

HOLY SONG FROM HAPPY SAINTS NO. 3476

A SERMON
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*“Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved.”
Isaiah 5:1*

IT was a prophet who wrote this, a prophet inspired of God. An ordinary believer might suffice to sing, but he counts it no stoop for a prophet, and no waste of his important time, to occupy himself with song. There is no engagement under heaven that is more exalting than praising God—and however great may be the work which is committed to the charge of any of us, we shall always do well if we pause awhile to spend a time in sacred praise.

I would not wish to prefer one spiritual exercise before another, else I think I would endorse the saying of an old divine who said that a line of praise was better than even a leaf of prayer—that praise was the highest, noblest, best, most satisfying, and most healthful occupation in which a Christian could be found. If these may be regarded as the words of the church, the church of old did well to turn all her thoughts in the direction of praising her God.

Though the winning of souls is a great thing, though the edifying of believers is an important matter, though the reclamation of backsliders calls for earnest attention, yet never, never, never may we cease from praising and magnifying the name of the well-beloved. This is to be our occupation in heaven—let us begin the music here and make a heaven of the church, even here below.

The words of the text are, “Now will I sing,” and that seems to give us a starting word.

I. THE STRAINS OF THE SOUL'S SONG.

“Now will I sing.” Does not that imply that there were times when he who spake these words could not sing? “Now,” said he, “will I sing to my well-beloved.” There were times, then, when his voice, his heart, and his circumstances were not in such order that he could praise God. My brethren, a little while ago we could not sing to our well-beloved, for we did not love Him—we did not know Him—we were dead in trespasses and sins.

Perhaps we joined in sacred song, but we mocked the Lord. We stood up with His people and we uttered the same sounds as they did, but our hearts were far from Him. Let us blush for those mock psalms. Let us shed many a tear of repentance that we could so insincerely have come before the Lord Most High.

After that, we were led to feel our state by nature, and our guilt lay heavy upon us. We could not sing to our well-beloved then. Our music was set to the deep bass and in the minor key. We could only bring forth sighs and groans. Well do I remember when my nights were spent in grief and my days in bitterness. It was a perpetual prayer, a confession of sin, and a bemoaning of myself, which occupied all my time.

I could not sing then, and if any of you are in that condition tonight, I know you cannot sing just now. What a mercy you can pray. Bring forth the fruit which is seasonable and in your case the most seasonable fruit will be a humble acknowledgment of your sin and an earnest seeking for mercy through Christ Jesus. Attend to that, and by and by you, too, shall sing to your well-beloved a song.

Brethren in Christ Jesus, it is now some years ago since we believed in Christ, but since then there have been times when we could not sing. Alas! for us there was a time when we watched not our steps, but went astray—when the flatterer led us from the strait road that leads to heaven and brought us into

sin. And then the chastisements of God came upon us, our heart was broken, until we cried out in anguish, as David did in the 51st Psalm. Then if we did sing, we could only bring out penitential odes, but no songs.

We laid aside all parts of the book of Psalms that had to do with Hallelujah and we could only groan forth the notes of repentance. There were no songs for us then, till at last Emmanuel smiled upon us once more, and we were reconciled again, brought back from our wanderings and restored to a sense of the divine favor.

Besides that, we have had, occasionally had, to sorrow through the loss of the light of God's countenance. It is not always summer weather with the best of us. Though for the most part—

*“We can read our title clear,
To mansions in the skies,”*

yet we have our fasting time when the Bridegroom is not with us. Then do we fast.

He does not intend that this world should be so much like heaven that we should be willing to stop in it—He, therefore, sometimes passes a cloud before the sun, that we in darkness may cry out, “Oh! that I knew where I might find Him! I would come even to His seat.” Even the means of grace at such times will bring us no comfort. We may go to the throne of mercy in private prayer, but we shall perceive but little light even there.

