

SINGING IN THE WAYS OF THE LORD

NO. 1615

A SERMON
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Yes, they shall sing in the ways of the Lord: for great is the glory of the Lord.”
Psalm 138:5.*

ACCORDING to the context, this is spoken of kings. “All the kings of the earth shall praise You, O Lord, when they hear the words of Your mouth. Yes, they shall sing in the ways of the Lord.” It will be a novel spectacle to see kings singing in the ways of the Lord! As a rule, they have not much troubled themselves with singing, but they have often troubled those who love the ways of God and opposed them, both by their laws and by their example. There will yet be another order of things in the earth! These days will be shortened for the elect’s sake and the time shall come when kings shall fall down before the King of kings and all people shall call Jesus blessed! Oh that the time may speedily arrive when a choir of kings shall, with loud voices, magnify the name of the Lord!

Well, dear brothers and sisters that time has not come, and therefore let *us* sing all the more. If the kings have not begun to sing, let us sing! And well we may. We have full permission to do it, for the next verse encourages us—“Though the Lord is high, yet has He respect unto the lowly.” He will be just as pleased with the song of the peasant as with that of the prince—with the psalm of the workman as with that of the monarch! We, too, may come, though obscure and unknown, and we may bring our two mites which make a farthing—and if they are all the praise our soul can give—the Lord will count that we have not given less than kings have! Let us make up for royal silence. If others cannot praise God and speak well of His name, yet let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He has redeemed out of the hands of the enemy! If we do not speak, surely the stones of the street will cry out against us! Therefore I shall take the text and use it in reference to ourselves, believing that for us this promise stands fast, “They shall sing in the ways of the Lord: for great is the glory of the Lord.”

I. We shall discuss the text under four observations, the first of which is the text itself—“THEY SHALL SING IN THE WAYS OF THE LORD.” That is to say, first, gracious persons take pleasure in the things of religion. A man’s religion is worth nothing if it is not his chief delight. That which we do before God as task work is ill done and is *not* acceptable. God will not have slaves to grace His throne! Nor would He be served by us in the spirit of bondage. It is His delight to be served by sons and daughters and to be waited upon by those who do His commandments with delight. If your pleasure is not in the ways of the Lord, then, surely, you *cannot* know much about those ways. You must be a stranger to them and you must be walking in paths which may *look* like the ways of God, but are not really so.

I do not say that those who know the Lord are always happy, but I say that they are always “the seed that the Lord God has blessed.” I may not say that we are always pleasurable in heart in the ways of wisdom, but I will say of the ways of wisdom, themselves, that they are pleasantness and that all its paths are peace. Yes, brothers and sisters, we do not groan out our religion! We do not go to our places of worship as slaves went to the calaboose to be flogged! I do see *some* each Sunday who look dreadfully solemn and they walk to their places of worship as if they were going to the gallows and never expected to come back alive—but that is *not* the spirit in which I would have you go up to the house of God! Go with lightly tripping feet, saying—

*“I have been there and still will go
‘Tis like a little heaven below.”*

I would not be kept away, or bought out of the house of God by all that could be offered me. I believe that Sunday should be spent in recreation! You are dreadfully shocked and well you may be—but what do I mean by, “recreation”? It means creating us over anew! Oh, that everybody who talks about spending Sunday in recreation would know the meaning of the word, “recreation,” and would come to be re-created, regenerated, renewed, refreshed, invigorated, strengthened, revived and made to rejoice in

God! The Lord's Day is the highest hill of the week! On that day we stand on tiptoe on Pisgah and look to "the rest which remains for the people of God!" It is the type of that everlasting Sabbath which remains for the people of God.

