkindness of the Lord. If we cannot tell all about it; if we cannot properly weigh and value it; if we cannot give any adequate return for it; yet let us at least think of it. Let every one of us think of it now, so that we may be able to say, at the close of the service, or even before, "We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple."

Further, *such thought as our text describes is essential to all true worship.* Be not startled if I say that it is very much in proportion to our thought that we do really worship; and, without thought, there is no true worship. Suppose we sing the praises of God without thinking what we are doing; is that praising him? Nay, no more than if we could have taught a parrot, or constructed an automaton, to make the same set of sounds. Suppose we preach without thought; of what value is such preaching? I am afraid there is much of that sort of preaching to be heard. One minister said, some time ago, that he could preach two sermons a day, six days in the week, and think nothing of it; and somebody, who knew his style of speech, said that he was quite right in thinking nothing of it, for there was nothing in it to think of. If the preacher shall talk, and talk, and talk, but does not himself think, his words will not be acceptable even to his hearers, much less can he hope that they will be accepted by God. If you say that you worship God without thought, I answer that you worship not God at all, and that you rather mock him than worship him. If you kneel down to pray, ere you retire to rest, and when you rise up, you say to yourself, "I never thought of what I was saying," then, sir, you did not really pray, there was no true prayer in the act, it was all a mockery and a sham. We must make the whole of our devotion an exercise of the inward spirit, not so much an act of the vocal organs as of the thoughtful part of our being, so that we may be able truly to say, "We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple."

Now, this task of thinking of God's lovingkindness ought to be a very easy one, for *there is abundance of material to think of in God's lovingkindness.*" Well did Joseph Addison sing,—

"When all thy mercies, O my God
My rising soul surveys;
Transported with the view, I'm lost
In wonder, love, and praise."

Each one of us, who has been the subject of saving grace, may say to the Lord, "I have thought of thy lovingkindness to me in thine eternal counsels, or ever the earth was; and of thy lovingkindness to me long before the members of my body were curiously wrought by thy mysterious power." Some of us can say to the Lord, "I have thought of thy lovingkindness in having committed me to the care of a godly mother and a Christian father; of thy lovingkindness to me, in my infant days, when I could not protect myself; of thy lovingkindness to me, in my wayward youth, when I ran into divers follies, knowing not myself or thee; and of thy loving-

kindness to me, when I grew up to manhood, and, alas! my folly ripened into sin. I have thought of thy pitying, restraining, forgiving lovingkindness, that watched over me in all my wanderings, ever tracking the lost sheep that the good Shepherd might always know where it was, and in due time bring it home; and that lovingkindness which, at last, lovingly grasped me, laid me upon thy shoulders, and bore me home rejoicing. Thy lovingkindness, O my God, where shall I end the story of it? Surely, it shall last, not only as long as my existence here, but it shall be continued throughout eternity. Since the new birth of thy servant, how great have been thy lovingkindnesses in instruction, in deliverance, in forgiveness, in comforting, in strengthening, in guiding, in answering prayer, in removing temptation, in conquering infirmity, in leading on from strength to strength!" Oh, if we had to write the complete record, the roll would need to be written within and without to hold the list of all the Lord's lovingkindness, and it would need to be long enough to belt the whole heaven as with a zodiac of light, for his lovingkindness is without end, and altogether untellable. No man can truly say, "I have thought that subject dry; I have worked it threadbare." Oh, no! We have thought, and we still will think of God's lovingkindness to us; but that is a theme not only worthy of thought, but beyond all thought.

If any of you, brethren, think there is likely to be any lack of material for thought, I beg you to consider the various acts of divine grace, all of which are full of the lovingkindness of the Lord;—the everlasting covenant, personal election, redemption, effectual calling, adoption, sanctification, final perseverance. Touch on any point you please, and you may think with joy and gratitude of God's marvellous lovingkindness.