If the Lord withdraw Himself, there is no merry-making in the soul, but sadness, darkness, and gloom shall cover all. Then we hang our harps upon the willows and if any require of us a song, we tell them we are in a strange land and the King has gone—how can we sing? Our heart is heavy and our sorrows are multiplied.

Once more, we cannot very well sing the praises of our well-beloved when the church of God is under a cloud. I trust we are such true patriots, such real citizens of the new Jerusalem that, when Christ's kingdom does not advance, our hearts are full of anguish. My brethren, if you happen to be members of a church divided against itself, where the ministry appears to be without power, where there are no additions, no conversions, no spiritual life—then, indeed, will you feel that whatever the state of your own heart, you must sigh and cry for the desolations of the church of God.

“If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget her cunning.” This is the view of every true citizen of Zion—and however our own hearts may flourish, and our souls be like a well-watered garden, yet if we see the place of worship neglected, the Lord's house dishonored, the church diminished and brought low, the Gospel held in contempt, infidelity rampant, superstition stalking through the land the old doctrines denied, and the cross of Christ made to be of none effect—then, again, we feel we cannot sing—our hearts are not in tune, our fingers forget the accustomed string, and not then can we sing to our well-beloved a song.

With these exceptions, however, I turn to a very different strain, and say that *the whole life of the Christian ought to be describable by the text*, “Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song.” From the first moment in which sin is pardoned, to the last moment in which we are here on earth, it should be evermore our delight to sing to our well-beloved a song.

“How can we do that?” say you. Well, we can do it in three or four ways. There is such a thing as *thanks-feeling—feeling thankful*—and this ought to be the general, universal spirit of the Christian. Suppose, my dear brother, you are not rich—be thankful that you have enough to eat and to drink, and wherewithal you may be clothed.

Suppose, even, that you had not a hope of heaven, I might say to a man, “Be thankful that you are not in hell.” But to you, Christian, I would add, “Be thankful that you never will be there and that, if just now your present joys do not overflow, yet “there remaineth a rest for the people of God”—let that console you.

Is there ever a day in the year, or ever a moment in the day, in which the Christian ought not to be grateful? Our answer is not slow to give—there is never such a day, there is never such a moment. Always receiving blessings untold and incalculably precious, let us always be magnifying the hand that gives them.

Always, beloved, as we have been, before the foundations of the world with our names engraven on the Savior's hands, always redeemed by the precious blood, always preserved by the power of God which dwells in the Mediator, always secure of the heritage which is given to us in covenant by oath, by the blood of Christ—let us always be grateful, and if not always singing with our lips, let us always be singing with our hearts.

Then, brethren, we ought to always be *thanks-living*. I think that is a better thing than thanksgiving—thanks-living. How is this to be done? By a general cheerfulness of manner, by an obedience to the command of Him by whose mercy we live, by a perpetual, constant, delighting ourselves in the Lord and submission of our desires to His mind.

Oh! I wish that our whole life might be a psalm—that every day might be a stanza of a mighty poem. That so from the day of our spiritual birth until we enter heaven we might be pouring forth sacred minstrelsy in every thought, and word, and action of our lives. Let us give Him thankfulness and thanks-living.

But then let us add *thanks-speaking* with the tongue. We don't sing enough, my brethren. How often do I stir you up about the matter of prayer, but perhaps I might be just as earnest about the matter of praise. Do we sing as much as the birds do? Yet what have birds to sing about, compared with us? Think you, do we sing as much as the angels do? yet were they never redeemed by the blood of Christ. Birds of the air, shall you excel me? Angels of heaven, shall you exceed me? You have done so, but I intend to emulate you henceforth, and day by day, and night by night, pour forth my soul in sacred song.

We may sometimes thank God not only by feeling thankfulness and living thankfulness, and speaking our thanks, but by that *silent blessing of Him* which consists in patient suffering and accepting the evil as well as the good from JEHOVAH's hand. That is often better thanksgiving than the noblest psalm that the tongue could utter.