Now, as it is with Sabbath-keeping and going up to the house of God—that there we sing in God's ways, so it is with *all* God's ways—they are all full of delight to His people! Those who heartily enter into them are happy people. "Blessed are the people in whose hearts are Your ways." Their heart shall be full of joy and overflowing with delight. Hence it follows, next, that they do not go out of God's ways to get their songs. They shall sing in the ways. Alas! I have heard of some who go here and there, as they say, "to get a little pleasure." What? What? Do I understand you? You find no pleasure in the ways of God? Then, friend, you are a hypocrite! That is plain English—for he that is *really* in God's ways finds his pleasure there. That is his chief delight and he can sing, as our hymn puts it—

*"I need not go abroad for joys,
I have a feast at home!
My sighs are turned into songs,
My heart has ceased to roam."*

Do you call that man a loving husband who says, "Well, you know, you must go away from home sometimes just to have a little pleasure; you cannot always be in the company of your wife and children. You must go from home to get a little pleasure." That is a bad fellow! I am very sorry for his wife and children. A bad lot; I am sure he is. And he who talks about being married to Christ and joined to His church—and then says that he goes elsewhere to find his pleasure—is a traitor! I shake my head about him! I am afraid that I may have to break my heart over him one of these days. When you see professors seeking pleasure in sin and worldliness, there is something rotten at the core! True men of God shall sing in the ways of the Lord and find something to sing of while they are in those ways. It means, too, that they sing as they are actively engaged in the ways of the Lord. That is to say, while they are engaged in the service of God their hearts are joyous and glad. They do not stop the work to go and sing, but they sing as they work! Sailors, when they pull a rope, make a cheery sound. As they heave the anchor they sing after their fashion. Soldiers march to battle with sounds of trumpet and the beat of drums, listening to music while they march. So Christians go on their pilgrimage and keep step to the sound of joyous psalms and hymns. They sing in the ways of the Lord. But sometimes the ways of the Lord call for difficult service. Gracious men may have to visit sick and desponding persons. Surely, if they are of any use to the sick, their hearts will sing even while they are sympathizing with them.

They have to talk with those who are anxious and to lead them to the Savior. And I believe there is no way of doing it as well as by showing them the peace which Jesus gives. Perhaps believers are called to plow fields that seem barren. Yes, but they must still do it! They must be singing as they break the clods; singing as they plow and singing as they sow the seed of God! That is the best way to do it. They shall sing in the ways of the Lord when those ways call for prayer. Song and prayer are like butter and honey, a royal mixture.

I have heard that of old, in America, the principal day of the year was a day of fasting until some good divine said that since God had brought the Puritans from England and landed them in a wilderness, but fed them till the wilderness became a garden. And since He had multiplied their numbers till they had become a great nation, He thought it was time that they kept a day of *thanksgiving* and so they have done ever since! A day of prayer should be a day of thanksgiving, too. Saints sing in the ways of earnest prayer. It never dampens the ardor of intercession to give thanks unto the Most High. Whatever you are doing for the Lord, whether it is distributing tracts or teaching the young, mix holy joy with it! I may say of thanksgiving to God what was said of salt in the Bible—"Salt, without prescribing how much." Set no limit to it! Nobody ever sings the high praises of God too often or too heartily! "They shall sing in the ways." And when the ways get very tough and become the paths of sufferings—and the pains are frequent and incessant—then still sing! No music that goes up to the throne of God is sweeter in Jehovah's ears than the song of suffering saints. They shall praise Him upon their beds and sing His high praises in the fire! To go right through the valley of the shadow of death, and sing all the way; to climb hill difficulty and to sing up its crags—to pass by giant grim, and even by the castle of giant despair, and through the enchanted ground, and still keep singing; and to come to the river's brink, and descend into it still

singing is lovely in a Christian! May the statutes of the Lord be our songs in the house of our pilgrimage till we mount to sing above!

Once more, under this first head, I think dear brothers and sisters that the children of God sing in the ways of God because they are in a cage for singing—in a right state of mind for singing. When we are in the ways of the Lord, dear friends, we are strong—“They go from strength to strength.” When we walk as God would have us walk, we are made strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Limping pilgrims cannot sing, but those whose weakness casts itself upon the strength of God can. Do you know how strong you are? I will be bound to say you are better acquainted with the other question—how weak are you? But do you know how strong you are when God is with you? Why, you are irresistible! The belt of faith girds a man with strength that is only equaled by omnipotence! If the Lord is with you, what can stand against you? If God strengthens you, you shall run without weariness; you shall walk without fainting and sometimes you shall even mount as upon the wings of eagles! Well may that pilgrim sing who is made strong by the mighty God of Jacob! You have safety, also, for in the ways of the Lord all His servants are protected from danger. On the king’s highway “no lion shall be there, neither shall any ravenous beast go up thereon.” You shall be “kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation” in the ways of the Lord. Well may that traveler sing who is perfectly safe! He holds his tongue if there are thieves about and robbers likely to pounce upon him. But when he feels that he is under the guardian care of the Lord of the ways who has given His angels charge over him to keep him—yes, when he feels that the Lord, Himself, is round about him like a wall of fire—he must sing in the ways! Strength and safety are ours, and therefore let us sing!