Then, each one of you turn to your own personal experience. I need not again remind you how gracious God has been to you; I have already given you a sort of outline sketch of it. But, oh! there are some of you who could tell—no, you would not like to tell, but you know—some wonderful things about the Lord's lovingkindness to you. As for myself, I know that my Master has done for me that which, if I were to tell it, would never be believed; and, therefore, I shall keep the story of it till I get where doubt and incredulity will never be admitted. The lovingkindness of the Lord is amazing. Oh, what blessed secrets there have been between him and some of his most highly favoured people! When they have been locked up in the darkest dungeons of the prison-house, then have they discovered that they were in the King's wine-cellars, and he has said to them, "Drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." When they have been shut out from all natural light, they have found that they did not need the sunlight, for their Lord's presence has given them all the brightness they have needed. I warrant you that the Covenanters and our Puritan forefathers knew more of the lovingkindness of the Lord than many of us do; though some of us know so much of it that we shall need all eternity to tell the wondrous story. Oh, he is a good and gracious God! If you do not think so, it is because you

do not know him. Perhaps you have not yet seen him in the right light. Possibly, you have been living under the law; if you were living under grace, you would understand him better. Or perhaps you have been trying to live with just a little grace; whereas, if you had more grace, you would know the Lord better, and then you would adore him more. It is never with him as it is with certain earthly masters; the less they are known, the better are they liked; and the shorter the service under them is, the sweeter is it considered. Oh, no! our blessed Lord is better loved the better he is known; and the longer we serve him, the easier does his yoke prove to our shoulders. Personally, I can testify that I find it an ever-increasing joy to be his servant; and it is to me the source of pardonable pride that my two sons are in the service of the same Master; and I should not say that if I had found him to be a bad master. I know what some of you say, "I have such a hard taskmaster that I will never bring my boy to him to be apprenticed;—not I." But when you serve the Lord Jesus Christ, if you do but know him as he really is, you will wish to have all whom you love to be beloved of him, and it will be your heart's delight to see them all earnestly engaged in his blessed service.

Talking thus of the Lord's lovingkindness to any one of you personally, we might, in time, get to the end of the story; but, beloved, there are thousands of you here, who, unless you have grossly deceived yourselves, have a similar tale to tell. The lovingkindness of the Lord to any one of his children is a theme of wonder; but, to hundreds, to thousands, to millions, to a multitude that no man can number, O my blessed Lord, thy lovingkindnesses are like the sand upon the seashore, or like the stars of heaven, innumerable! None but thyself can fully understand thyself.

"God only knows the love of God."

It is beyond all the bounds of human thought, or speech, or calculation, or imagination.

I think, dear friends, that I have now shown you that there is plenty of room for thought upon the subject of the Lord's lovingkindness. So now let me go on to say that *this is a kind of worship in which all of you, who are God's people, may engage.* When I go home, after this service, I shall be able to say, "I have preached thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple." You will not all be able to say that, for, if we were all preachers, where would be the hearers? But I hope you will be able to say, "I have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple." Perhaps your singing does not count for much, like mine,—more of a growl than a song, our musical friends say. Never mind if it is so; if you cannot sing, you can say to the Lord, "I have *thought* of thy lovingkindness;" and that, after all, being the very essence and soul of worship, will be more profitable to you than if, without thought, you had spoken with the greatest eloquence, or sung only with your lips the sweetest notes of music. Ah! my dear sick sister over yonder, hardly fit to be out of your room, I hope you will be able to say, "I have thought of thy

lovingkindness, O God." My poor old friend, up there in the gallery, who cannot even read the Scriptures, you also can join with us, my brother, in saying, "We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God." Yes, my friend, though you have not the talent of communicating anything to others, for you feel so bashful, and are almost hiding your head even now while I am speaking, and although you scarcely think yourself worthy to come to the communion table with the Lord's people, yet you know that you can chime in with us when we say, "We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God." I do delight in any form of worship in which everybody can join; and this is such that no one, who really loves the Lord, need keep himself out of the happy united assembly.

Yet, brethren, *this practice of thinking of God's lovingkindness is not universally followed.* I am afraid that, in all congregations, there are many people who do not think at all; and many others, who do think, but they think about almost anything except the lovingkindness of the Lord. You missed your ring from your finger! You say to yourself, "Where did I leave those keys?" You are wondering how that sick child is! You are thinking about that pair of horses to be sold to-morrow! Oh, yes, under the most faithful ministries, these odds and ends of daily life will force their way in if they can; but they must be rigidly excluded when they take the place of that one theme that is really worthy of our thought. When the birds came down to eat the sacrifice that Abraham was offering, he drove them away. Try, dear friends, to do the same with all that is carnal, frivolous, worldly, that your sacrifices unto the Lord may be well pleasing in his sight, and that you may be able to join with the sons of Korah in saying, "We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple."

