

FROM THE DUNGHILL TO THE THRONE

NO. 658

**A SERMON
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*“He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill;
that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people.”
Psalm 113:7-8*

THE greatness and majesty of the Most High God are utterly inconceivable. The most masterly minds, when in the most spiritual state, have felt it impossible for the utmost stretch of their imagination to reach to the grandeur of God. Our loftiest conceptions of the universe probably fall very far short of what it really is.

Although the researches of astronomy have revealed facts surpassing all the powers of the human mind in the attempt to grasp them. Thought, reason, understanding, and even imagination are bewildered in the vast and illimitable fields of space amidst the marvels of God’s handiwork. Yet all the wonders which the human eye has seen, or mortal spirit guessed at, are but parts of His ways.

We have heard no more than one stanza of creation’s never-ending psalm. We have viewed but one stone in the vast mosaic of the Maker’s works. An infusorial atom of life in a drop of water may know as much of the great sea as we do of the universe as a whole. An ant creeping over a sand heap by the seaside must not boast of having counted the grains which bound the ocean—nor must the most learned mortal dream that he has a full idea of the vast creation of God.

Above all this, however, is the fact that all these wondrous works bear no more proportion to the unseen, all-powerful God, than one line written by the pen of Milton would bear to his masterly mind. When God has made all that He ordains to create, and when we have seen all that He has made, yet there remains in Himself infinite possibilities of creation.

The potter is far greater than the vessel which he fashions, and the Lord is infinitely greater than all His works. He fills all things, but all things cannot fill Him. He contains immensity. He grasps eternity. But neither immensity nor eternity can encompass Him.

*“Great God, how infinite art Thou!
What worthless worms are we!”*

Very fittingly does the psalmist sing of Him as God humbling Himself to behold the things which are in heaven. Those majestic beings, cherubim and seraphim, who flash with wings of fire to obey the behests of the Eternal, are not to be observed of Him unless, speaking after the manner of men, in condescension He stoops Himself to view them.

We sing of the heaven, even the heaven of heavens, as the Lord’s, and speak of those glorious places as being his peculiar abode, and so they are, and yet the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, and celestial spirits are as nothing when compared with Him. Consider, then, the condescension of the Lord in visiting the sons of men!

What a stoop is here, my brethren! From the throne of the Infinite, to the clay tenements of man! Surely in a moment you will perceive that all gradations of rank among our race of worms must be less than nothing, and even contemptible with Him. He does not consort with kings when He descends to earth, for what is their mimic pomp to Him?

He does not seek out for Himself regal society as being more worthy of His dignity than association with poverty, for what is the child's play of courtly grandeur to Him? A king! what is he but a crowned worm! A king! what is he but dust and ashes raised a very little on the ash-heap than the rest of the dust? The Lord, therefore, makes but small account of the honor which comes from man whose breath is in his nostrils.

*“With scorn divine, He turns His eyes
From towers of haughty kings.”*

When His awful chariot rolls downward from the skies, he makes men mark the fact of His condescension by visiting men of low estate. He would have to stoop to a palace. It is no more if He stoops to a dunghill. When He is engaged on mercy's errands, having bowed so low as to enter a cabinet-council chamber, it is scarce a step further to the haunt of poverty and the den of vice. Courage, you humblest of the sons of men. He who reigns in glory despises none.

“He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill.” This has frequently occurred in providence. God in His arrangements singularly alters the position of men. History is not without many instances in which the uppermost have become lowest, and the lowest have been highest. Verily, “There are first that shall be last, and there are last that shall be first.”

Solomon said, “I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking in the dust.” And the same thing has been seen even in these modern times, when kings have fled their thrones, and men who were prowling about in poverty have mounted to imperial power. God in providence often laughs at pedigree and ancestry, and stains the honor and dignity of everything in which human nature boasts itself. From the kennel to the palace is an easy ascent when heaven favors.

It is not upon providence that I intend to dilate, this morning. My text has a special bearing upon God's acts of grace. Here it is above all others that we see the condescending sovereignty of His dealings. He takes the base things of the world, and the things that are not, to bring to nought the things that are.

He selects for Himself those whom men would have repudiated with scorn—He covers His tabernacle of witness with badgers' skins, chooses unhewn stones to be the materials for His altar, a bush for a place of blazing manifestation, and a shepherd boy to be the man after His own heart. Those persons and things which are despised among men, are often highly esteemed in the sight of God.