Saints also sing in the ways of God because they have guidance. He that does not know whether he is in the right way or not may well be silent, but he that is sure about his road—yes, sure about it even to his journey’s end—may well sing in the ways! We have One with us who will lead us into all the truths of God—we have the Comforter with us who will direct our ways even to the end—how can we keep from singing? Pilgrims bound to Zion’s city who have such a conductor as the infallible Spirit of God ought to sing! It would be *treason* on their part if they did not! Strength, safety, guidance—surely these should make us glad. And then, besides that, we have provision all along the road. The pilgrim who does not know where he will lodge at night feels a little anxious. But if he knows where there is an inn, or where he has a friend, he goes along right cheerily. I know nothing about my way to heaven from this spot to heaven’s gate—but this I do know—there are places of refreshment provided for God’s weary pilgrims every day and every night until we enter into the great mansion of God above. “He makes me to lie down in green pastures: He leads me beside the still waters.” Perhaps we shall halt at Elim, where there are wells and palm trees. But if we do not come to Elim, we shall rest somewhere else. There is sure to be a place of shelter for the saints in every night of their travel. Therefore do we sing in the ways of the Lord, for our pasture is on all high places; it is a way of abundant provision, and we may well sing, for the Lord continually fills our hearts with gratitude.

As we journey on in the ways of the Lord, fresh streams of comfort come to us from one earthly source and another, but chiefly from the great source of everlasting consolation, even from Christ Jesus, Himself. I can speak well of the ways of the Lord and earnestly stir up all my fellow pilgrims to sing in them, for they have been good ways to me. Let us march on and sing on! Let us proceed with a step and a song, a step and a song! Let our halting places be charmed with sacred psalmody and may the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, abide with us and keep us singing the praises of God! That is the first observation—“they shall sing in the ways.”

II. But I find that Dr. Gill gives another reading of the text, “THEY SHALL SING *OF* THE WAYS OF THE LORD,” that is true doctrine and an admissible translation and so we will dwell upon it. “They shall sing *of* the ways of the Lord.” Not only are God’s ways the place of their song but the *subject* of their song. How shall we sing of the ways of the Lord? We will arrange them under two heads. We will sing of God’s ways to us, and we will sing of our ways which lead us to God. We will sing of God’s ways to us, but where shall we begin? Shall we begin where God began with us? With that eternal council chamber—with that divine predestination—with that secret decree of salvation by which He separated His people from the mass of the world and made them to be His before the earth was? Here is a grand beginning! We will sing of the eternal ways of God in His purpose and decrees before time began! But then we shall have to sing of God’s actual ways when the time for the fulfillment of the purpose came—

of the covenant and all its provisions—of the incarnate God descending to the manger. We shall have to sing of that same incarnate God opening His heart to pour out the purchase price of our redemption! Oh, the ways of the Lord with us through Christ Jesus and through the Spirit who was given because Jesus ascended to His Father and to your Father! What a subject!

Then we will sing of the ways of God in the application of redemption to us, His people—how He convinced us of sin and led us to the Savior—and how, since then, He has led us by a right way, helped us, comforted us, chastened us, directed us, opened all His rich treasures to us, communed with us, told us the very secret of His soul, wiped our tears away, removed our fears, charmed our hearts! This is a long, long story, and each believer sees a new phase of it in his own experience. Surely, the mere hints I have given are enough to show that we may well sing of the ways of the Lord! And you never need be ashamed to sing of those ways. David says, “Then will I teach transgressors Your ways.” God’s ways are such gracious ways, such wise ways, such holy ways, such ways of wisdom and of loving-kindness, that in any company we may talk about them and in every place we may sing of them! We will sing of the ways of the Lord with us. But then the next thing, and the main thing in this particular passage, is to sing of our ways *to* God. What is there to sing of with respect to those ways of God by which we come to Him? I think that there is everything in them to sing about! For one, I am so glad that I am in the ways of the Lord when I remember where I once was. As a dear brother said in prayer before this service began, what a mercy to be plucked like a brand from the burning! The saddest saint is, after all, happier than the gladdest sinner! The best house in the city of destruction, where everything is to be burnt with fire, is not equal to the poorest shanty on the road to heaven, where, if the pilgrim fares hard, he is on the way to glory! When we think of where we used to be—of the city from where we came. When we think of Egypt and the iron furnace, the bondage and the slavery from which God has brought us out with a high hand and an outstretched arm—why, we ought to sing in the ways of the Lord!