II. Now, secondly, I want to show you that *the place was appropriate*: "in the midst of thy temple."

The temple at Jerusalem stands no longer; it is gone, but are there not temples of God now? Yes, a good many. Of what are they composed? They are composed of living men and women; there are no other temples of God. The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?" But those handsome buildings with spires and towers, and those barn-looking structures called Nonconformist places of worship, are they not temples? No; or if they are called temples, then to them Stephen's words may be applied, "The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands." So let us cast aside the superstition which regards any particular place, or any set of bricks, and mortar, and stones, and iron, as being in any sense or degree holy. Holiness is not an attribute attaching to material substances. God says, "Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things?"

But there is still a temple of the living God, and that temple is made up of the aggregate of all the temples; the temples are

the bodies of his people; and the whole Church, which is the mystical body of Christ, is the temple of God. By the term, the Church, I mean the whole body of believers throughout the world, and in heaven, too, for they together form the one "general assembly and Church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven." This is the temple of the living God, and I hope that many of us can say that we are in the midst of it. If we are numbered amongst God's people, the tens of thousands, and hundreds of thousands, all over the world, who love the Lord, surely we are in the most appropriate place to think of the lovingkindness of the Lord.

And, first, if we are in the midst of God's spiritual temple, his true Church, we may well *think of his lovingkindness in permitting us to be there*. "What!" says one, "am I really one of the Lord's chosen people? Dare I hope that I have a part and a lot with his saints? Who would have thought that such a thing was possible? Who would have dreamed that it could ever be so?" Ah! beloved, of all the wonders you will ever see in the Church of God, if you really know yourself, the greatest wonder of all will be to find yourself there. I am never tired of singing, with good Dr. Watts,—

"Why was I made to hear thy voice,
And enter while there's room;
When thousands make a wretched choice,
And rather starve than come?"

"'Twas the same love that spread the feast,
That sweetly forced us in;
Else we had still refused to taste,
And perish'd in our sin."

Cannot many of you say the same thing? Some of your old companions are not here; perhaps they even ridicule the idea of coming to such a place as this. Possibly, some of your former associates are now where hope and mercy can never reach them. Why was it not your lot to reject Christ, and to perish in your sin? What, but the sovereign grace of God has made the difference between you and them? So well may you say, "'We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple;' we have thought of thy lovingkindness in putting us into thy temple, and even making some of us to be pillars in that temple."

Standing in the midst of that temple, which is the true Church of God, we cannot help thinking of the lovingkindness of the Lord, for *every stone in that temple testifies to his lovingkindness*. These are the living stones that are "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord." And, brethren, the very quarrying of every stone out of the pit of nature, and the squaring of every stone so as to make it fit to be built into God's temple, is such a work of lovingkindness that, as we look upon our brothers and sisters,—the living stones that lie in the same course with ourselves,—we may well think of God's lovingkindness.

We may also think of the lovingkindness of the Lord, in the midst of his temple, *because everything in that temple reminds us of his lovingkindness*. There was, for instance, the altar of burnt offering; and we can say, "Thank God for the lovingkindness which has provided for us the one great atoning sacrifice by which our sin is for ever put away." There stood, too, the golden altar of incense; and every thoughtful believer says, "Thank God for the lovingkindness which has given us Christ to be our Intercessor before the throne of God on high, where his prevailing prayers are continually ascending on our behalf." There also stood the shewbread upon the sacred table; and we say, "Thank God for him who, as the Bread of life, is the ever-present and ever-satisfying food for his people." There, too, was the golden candlestick, or lamp-stand; and we can say, "Thank God for his lovingkindness in having provided all-sufficient light for his people."