In considering the text this morning, let us notice the objects of God's choice. First, *where some of them are*. Secondly, *how He takes them from their degraded state*. Thirdly, *how He lifts them up*. And fourthly, *where He puts them*.

It will be the history of a child of God, *from the dunghill to the throne*. Novelists are plastering our walls with sensational titles. There is one which might even satisfy them in their ambition to delight the morbid cravings of this age. “*From the dunghill to the throne*,” is a subject which ought to win your attention, and if it does not, the fault must surely lie with me.

In it there will ever be a blessed novelty of interest, and yet we thank God that it is a correct description of the upward experience of all the Lord's people. He finds tens of thousands in the dunghill-state, and bears them up by the arms of His mercy till he makes them to sit among the princes of his people.

I. We will begin where God began with us. WHERE GOD'S CHOSEN ONES ARE WHEN HE MEETS WITH THEM.

The expression used in the text implies, in the first place, that *many of them are in the lowest scale socially*. Sovereign grace has a people everywhere, in all ranks and conditions of men. Were we taken up to heaven, and did the heavenly spirits wear any token of their rank on earth, we should on returning, say, “Here and there I saw a king. I marked a few princes of the blood, and a handful of peers of the realm. I observed a little company of the prudent, and a slender band of the rich and famous. But I saw a great company of the poor and the unknown, who were rich in faith and known unto the Lord.”

The Lord excludes no man from His election on account of his rank or condition. We shall not err if we say,

*“While grace is given to the prince,
The poor receive their share;
No mortal has a just pretense
To perish in despair.”*

Yet how true it is that many of those whom God has chosen are found not simply among the workers, but among the poorest ranks of the sons of toil! There are some whose daily toil can scarcely find them bread enough to keep body and soul together, and yet they have fed daintily upon the bread of heaven.

Many are clad in garments of the meanest kind, patched and mended everywhere, and yet they are as gloriously arrayed in the sight of God and the holy angels, as the brightest of the saints. “Yet, I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” Some of the sweetest biographies of Christians have been the lives of the lowly culled from the annals of the poor.

Who has not read, *The Young Cottager* and *The Dairyman’s Daughter*? Who has not found the greatest pleasure in visiting those bed-ridden ones who lie in the alms’ room, those saints of God who owe to charity their daily food, because sickness has deprived them of the means of earning their bread?

My poor hearer, you may this morning, while sitting in that pew, feel as if you were scarcely respectable enough to be in a place of worship, but I pray you let not your poverty hinder your receiving the Gospel, whose peculiar glory it is that it is preached to the poor.

You may have nothing at all in this world, not a foot of ground which you can call your own. You may have been fighting against adversity, a deadly struggle, year after year, and yet you may be still as poor as poverty itself. I will neither commend nor upbraid your poverty, for there is nothing necessarily good or bad morally in any state of life, but I beg that you will not let your circumstances discourage you in the matter of your spiritual interest before God.

Come as a beggar if you be a beggar. Come in rags, if you have no other covering. “He that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”

The expression in the text does not refer merely to social gradations. I have no doubt it has a more spiritual meaning. *The dunghill is a place where men throw their worthless things*. When you have quite done with an article, and cannot put it to any further use, you throw it away. It has been turned to two or three accounts since it was first employed for its original intention, and now it is in the way and cannot longer be harbored. It is of no use to be sold even as old metal, and therefore you throw it on the dunghill that it may be taken away with the rubbish.

How often have God’s own chosen people felt themselves to be mere offscourings and sweepings, good for nothing but to be cast away! You, dear friends, are in a like case, for you have discovered your own utter worthlessness. Looking upon yourself in the light which you have received from heaven, your fancied value has all departed.

You were very important once in your own esteem, but you now perceive that your loss, so far from affecting heaven and earth, would be of no more consequence to the world at large than the throwing of a rotten fruit upon the dunghill, or the falling of a sere leaf from one forest tree amidst a myriad. In your own estimation there is in you a want of adaptation for any useful purpose.

You are of no more use than salt which has lost its savor. You cannot glorify God as you could wish. You do not wish as much as you should. You can neither pray with the earnestness you desire, nor praise with the gratitude you wish to feel. Looking back upon your past life, you are heartily ashamed. In a corner you mourn out, “Lord, what a worthless piece of lumber I have been in this world! What a cumberer of the ground! What an unprofitable servant!”