To bow down before Him and say, "Not my will, but thine be done" is to render Him a homage equal to the Hallelujahs of cherubim and seraphim. To feel not only resigned, but acquiescent—willing to be anything or nothing, according as the Lord would have it—this is in truth to sing to our well-beloved a song.

Now having put this before you, that there are some times when we cannot sing, but that, as a rule, our life should be praise, let me come again to the text by saying that sometimes on choice occasions appointed by providence and grace, our soul will be compelled to say, "*Now, now* if never before, *now* beyond all other occasions, I will sing to my well-beloved a song."

I only hope that some—that all Christians here—will feel that tonight is one of those occasions. And as you sit here in the presence of this table, upon which will soon appear the emblems of your Savior's passion, I trust you will be saying, "*Now tonight* I feel I *must* sing to my well-beloved a song, for if ever I loved Him, I love Him tonight."

Let us ponder now—

II. SOME OF THE OCCASIONS IN WHICH WE MUST SING TO HIS NAME.

The first is *when our soul first perceives the infinite love of Jesus to us*, when we receive the pardon of sin, when we enter into the marriage relationship with Christ as our Bridegroom and our Lord. The song becomes the wedding feast. How could it be a marriage without joyfulness? Oh! do you remember, even years ago, do you not remember now that day when you first looked to Him and were lightened, and when your soul clasped His hands, and you and He were one?

Other days I have forgotten, but that day never can I forget. Other days have mingled with their fellows, and like coins which have been in circulation, the image and superscription have departed from

them. That day when first I saw the Savior is as fresh and distinct in all its outlines as though it were but yesterday coined in the mint of time.

How can I forget it—that first moment when Jesus told me I was His and my Beloved was mine? Were any of you saved last week? Did any of you find Jesus Christ at any of the meetings last week? Have you found Him this morning? Did a blessing come to you this afternoon? Then hallow the occasion, pour out your soul before the Most High.

Now, if never before, let your well-beloved have your choicest music. “Awake, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp; I myself will awake right early. I will praise You, for though You were angry with me, Your anger is taken away and You comfort me.”

Other occasions, however, come after our first day, for with Christ it is not all joy the first few weeks. No, blessed be His name! Sometimes, however, we have our high days and holidays, when the King entertains us at a feast. It is often so with my soul *at this table*. Coming to the Communion Supper every Lord’s day, I don’t find it grows stale and flat with me.

On the contrary, I think every time I come I love better than I did before to commemorate my Lord’s sufferings in the breaking of bread. And usually when we do come round the table, we, who know what it means, feel, “Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song.” ’Twas well that after supper they sang a hymn. We want some such expression for the sacred joy that rises in our soul at this feast.

But not only when the emblems are before us, but when you hear a sermon that feeds your soul—when you read a chapter and the promises are very precious—when you are in private prayer, and are able to get very near to Jesus, I know your hearts then say, “Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song. He has visited me and I will praise Him. He has made my soul like the chariots of Ammi-nadib, and where shall my strength and rapture be spent but at His dear feet, adoring and magnifying His ever blessed name?” Oh! I wish we often had broken through order and decorum, even, to give to our Lord a song. He well deserves it. Let not cold ingratitude freeze our praises on our lips.

We ought to praise our Lord Jesus Christ and sing to our well-beloved a song, particularly when we have had a *remarkable deliverance*. “Thou shalt compass me about,” says David, “with songs of deliverance.” Were you raised from a bed of sickness? Have you passed through a great pecuniary difficulty? Through God’s help has your character been cleared from slander? Have you been helped in some enterprise and prospered in the world? Have you seen a child restored from sickness, or a beloved wife once more given back to you from the gates of the grave? Have you just experienced the light of Christ’s countenance in your own soul? Has a snare been broken? Has a temptation been removed? Are you in a joyous frame of mind? “Is any merry? Let him sing psalms.”