There was nothing, on which the intelligent, thoughtful eye of a believer could rest, in the tabernacle or the temple, that would not remind him of the lovingkindness of the Lord; and I think I may say the same concerning the Church of Christ, to which we belong. Look where you will, everything speaks of the lovingkindness of the Lord. There is, first of all, the great Head of the Church, your Lord and Saviour, and mine. Oh, what lovingkindness there is in him! His incarnation, his life, his death, his resurrection, his ascension, his intercession, his promised second advent,—all these are full of lovingkindness. Then look at the feet of that same mystical body; for the very poorest of the saints will also tell you of the lovingkindness of the Lord. See how, in our baptism, the Lord shows us his lovingkindness by teaching us that the way to life lies through death and burial. Then see how, in that sacred supper which we are about to celebrate, the Lord further shows his lovingkindness by teaching us how the divine life that he has imparted to us is to be nourished by the very body and blood of Christ received into us in a spiritual sense. It is lovingkindness everywhere, brethren, in the temple of the Lord; turn which way you will, it is all lovingkindness, and nothing else.

Will you kindly pick that long word to pieces for a minute? It is a most expressive and instructive word;—loving-kind-ness; not only kindness, or kinnedness,—God acting towards us as if he were near akin to us;—but, loving-kindness,—the kindness of a brother to his brethren and sisters, the love of a father towards his children;—nay, these are poor things compared with the lovingkindness of the Lord. Sing of it; tell of it; and, as the sons of Korah did, think of it in the midst of the temple of the Lord.

III. The third thing I was to prove to you was, that *the result was beneficial*: "We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple." Having done so, what was the result?

First, according to the context, *they were made joyous*: "Let mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments." You know how you may think over a subject until you can produce within yourself the state of mind which naturally grows out of it. You may take your troubles, and pore

over them, again, and again, and again, and again, until you make yourself as thoroughly miserable as a human being can be. I recollect someone writing to me to say that he had attended the Tabernacle, on one occasion, but that he should never do such a thing again, for he was certain that the tried and afflicted people of God did not meet there. He said, "As I looked around, and saw the happy faces of the congregation, I said to myself, 'These are not the tried people of God.'" Then he went on to inform me that he had found a brother, under whose preaching he could profit, for there were only eight people gathered to listen to him, and they all looked so wretched, and the preacher unfolded such a deep and sorrowful experience, that the brother felt himself quite at home. I was glad that he did, for I like everybody to be where he feels at home; and if anyone is most happy when he is most miserable, I hope he will enjoy himself all he can. That state of mind would not suit me; yet there are persons, of that sort, who never are contented till they are dissatisfied, who never are pleased with anything unless they can grumble and growl at it; and who never seem able to sing,—

"My willing soul would stay
In such a frame as this,"—

until they feel that they cannot stay in it any longer. But, brethren and sisters, I trust we are not "cut on the cross" after that fashion. We delight in being joyful in our God, and we wish that our countenances could always shine as the face of Moses shone when he came down from the mount. So, beloved, think of the lovingkindness of the Lord to you, and see if that does not make melody in your heart unto him, and cause the big bells in your soul to ring carillons of praise so full of jubilant gladness that your very body shall seem as if it could hardly bear the joy. I have sometimes seen an old church steeple rock and reel when a marriage peal has been rung out from the ancient belfry; and, in like manner, at times, one has felt so happy that the poor physical frame seemed as if it could scarcely endure such excess of bliss as the soul was delighting in the lovingkindness of the Lord.

Now, my dear sister, you have talked about that rheumatism of yours to at least fifty people who have been to see you, suppose you tell your next visitor about the lovingkindness of the Lord to you. Yes, my dear brother, we all know that trade is bad, for you have told us so, every day, for I do not know how many years. And you have always been losing money, though you had no capital when you started; yet, somehow or other, you have managed to have something left even now. Well, we know that old story; could you not change your note just a little, and talk about the lovingkindness of the Lord? Yes, my friend, I know that many professing Christian people are not all that they profess to be; I have heard you say so ever so many times. You say also, "There is no love in the church." Well, so far as we can see, you are not overstocked with it. You say, "There is no zeal among the members." But have you any to give away to those who need it?

Now, henceforward, instead of always harping on the faults and failings of God's people,—which, certainly, are numerous enough, but have not become any fewer since you talked so much about them;—would it not be better to think and talk of the lovingkindness of the Lord?

I would like to have this for my theme until I die. If there could be such a sentence as this passed upon me now, "You are never to preach again except upon the lovingkindness of the Lord," my soul would be delighted to have such a commission. I am sure that I should never exhaust the subject, though I would try my hardest to do so. When I had gone as far as I could, I would call on some of you to tell what God had done for you, and so I would start a fresh band of preachers, for each one of you would have a new story to tell of the lovingkindness of the Lord, and the telling of that story would make your own souls glad.