You have been useful to your family, or to your country, and once you thought this enough—but now you measure yourself as in the light of God. And inasmuch as you have never glorified Him who

made you, and have brought no honor to Him who is your kind and gracious Preserver, you feel yourself to be so worthless, that if the Lord should throw you on the dunghill, and say, "Put him away! he is as worthless as dross and dung!" He would only treat you as you richly deserve.

My dear friend, this estimate of yourself, though it brings you much unhappiness, is a very healthy sign. When we think little of ourselves, God thinks much of us. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." He will not break you, O you bruised reed! He will not quench you, O you smoking flax! but though you are only fit to be cast on the dunghill, His mercy will tenderly consider you and exalt you among the princes of his people.

Again, *the dunghill is a place of contempt*. Contempt sometimes sneeringly says of its victim, "He is such a person, that I would not pick him up if I saw him on a dunghill." The sneer of the world condemns some persons thus, "Oh! they are good for nothing. A dunghill is too good for them." Possibly, my hearer, you may be placed in a family where you are much despised. You may not have the ability and sharpness of others of the household, and therefore you are much looked down upon, and are regarded as a poor simpleton, not worth noticing.

You have not succeeded in life as others have done, and consequently you are viewed with much contempt by those who have prospered much and speedily. Nay, you feel this morning as if you merited the contempt poured upon you. You have been saying, "Ah! you despise me, but if you knew me as I know myself, you would despise me more. You think nothing of me and I am less than nothing. You call me an ill name, but could you see the deceitfulness of my base heart, you would understand that the name might be worn in truth though given in jest."

Well, despised one, let me remind you that the Lord has often looked upon those whom man has despised. And though your own parents may have taken no pleasure in you, and society may sneer at you, and you may yourself now feel as if the sneer were well-deserved, yet take confidence and be of good heart, for God visits dunghills when He does not visit palaces, and He will lift up the humble and meek from the dust wherein they pine and languish.

The next remark may, perhaps, afford more comfort—*the dunghill is the place for filthy and offensive things*. We say of a foul and unsavory thing, "It is too bad to be borne in the house, let it be swept away. Put it away with the filth. Cover it up." When a matter becomes noisome, putrid, offensive, we want it to be removed at once.

Ah! sad that we should have to say this of any of our fellow creatures, but we must say it. There are some whose sins are terribly foul. Their iniquities are so vile that they are an offense in the eyes and ears of all decent men—while the Holy God looks upon their actions with wrath and detestation. Some sinners have become so infamous in character that they are an injury to all associated with them.

They cannot enter into any company without spreading the contagion of their sin. Their example is so bad that it is enough to poison the parish where they live. They are only fit to be put as so much rotteness, foulness, and putridity, on the dunghill where immorality rots out its hour of abomination.

But oh! the love of my Master. He has often stooped to rescue the abandoned from the dunghill. In heaven I see those who had washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, who once were harlots like Rahab, adulterers like David, and idolaters like Manasseh. Before the throne of God there stand today, among the peers of God, those who, in their days of unregeneracy, were thieves, and drunkards, and blasphemers. Heaven's courts are trodden by many who once were the chief of sinners, but who now are brightest among the saints.

I pray you, beloved, never think that the Gospel of Christ saved great offenders in years gone by, but that now it is only for the unfallen and moral. The moral are freely invited to Christ, which we never forget to testify, but the immoral are *bidden* too. The Lord came to our earth as a Physician, and He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. He came not to heal those who are already sound in health, but the sick.

O my hearer, if you be so sick with sin that your whole head is sick and your whole heart faint, and from the crown of your head to the sole of your foot there is no soundness in you—but nothing but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores—yet still the love of my Master will stoop to you!

If you have added lust to theft, and even murder to lust, if you are red-handed with infamous iniquity, yet the sacred crimson bath, which was filled from the heart of Jesus, can wash away “all manner of sin and blasphemy.” Whosoever believes in Him is justified from all things from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses.

Refined minds thought just now that I was using a very ugly expression when I spoke of rescuing rottenness from the dunghill, but the expression is all too clean when compared with sin. For all the filth and loathsomeness that ever offended eye and nostril are sweetness itself compared with sin. The foulest and most detestable thing in the whole universe is sin.