Oh! give your well-beloved a song now that the sun shines and the flowers bloom. When the year begins to turn and fair weather comes, the birds seem to feel it and they renew their music. Do so, oh! believer. When the winter is past, and the rain is over and gone, fill the earth with your songs of gratitude.

But remember, O believer, that you should sing your well-beloved a song chiefly when it is not so with you, *when sorrows befall*. He gives songs *in the night*. Perhaps there is no music so sweet as that which comes from the lips and heart of a tried believer. It is real then. When Job blessed God on the dunghill, even the devil himself could not insinuate that Job was a hypocrite. When Job prospered, then the devil said, “Does Job serve God for naught?” but when he lost his all and yet said, “Blessed be the name of the LORD,” then the good man shone like a star when the clouds are gone.

Oh! let us be sure to praise God when things go ill with us. Make certain that you sing then. A holy man, walking one night with a companion, listened to the nightingale and he said, “Brother, that bird in the darkness is praising her Maker. Sing, I pray you, and let your Lord have a song in the night.” But the other replied, “My voice is hoarse and little used to sing.” “Then,” said the other, “I will sing.” And he sang, and the bird seemed to hear him, and to sing louder still, and he sang on, and other birds joined, and the night seemed sweet with song. But by and by the good man said, “My voice fails me, but this

bird's throat holds out longer than mine. Would God," said he, "I could even fly away where I could sing on forever and forever."

Oh! it is blessed when we can praise God when the sun is gone down, when darkness lowers and trials multiply. Then let us say, "I will sing to my well-beloved a song." I will tell you exactly what I mean by that. One of you has just passed through a very terrible trouble and you are almost brokenhearted—you are inclined to say, "I will ask the prayers of the church that I may be sustained."

It is quite right, my dear brother, to do that, but suppose you could be a little stronger and say, "Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song"? Oh! it will be grand work. It would glorify God. It will strengthen you. "Yes, the dear child is dead—I cannot bring him back again, but the Lord has done it and He must do right. I will give Him a song, even now." "Yes, the property has gone and I shall be brought from wealth to poverty, but now, instead of fretfulness, I will give to my well-beloved extra music from my heart. He shall be praised by me now. Though He slay me, yet will I praise Him." This is the part of a Christian—God help us ever to act it.

Beloved friends, we may well sing to our beloved a song when it shall be near *the time of our departure*. It draws nigh, and as it draws nigh we must not dread it, but rather thank God for it. The swan is said to sing her dying song—a myth, I doubt not, but the Christian is God's swan, and he sings sweetest at the last.

Like old Simeon, he becomes a poet at the last and pours out his soul before God, and I would we each desired, if we are spared to old age, to let our last days be perfumed with thanksgiving, and to bless and magnify the Lord, while yet we linger where mortal ears may hear the strain. Break, O fetters, and divide, you clouds. Be rolled up, O veil that hides the place of mystery from the world. Let our spirits pass into eternity singing.

What a song to our well-beloved will we pour out from amidst ten thousand times ten thousand choristers. We will take our part—every note for Him who loved us and that washed us from our sins in His own blood. Each note undefiled with sin. Each note undistracted and undivided by worldly thoughts. Each note full of perfection and acceptable to Him to whom it shall be presented. O long-expected day, begin! Our hearts are ready to cry out, "Open, you two-leaved gates, and let my spirit pass through, that I may give to my well-beloved a song."

Now I just linger here a minute to put it all round to every Christian here. Brother, haven't you a song for the well-beloved? Sister, haven't you a song for the well-beloved? Aged friend, will you not give Him a note? Young brother full of vigor, haven't you a verse full of praise for Him? Oh! if we might all come to the Communion table in the spirit of praise!

Perhaps some can dance before the ark like David. Others, perhaps, are like Ready-to-Halt, on their crutches, but even he laid them down, according to John Bunyan, once upon a time when he heard the sweet music of praise. Let us bless the name of the Lord. The day has passed and been full of mercy, and eventide has come, and as the sun goes down let us magnify Him whose mercy lasts to us through the night and will come again upon us in the morning, and will be with us till nights and days shall no more change the scene.