I have partly anticipated what I was going to say upon the next point; which is that, thinking upon the lovingkindness of the Lord *would unloose our tongues*. Notice what it says in the 12th and 13th verses: "Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following." If you have really tasted of God's lovingkindness, you must tell others about it. You cannot keep as a secret the love of God to you. The first instinct of a new-born soul is to tell its joy to somebody else. Think over this theme, and you will find a tongue that you thought you had not got. "While I was musing," said David, "the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue." My sister, you will take a Sunday-school class yet, if you will only think upon God's lovingkindness to you. My dear brother, you can talk to those few poor people in that hamlet where you live. You have been afraid to try to speak to them, and so you have let them remain uninstructed; but you will not be able to be silent if you think upon God's lovingkindness to you. There is a string that ties your tongue; get your heart so red-hot that it will burn that string; and then, off you will go; and when once your tongue is unloosed by such a process as that, it will be said of you as it was of Naphtali, the hind let loose, "he giveth goodly words." Tell to all around you that the Lord is good, and that his mercy endureth for ever.

Does someone ask, "Is there any need to tell that?" Yes, there is, for it has got abroad that our Master is austere, and hard to his servants. I should not wonder if there are some young people, even here, who imagine that religion is a very dull, dreary, miserable thing, and who say that they do not want to be Christians, for they would rather see a little life. They would not mind being converted afterwards, but they would like to have a little happiness first. Well, young people, it is a very good resolution; only let me tell you that it is a pity to look for life in the purlieus of death, for there is none there. It is advisable to have a little happiness, and more advisable to have a good deal of it; and it is most of all advisable to have the greatest happiness possible. I, for one, will

speaking of the lovingkindness of the Lord, and I do not think any believer here will contradict me; and I can say that I never knew what real happiness meant till I trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour. I have had plenty of trouble since then, and much pain of body and depression of spirit; but I can testify that my Master's service is the grandest possible service on earth, and his love to me, and his tenderness and gentleness to me, make me feel that, if I had even to die for him, I would rejoice to do it; and if I had to live as long as Methuselah did, I would only pray that, during every hour and minute of the time, I might consecrate every faculty I had entirely to his praise. We must tell to the generation following the truth about the lovingkindness of the Lord that they may not be deceived by the great enemy of souls, and be made to think that Christ's service is a bondage to the soul.

Last of all, as we think of God's lovingkindness, *we shall be confirmed in our loyalty to him.* How does the Psalm finish? "For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our Guide even unto death." There are some here who have known my Master for fifty years. I have preached him to you for nearly twenty-five years, and I knew him a good while before that. Do I want to change my Master for a better one? Yes, if you can find a better one for me, but that you never will be able to do. Christian, do you believe that you will ever have a better Master than Christ, and a better service than his? No; I know what you will say, "I only want to know him more, and to serve him better, He has bored my ear to his door-post, and I shall not go away from his service ever; for he is mine, and I am his, for ever and for ever." "This God is our God;" he was our father's God, and our mother's God, and the God of the dear ones whom he took from us, to be with him in heaven; and "this God is our God." He is the God to whom we looked in the day of our soul's distress, when we saw him in Christ Jesus, reconciled unto us through the death of his Son: "this God is our God for ever and ever." He is the God who wiped our tears away, and filled our hearts with gladness, and started us on our pilgrimage to heaven with new life in our souls, and new songs on our lips: "this God is our God." He is the God who has heard our prayers, the God who has been with us in our direst extremity, the God who spoke to us words of healing, words of peace, and words of salvation, when we lay on the verge of death, and looked into eternity; he is the God on whom we have cast our unworthy selves, trusting him with our souls, and our all, for this world, and the world to come, "this God is our God for ever and ever." Place your hand on the altar's horn, my brother, and say, "I am his for ever and for ever; never to draw back, never to backslide, never to apostatize, never, his grace enabling me to be steadfast, to dishonour his sacred name, or to do despite to the precious blood of his Son, or to the purity of the indwelling Spirit. Thy lovingkindness, O God, has bound the sacrifice with cords, even to the horns of the altar." So let it be, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake! Amen and Amen.