But, then, it is not only where we came *from*, but it is where we are *going* that should make us sing in the ways of the Lord. When Philip Henry, the father of Matthew Henry, was a preacher of the gospel and a young man, he set his affection upon a young lady who was an heiress. Her father said, “Mr. Henry is, no doubt, a good man, and a scholar, and a gentleman, but he is a poor man. And I would have you remember that we hardly know where he came from.” “Oh! Father,” said the young lady, “but I know where he is *going*, and he is going where *I* should like to go with him. Do not let that stand in the way.” And it did not! That is the point about all God’s people. We know where we are going and we can sing in the ways of God because we know where the road ends. Unconverted men and women, every step you take, you are a step nearer hell. It is a very solemn thought, but I want you to remember it. Every hour that you unconverted people live, you are an hour nearer to the pit that burns with the wrath of God! Oh, I pray you, think of that! But the man who is a believer is on a road which brings him, every step, *nearer heaven!* I do not know a sweeter hymn than that which we sometimes sing—

*“And nightly pitch our moving tent
A day’s march nearer home.”*

And what a home it is! Oh, if our way home lay through 7,000 hells, yet the end would be worth it! If we had to pass through deaths as many as the hairs of our head, yet five minutes with Christ would make up for all our pain! I am sure that it is so! Let us, therefore, press forward singing, because we are getting nearer to the place where song shall be our element forever.

They shall sing of the ways of the Lord because they know where they come from and where they are going. But about the ways themselves; well, we sing of them because it is a good road. The road to heaven is a splendid road and it has had some fine travelers on it. The way the holy prophets went; the road that leads from banishment; the king’s highway of holiness. I’ll go, for all His paths are peace. The glory of that way is that the Prince Emmanuel trod it! With sorrowful steps He traversed that way and He has left the prints of His pierced feet all along it—it is for us to feel that it must be a good way—since holy men and their glorious leader have walked it. It is a way in which many who are very dear to us have gone—some of whom have reached the end of it now. Some of us can track the footprints of a grandfather, a grandmother, uncles and aunts. We rejoice to be going to heaven with father, mother, friends, relatives and dear ones whom we cherish. The way is good enough for them—I am sure it is good enough for us!

Lately our modern divines have pretended to improve the road. They have taken up the stones and laid down a rotten wood pavement which is very slippery for pilgrims! But we will have none of their nonsense. The road that was good enough for Whitefield and Wesley is quite good enough for me! And the road that suited John Bunyan and the Puritans is quite to my mind. These modern ways are a modern nuisance and I would like to see them deserted forever. We can do better with the good old way than with any of these refinements—

*“We are going forth with our staff in hand,
Thro’ a desert wild in a stranger land.
But our faith is bright and our hope is strong,
And the good old way is our pilgrim song,
‘Tis the good old way, that our fathers trod,
‘Tis the way of life and it leads to God.
‘Tis the only path to the realms of day,
We are going home in the good old way.”*

We love to sing of the way because there is good company in it. No company in the world is equal to that of those who are going on pilgrimage to heaven. If I meet with any who are not going there, I can enjoy their talent and their interesting conversation, but their talk is poor, after all. We say when the conversation is over, “That was a fine gentleman and he made merry company, but it did us no good; better far to get with half a dozen godly old women at a cottage meeting than waste time with him.”

Let us meet with those who talk about Jesus Christ and experimental godliness, however ungrammatical their language may be, sooner than sit with the greatest of worldlings whose conversation lacks a savor of Christ! Go you in the ways with a song, because there is such good company to sing with. And there is such good accommodation on the road. I have told you of that, before. “He makes me to lie down in green pastures: He leads me beside the still waters.” God in providence makes all things work together for good. Our heavenly Father bids the angels keep watch and ward about His children. God gives us the provender of His promise and supplies our souls so that no good thing is kept from us. Well may we sing, then, in the ways of the Lord!