Lift up your hearts, my brethren. Let every one of you lift up your hands unto the name of the Most High and magnify Him that lives forever. "Oh! that men would praise the LORD for His goodness—for His wonderful works to the children of men!"

Now I have just a few observations to make about—

III. THE QUALITY OF THE SONG.

I will suppose that every Christian here singing has found that he has got one of the Lord's songs to sing. "Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song." Dear brother, the Lord's music has one thing about it—that *it is always new*. How very frequently we find in the New Testament that saints and angels sing "a new song." Very different from the songs we used to sing—very different from the songs the world still delights in—ours is heart-music, soul-music. Ours is real joy—no fiction—no mere crackling of thorns under a pot.

Solid joys and lasting pleasures make up the new song of the Christian. New mercies make the song always new. There is a freshness in it of which we never weary. Some of you have heard the Gospel now for fifty years—has it got flat to you? The name of Jesus Christ was known to you as the most precious of all sounds fifty or sixty years ago—has it become stale now? Those of us who have known and loved Him twenty years can only say, “The more we know Him, the more sweet He is, and the more we enjoy His Gospel, the more resolved we are to keep to the old-fashioned Gospel as long as we live.”

We could, indeed, sing a new song, though we have sung the same praises these twenty years. All the saints’ praises have this about them—that *they are all harmonious*. I do not say that their voices are. Here and there, there is a brother who sings very earnestly through his nose and very often puts out the rest that are round about him. But it does not matter about the sound of the voice to the ear of man—it is the sound of the heart to the ear of God.

If you were in a forest and there were fifty sorts of birds, and they were all singing at once, you would not notice any discord. The little songsters seem to pitch their songs in keys very different from each other, but yet, somehow or other, all are in harmony. Now the saints, when they pray—it is very strange—they all pray in harmony.

So when they praise God. I have frequently attended prayer meetings where there were brethren of all sorts of Christian denominations—and I would have defied the angel Gabriel to have told what they were when they were on their knees. So is it with praise. I may say, “The saints in praise appear as one”—

***“In word, and deed, and mind,
While with the Father and the Son,
Sweet fellowship they find.”***

Though our words be broken and our notes fall short of melody, yet if our hearts are right, our words are acceptable and our music is harmony in the ears of the Most High.

Beloved, be it noticed about *the saints’ music that it always seems very poor to them*. They feel that they must break out. There are some of David’s Psalms in which in the Hebrew the words are very much disconnected and broken, as though the poet had strained himself beyond the power of language. And how constantly do you find him calling upon others to help him praise God—not only to other saints, but as if he felt there were not enough saints—he calls on all creatures that have breath to praise God.

How frequently do you find holy men invoking the dwellers above the skies, and earth, and air, and sea to help them lift high the praise of God, and as if they were not content with all animated beings, you will hear them bidding the trees of the wood break out and clap their hands, while they invite the sea to roar and the fullness thereof to magnify the Most High.

Devout minds feel as though the whole creation were like a great organ with ten thousand times ten thousand pipes, and we little men, who have God within us, come and put our little hands to the keys and make the whole universe echo with thunders of praise to the Most High, for man is the world’s priest—and the man that is blood-washed makes the whole earth his tabernacle and his temple—and in that temple does every one speak of God’s glory.

He lights up the stars like lamps to burn before the throne of the Most High and bids all creatures here below become servants in the temple of the infinite majesty. Oh! brethren, may God give us to feel this state of mind tonight, and though we should think our praises are like to break down, and feel how mean they are, compared with the majesty of JEHOVAH and His boundless love, yet shall we have praised Him acceptably.