It is this which keeps the fire of hell burning as God’s great sanitary necessity. There cannot but be a constant Tophet where there is such constant sin. We read that in certain French towns they kindled great public fires because of the cholera. The cholera! what is it compared with sin? Well may God cause the fiery flames of eternal torment to go up forever and ever, for it is only by such terrific punishment that the plague of sin can be at all restrained within bounds.

Sin is a horrible evil, a deadly poison. And yet, sinner, though you be as full of it as an egg is full of meat, and as reeking with it as the foulest piece of noxious matter can be reeking with foul smell—yet the infinite mercy of God in Christ Jesus can lift you from this utmost degradation and make you shine as a star in His kingdom at the last.

Once more, the dunghill may be spiritually considered as *the place of condemnation*. You look at a certain article of food, for instance, and the economical housewife does not wish to waste anything. Well, if it may not serve for food, may it not be useful for something else? At last, when she sees that it is of no service, the sentence of condemnation is, “Let it be cast on the dunghill.”

Nebuchadnezzar, in his memorable proclamation concerning the Lord JEHOVAH, said that whosoever should speak a word against Him should be cut in pieces, and his house should be made a dunghill. There is a connection, then, between the dunghill and condemnation.

Now there may be in this audience, this morning, a man who feels himself to be under sentence of condemnation. You have so often had pricks of conscience, so frequently have been taught better, and yet you have sinned against light and knowledge, that now you consider yourself to have sinned beyond the reach of mercy.

My voice, this morning, very likely grates on your ears, though it is meant to convey to you the most gladsome tidings that ever silver trumpet rung out to bankrupt sinners on the day of Jubilee, yet it sounds to you like the voice which proclaims your doom. Well, poor sinner, if you be in yourself condemned, and a hoarse voice has said, “To the dunghill with him! To the flames of hell with him!” yet I come to you in JEHOVAH’s name, and bid you hear this word this morning—“He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; that he may set him with princes.”

What say you to this? What if God should forgive you, this morning? What if He should make you His child? What if He should give you a crown of life that fades not away? “Oh!” say you, “if He would, I would love and bless Him.” Sinner, He will do it if you can now believe in the Lord Jesus, whose blood cleanses us from all sin. By the death of Jesus I beseech you trust in the atoning sacrifice of Calvary and you shall live to praise His redeeming love.

I must not, however, leave out a thought which just flashes on one’s mind. A thing which lies upon the dunghill *is in contact with disgusting associates*, and therefore, the text may represent those who have hitherto lived in the midst of evil associations.

When these doors are opened, there often come in here, out of curiosity, persons who are not regular attendants at places of worship—I must say the most hopeful class that I ever address—for some of you who have heard my voice and the voices of other ministers so long, are almost hopeless. We might well

give you up, for we have pleaded with you so frequently, and put the truth before you so constantly, that surely if it ever was to have been blessed to you it would have been blessed already.

But those to whom the Gospel is a new thing occasionally drop in, and some of these come from the very worst society, fresh from the theatre, the gin palace, and worse places still—the name of Jesus scarcely known except as it may be used in blasphemy, and the person of God Most High never thought of except as He is invoked in a curse.

Friend, we are glad that you are here. You have been on the dunghill, you are on the dunghill now. You have been living with publicans and harlots. You have kept sad company. You have not been nurtured among the choice and the *elite* of mankind, on the contrary, you have been among the pots and dwelt in the hedges.

Now it is such as you are that Jesus Christ bids us gather in. “Go out quickly into the lanes and into the hedges, and as many as ye find bid to the supper.” And they brought in the blind, and the halt, and the lame, and they took their seats, and feasted where others who were first invited refused to come. I call to you, then, if such there be within my hearing, to you who do not often darken the doors of God’s sanctuary, to you who live among the profane and the debauched, turn to Jesus Christ, I pray you!

May the eternal Spirit turn you this day and may you be found among the chosen of God! Alas! and woe is me that I should have to say it, some of you, my hearers, who have been moral and excellent, and have listened to the Word these years, will, I solemnly fear, perish in your sins. For verily, verily, I say unto you, publicans and harlots will enter into the kingdom of heaven before some of you who hear the Word but do it not, and listen to it but feel not its power, and know the joyful sound but do not receive it into your hearts.