We sing because we have such fine prospects on the road. Down in the valley of humiliation—why, no scenery is lovelier! Upon the hilltops of Amana, Tabor and Pisgah, when the Beloved is with us, what views of Himself and of His coming and of His kingdom and of the glory to be revealed open up before us! The way seems short with all these pleasant views before our mind’s eyes and we burst forth into singing in the ways of the Lord! But the best of it is that we have daylight to travel by, for we are not the children of darkness. We walk in the light of God to the kingdom of light. Even when we say that it is dark with us, we do not mean that it is as dark as it is with the sinner when it is bright with him, for our darkest darkness is brighter than the sinner’s brightest brightness!

As I have often said, I would sooner be God’s dog than the devil’s darling. Better to lie like God’s Lazarus, full of sores, with no surgeons but the dogs, than go and sit up there clothed in scarlet with pampered Dives! Oh, yes, we are a joyful people and we travel by daylight to heaven—the light of God we have from Christ, and the light of God we have within will melt into the eternal light! Come, brothers and sisters, let us sing of the ways of the Lord! When we have a mind for a tune, let us sing about God’s goodness to us in His ways—

*“The men of grace have found
Glory begun below!
Celestial fruits on earthly ground
From faith and hope may grow.
Then let our songs abound!
And every tear be dry;
We’re marching through
Emmanuel’s ground
To fairer worlds on high.”*

III. The third observation is that **THOSE WHO SING IN THE WAYS OF GOD ALSO SING OF THE LORD OF THE WAY.** “They shall sing the ways of the Lord.” And then some read it, “That great is the glory of the Lord.” That is the subject of their song. When they sing about the Lord of the way, this psalm supplies us with the points of their song. Kindly open it and keep your eyes upon it. “I will

praise You with my whole heart. Before the gods will I sing praise unto You.” What for? “I will worship toward Your holy temple and praise Your name.” What for, David? “For Your loving-kindness!” God is kind, but He is more than that. It is *loving-kindness*. A man breaks a leg and the surgeon sets the bone. That is kindness. But suppose the man’s mother could set the bone? Oh, how she would do it with loving-kindness! When the surgeon’s own son is under his hand and the surgeon is dealing with a broken bone, it is not only kindness, but loving-kindness—the sweetest of the sweet—the kindest of the kind!

Now, that is how God has dealt with us. Oh, how tenderly! “Your gentleness has made me great.” He has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence. Was there ever a God so good to anybody as God has been to us? I reckon myself to be the darling child of His providence and I think I hear many of you say, “And so are we!” Some of you, perhaps, have had more whipping than others—not so much because you deserved it but because, “Whom the Lord loves He chastens.” Often the master is hardest with that boy in the school who is getting on best because chiding will make him grow. He will find no fault with a dull, stupid boy—he never can make much of him—but the very one who does the best is he whom he drives on the most vigorously, for he means to make a senior wrangler of him.

So, perhaps, you, dear friends, are having more pruning than anybody else because you are a branch that will grow with pruning and will bring forth better grapes. There is more love in the chastening that you get than in the gentler way in which God deals with others. Come, let us bless His name! He is a loving God! Let us sing in His ways and chant the tune of His loving-kindness. And what next? “For Your loving-kindness and for Your truth.” Ah, that is a blessed thing—a faithful God, a true God, a God that cannot lie—a God that cannot fail His people, a God that never breaks His promise or forgets it. Oh, come, let us sing unto His name while we are in His ways! Let us tell the world that men of high degree are vanity and men of low degree are a lie, but our God is true! Let us tell the world that riches make to themselves wings and fly away; that honor and fame are but so much wasted breath and empty air! But let us tell them that God is—and that in Him there is substantial good and faithfulness that never fails! Here is a sweet song for you to sing concerning the Lord of the way while you are in the way! David goes on to say, “In the day when I cried, You answered me and strengthened me with strength in my soul.” Answered prayers make a fine set of hymns! Old prayers make new songs! When God hears prayers, we should let Him hear them again! When He has heard them as prayers, then let Him hear them as praises! We are often faulty here. I am afraid that we go to God with our errands when we are in need, for we have a cupboard love for Him. We are like many a dog to his master—he loves his master for the bones he gives him.