I would be very earnest in the next minute or two to stir up my brethren here to sing to their well-beloved a song, because I am quite sure the exercise will be *most fitting and most beneficial*. I will speak only for myself, but I will say this—if I did not praise and bless Christ my Lord, I should deserve to have my tongue torn out by its roots from my mouth, and I will add—if I did not bless and magnify His

name, I would deserve that every stone I tread on in the streets should rise up to curse my ingratitude, for I am a drowned debtor to the mercy of God—over head and ears—to infinite love and boundless compassion I am a debtor. Are you not the same?

Then I charge you by the love of Christ—awake, awake your hearts, now, to magnify His glorious name. It will do you much good, my brethren. There is, perhaps, no exercise that, on the whole, strengthens us so much as praising God. Sometimes, even when prayer fails, praise will do it. It seems to gird up the loins. It pours a holy anointing oil upon the head and upon the spirit. It gives us a joy of the Lord which is always our strength.

Sometimes, if you begin to sing in a dull frame, you can sing yourself up the ladder. Singing will often make the heart rise. The song, though at first it is a drag, will by and by come to be wings which to lift the spirit with it. Oh! sing more, my brethren, and you will sing more still, for the more you sing, the more you will be able to sing the praises of God.

It will glorify God. It will comfort you. It will also prove an attraction to those who are lingering around the churches. The melancholy of some Christians tends to repel seekers, but the holy joy of others tends to attract them. More flies will always be caught with honey than with vinegar—and more souls will be brought to Christ by your cheerfulness than by your moroseness—more by your consecrated joy than by your selfish dolor.

God grant us to sing the praises of God with heart and life until we sing them in heaven, and I doubt not that, as a church, we should thus become more useful and more would be led to cast in their lot with us, for they would perceive that God blessed us. If God should make you feel that you must praise Him tonight, the purpose that I desire to fulfill will have been accomplished.

Oh! I wish I could bid you all say, “I will sing to my beloved a song!” But there are some of you who don’t love Him, and cannot, therefore, sing to Him. In Exeter Hall, some years ago, at one of our services, I gave out the hymn—

*“Jesu, lover of my soul
Let me to Thy bosom fly.”*

There was one present who was a total stranger to the Gospel, but that touching expression, “Jesus, lover of my soul,” touched his heart and he said, “Is Jesus the lover of my soul? Then I will love Him, too,” and he gave his heart to Jesus and cast in his lot with His people. I would that some here would say the same. Then shall they also sing to their beloved a song. But now their fittest duty will be prayer and penitent trust. God help them to seek and find the Savior—even Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

PSALM 116:1-11

It begins well.

Verse 1. *I love the LORD.*

Can you say that? “Yes, Lord, thou knowest all things. Thou knowest that I love thee.” “I love the LORD.” Love is said to be blind, but not love to God. Love to God can see and it can give a reason for its own existence—and a good substantial reason, too. “I love the LORD.”

1. *Because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.*

A good reason for love will be found in the closet where prayer is answered. If you have ever been in trouble and that divine friend has listened to your feeble cries, you do love Him, and you cannot help loving Him. You wonder why others do not love Him too.

2. *Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.*

“Because.” He harps on that string. It is so sweet a note that he touches it again, “Because he hath inclined his ear unto me”—stooped out of heaven. He has laid His ear down to my lips. He has caught my wandering utterances. He has inclined His ear. My sin had pushed His ear away, but He has brought His head back again, and inclined His ear unto me.

“Therefore.” You see this was given as a reason, but the Psalmist is so full that what was a reason for love now becomes a reason for something else. The flowers in the garden of believers bloom double. Here is a second flower on this stalk. I love Him because He has inclined His ear unto me. “Therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.” I speed so well in prayer that I will keep on in that blessed business. God heard me once. He will hear me again—

*“Long as we live should Christians pray,
For only while we pray we live.”*

And as long as we live we shall find out the best way of living—to live from hand to mouth—from God’s hand to our mouth—by continual prayer.

Now the Psalmist tells about this wonderful instance in which God heard his cry.

3. *The sorrows of death compassed me,*

They were all round me. They made a circle. I could not find a break. They compassed me. Sorrows, deadly sorrows, the very sorrows of death.

3. *And the pains of hell gat hold upon me:*

They came inside the circle and they gripped me. I was like one that did lie under the lion. He seemed to bite and tear me. “The pains of hell gat hold upon me.” Did you ever know that? I did. Oh! I can never forget, for the scars are in my mind to this day when the pains of hell gat hold upon me. They say that there is no hell. He will never say that who has ever felt the pains of a guilty conscience—the pangs of unforgiven sin to a soul that is made alive by the Spirit of God. “The pains of hell gat hold upon me.”

3. *I found trouble and sorrow.*

An unexpected find. They were hidden away—these double enemies—hidden away beneath my pleasures, beneath my sins, beneath my self-righteousness. “I found trouble and sorrow.”

4. *Then I called upon the name of the LORD:*

The most canonical hour for prayer is the time of our greatest distress. When you can do nothing else but pray, then is the very best time to pray. When you seem shut up to prayer, what a blessed shutting up it is! “Then I called upon the name of the LORD.” And what was his prayer? Very short. Very full—a sort of soldier’s prayer.

4. *O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.*

There, dear hearer, if you need to begin to pray to God, there is a good beginning for you. “Oh! LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.”

5. *Gracious is the LORD, and righteous;*

A curious mixture. You will never understand it until you stand at the foot of the cross.

5. *Yea, our God is merciful.*

That is the practical outcome of the holy conjunction of grace and righteousness in the atoning sacrifice of Christ. “Our God is merciful.” Sometimes when people cannot read well, they spell the words, and one, I remember, spelled God in this way—“Yea, our God is merci-ful.” That will do—full of mercy—merciful.

6. *The LORD preserveth the simple:*

You clever men take heed of this. “The LORD preserveth the simple”—the plain, hearty, honest, sincere, sometimes ridiculed for their want of cunning. God takes care of them.

6. *I was brought low, and he helped me.*

What a sweet thing it is when you have studied a general doctrine to be able to give yourself as a particular instance of it. “The Lord preserveth the simple.” That is a grand truth of God. “But I was brought low, and he helped me.” That is an emphatic proof. That is the enjoyable illustration of the grand truth. Can you say that, dear friends? Can you put that in your diary? “I was brought low, and he helped me.”

7. *Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.*

Come back. He is a good God. Why wander? Return unto your first husband for it was better with you than now. He has been bountiful. My soul lives on His bounty again.

8. *For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.*

As I read these words, they seem as if they were written for me. Do they seem, dear hearer, as if they were written for you? Have you undergone this trinity of salvation—your soul from death, your eyes from tears, your feet from falling? If so, then make this resolve tonight.

9. *I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living*

That is to say, as He has dealt so well with me, I will always deal well with Him. I will not care to look to men—to their hope, to their help, to their judgment, to their censure—but I will set the Lord always before me. He shall be everything to me. Beloved, it is one of the best day’s work a man ever does when he turns clean away from everything but God.

Oh! when you have given up all reliance upon the creature and throw yourself upon the bare arm of the Creator, now you have got at it, man. Now you have come to real life. All the rest is mere play-acting, but this is reality, for God alone is, and all else is but a dream.

10-11. *I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted: I said in my haste, All men are liars.*

And uncommonly near the truth he came, even though he was in a hurry in saying it, for if you trust in any men, they must be liars to you. They will fail you either from want of faithfulness, or else from want of power. There are pinches where the kindest hand cannot succor. There are times of sorrow when she who is the partner of your bosom cannot find you alleviation.

Then you will have to go to God, and God alone, and you will never find Him fail you. The brooks of the earth are dry in summer, and frozen in winter. All my fresh springs are in You, my God, and there neither frost nor drought can come. Happy man who has got right away from everything to his God.

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