I do not say that we ever rise *above* that—we love the Lord because He has heard our prayers and our supplications, but let us sometimes go to the Lord wholly to praise Him. Say, “Lord, this time I will not ask anything of You except a grateful heart. And if You give me that, then I will praise You and praise You, and praise You because my soul is wholly taken up with adoring gratitude for what I have received.” Oh, dear friends, file your prayers when God does not hear them, and when He does hear them, put them in another file! Keep a silver file for prayers that are unanswered, but a golden file for prayers that are answered so that you may render unto Him according to the benefit you have received! Psalms penned at the mercy seat when petitions are granted are sweet sonnets for the children of God.

The next subject for song is God’s condescension. Read the sixth verse and let your heart sing it—“Though the Lord is on high, yet has He respect unto the lowly.” Oh, do sing this! I remember when I was but a youth and began to preach the gospel and won souls to Christ—they called me “the boy preacher”—oh how I used to bless the Lord that He would save souls by a boy! Obscure and unknown, but yet the Lord thought of me and used me! I cannot help praising Him on my own account because of that. Very likely some of you are in the same condition. You may be poor; you may have little talent; you may be quite unknown, but though the Lord is on high, yet has He respect unto the lowly! He hears the praises of the unknown! Wonderful is the power of “the great unknown.” I am persuaded that the strength of the church lies in its unknown members and possibly the soul of the music that goes up from earth to heaven lies in the unknown singers unnamed among men, who, nevertheless, praise God day and night. Oh, bless Him that He thinks of you! O you maidens, whom He looks upon as He did on her of old who said, “My soul does magnify the Lord, for He has remembered the low estate of His hand-maiden,” praise His name! And O, you matrons, remember Hannah, whose sweet song in the Old Testament was to the same effect as Mary’s in the New Testament! She, too, praised Him who looked upon

the weak and the feeble, but caused the bows of the mighty ones to be broken. Condescending love is a charming theme.

Have you got through that list of songs, dear friends? Then I have another subject for you. Just read on and begin to sing of God's *delivering* mercy! "Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me." Someone says, "Why, that is a song about something that is to *be done*." That is so. We ought to have quite a collection of songs for the future—

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

Did you ever praise God for tomorrow's dinner? "We have not had it yet." No, but you *will* have it. Thank God for it tonight! Martin Tupper recommends young men, long before they are married, to pray for the wives that they will have, and there is good sense in his advice. Don't you think that it is right for us to pray ahead a bit? Yes? Well, if it is right to pray ahead, let us *praise* God ahead for the mercies that we are to have! When I lay very sick, I used to praise God at the thought of getting better. I could not help it. I was so glad when I thought of standing in the pulpit again! I am sure I praised God for this night's sermon six months ago. Come, brothers and sisters, let us bless the Lord for the favors which the Lord has laid up for them that fear Him! When you do not seem to have anything to sing about, today, sing about what is going to be tomorrow! And if there seems to be nothing on earth to sing about, sing about the everlasting future! Soon you shall never be tempted to say, "What shall I eat, and what shall I drink, and with what shall I be clothed?" You shall have no cares to fret you, nor sins to repent of, for you shall be perfect before the throne of God, clean escaped from all the dangers and the trials of the way! Come, let us sing for what *will* be! "Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me."

In the last verse there is something to sing about which certain of our friends are afraid of—"The Lord will perfect that which concerns me." Sing of final preservation! Some good people are not sure of that. They say, "Saints fall from grace. God begins a good work in them, but He leaves them and they do not get to heaven." brother, if you cannot reach the note of final salvation, put your fingers as high on the harp strings as they will go! But I am happy to say that mine can touch this lofty note, for if there is a doctrine that I am certain of, it is the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints! I will undertake to say that if the Bible does not teach that, it does not teach anything! Words have ceased to have a meaning if the Bible does not teach the eternal life of true believers! At least to my soul it is so. Hear these words—"I give unto My sheep eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand." "He that drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but it shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Why, there are 50 reasons why he that has the grace of God truly in him and is really born unto God shall not fall away! But one said to me some time ago, "Yonder man has fallen from grace, and has been regenerated three times." "Oh," I said to him, "You need a new word then—re-re-regenerated."

I have heard of the new birth, but I never heard of a *newer birth!* I have heard of being born-again, but I never heard of being born-again and again and again! I discover no trace of it in the Word of God, but I do see distinct tokens that it is impossible. It is written—"If these shall fall away, it is *impossible* to renew them again unto repentance, seeing that they have crucified the Son of God afresh and put Him to an open shame." There is a life which God puts into the soul and that life is eternal! *If* it could die—if that were *possible*—the man would be hopelessly dead. "If the salt has lost its savor, with what shall it be salted? It is from now on good for nothing, but to be trodden under foot of men." "We believe better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak." "Faithful is He that has called you, who also will do it." "He will perfect that which concerns me" and, therefore, I will sing this song to my stringed instruments as long as I live—

*"My soul from the palms of His hands
Eternity cannot erase.
Impressed on His heart it remains
In marks of indelible grace.
Yes, I to the end shall endure,
As sure as the earnest is given!
More happy, but not more secure,*

Than glorified spirits in heaven.”

Now *there* is something to sing about!

IV. And now I close with the fourth observation, which is this—THEY SHALL SING TO THE LORD OF THE WAY, AS WELL AS OF THE LORD OF THE WAY. “They shall sing in the ways, for great is the glory of the Lord.” Oh, brothers and sisters let us take care that all our songs are to the honor and praise of God, for if we ever sing to our own praise it will be idolatry! I fear much public worship is thus marred. We heard of a man in Boston, in America, praying such a grand prayer that the newspapers said, the next day, that it was, “the finest prayer that had ever been offered to a Boston audience.” I am afraid that a good deal of praying is of that sort and I am sure much singing is no better. Why, we hear of churches where four people are hired to do the praise of God and all the people sit still and listen to them! And that is according to the New Testament, is it? It must be a very “revised version,” surely! I find nothing of that sort in the Book I have been accustomed to use. Let *all* the people of God praise Him! Singing should be congregational, but it should never be performed for the credit of the congregation. “Such very remarkable singing! The place is quite renowned for its musical performances.” This is a poor achievement! Our singing should be such that God hears it with pleasure—singing in which there is not so much art as *heart*—not so much of musical sound as of *spiritual* emotion. They shall sing to the glory of God!

And mark this, dear brothers and sisters, if you and I sing with the Spirit and the understanding, we shall increase the manifested glory of God by bringing others to sing in His ways. Sinners pass by God’s ways, sometimes, and as they go by, though they cannot see, for they are blind, they can *hear* something, and they say to one another, “Who are those people that tramp along the road?” They are pilgrims to heaven. And the sinners say, “Let us stop and listen a bit.” They listen and they hear the pilgrims groaning along, and moaning along, and one says to another, “Let us go the other way. Let us escape from such miserable company.”

But another time a number stand listening by the side of the hedge and they ask, “Are these pilgrims going along? Why, they are singing! Are they Methodists? Are they Presbyterians? Are they that strait-laced kind of people?” “Yes.” Well, but they are singing and they sing very heartily, too! They seem to be uncommonly merry. Is that their general way? “Oh, yes,” says one, “and they have good reason to be happy. I was with one of them and he was telling me what the Lord had done for him—and I thought that if the Lord had done as much for me I should be happy, too.” “And do you know any of these people? Are they troubled as we are?” “Oh, yes, they have their troubles, but they take their cares to their heavenly Father and find rest.” “Then,” says one, “I would like to go to their meetings and learn their secret”—and so they come and find the Savior!

Legions of flies are caught by this honey! Many are brought to God by the sweet lives of His people. If we can always rejoice in the Lord, we shall bring many to God who otherwise would have turned on their heels and said, “We will have nothing to do with these dull dreamers. We are too young to lose all our joy in life.” Tell the young people that the most joyous life is the life that is nearest to God—that the merriest life is the life of the man who has found all for this world, and all for the world to come, in God and in His Christ! God help you, dear brothers and sisters, to sing all day long, and may you even have “songs in the night,” to the glory of Him whose name is—“the happy God.” Amen.

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