Thus much, then, as to where some of God’s people are found. Let me say that in a certain sense this is where they all are—all on the dunghill of Adam’s fall, all on the dunghill of self-conceit, self-righteousness, and depravity, and sin, and corruption. But sovereign mercy comes to them just as they lie there rotting in heaps of ruin and rescues them by effectual grace.

II. In the second place, we desire to describe HOW THE LORD RAISES THEM FROM IT.

He lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; It is a dead lift and none but an eternal arm could do it. It is a feat of omnipotence to lift a sinner out of his natural degradation. It is all done by the power of the Holy Spirit through the Word, filled with the energy of God. The operation is somewhat on this wise.

When the Lord begins to deal with the needy sinner, the first lift He gives him *raises his desires*. The man is not satisfied to be where he was and what he was. That dunghill he had not perceived to be as foul as it really is. And the first sign of spiritual life is horror at his lost condition, and an anxious desire to escape from it.

Dear hearer, have you advanced so far as this? Do you feel that all is wrong with you? And do you desire to be saved from your present state? So long as you can say, “It is well with me,” and boast that you are no worse than others, I have no hope for you. God does not lift those up who are lifted up already. But when you begin to feel that your present state is one of degradation and ruin, and that you fain would escape from it, then the Lord has put the lever under you. He has begun to raise you up.

The next sign generally is that to *such a man sin loses all sweetness*. When the Lord begins to work with you, even before you find Christ to the joy of your soul, you will find the joy of sin to have departed. A quickened soul that feels the weight of sin cannot find pleasure in it. Although without faith in Jesus, the evil of sin cannot clearly and evangelically be perceived, yet the conscience of an awakened sinner, perceiving the terribly defiling character of some sins, compels him to give them up.

The alehouse is abandoned. The scorner’s seat is given up. The lusts of the flesh are forsaken, and though this does not lift the sinner from the dunghill, yet it is a sign that the Lord has begun His work of grace. When sin grows bitter, mercy grows sweet. O my friend, may the Lord wean you from the world’s sweet poisons and bring you to the true pleasures which are hidden in Christ Jesus.

It is another blessed sign that the man is being lifted from the dunghill, when he begins to feel that *his own self-righteousness is no assistance to him*—when, having prayed, he looks upon his prayers with

repentance, and having gone to God's house, rests not in the outward form. It is well when a man is cut off entirely from all confidence in himself. He may be on the dunghill still, but I am sure he will not be there long, for when you and yourself have quarreled, God and yourself begin to be at peace.

When you can see through that cobweb righteousness of yours, which once seemed to be such a fair silken garment; when you can hate that counterfeit coin, which once seemed to glitter and to chink like the true gold; when you are plunged in the ditch and your own clothes abhor you, it is not long before you shall be saved with an everlasting salvation.

Now comes the true lift from off the dunghill. That poor, guilty, lost, worthless one, *hears of Jesus Christ*, that He came into the world to save sinners—that poor soul looks to Him with a look which means, "Lord, You are my last resort! If You do not save me, I will perish. And You must save me altogether, for I cannot help You. I cannot give a thread with which to finish Your perfect righteousness. If it be unfinished, I cannot contribute one farthing to make up my own ransom—if You have not completely ransomed me, then Your redemption is of no service to me. Lord, I am a drowning, sinking man. I grasp You as I sink. O save me for Your mercy's sake!"

*"All my help on Thee is stayed;
All my trust from Thee I bring:
Cover my defenseless head
With the shadow of Thy wing."*

When a soul gets there, then it is off the dunghill. For the moment a sinner thus trusts Jesus Christ, his sins cease to be. God has drawn his pen through them all. They are gone. He is not guilty in the sight of God any longer. He stands acquitted through the atonement, and justified through the righteousness of Jesus Christ. He is a saved man.

He may rise from his sackcloth and ashes, and walking at large, may sing of the blood-bought mercy which has set him completely free. Thus by the gift of the only-begotten Son, brought personally to the heart, the Lord raises His elect ones from their ruined state. He makes them see it to be a dunghill, makes them feel that they cannot get off of it themselves, points them to Christ, leads them to trust His precious blood, and so they are delivered.

III. The third point is, HOW HE RAISES THEM UP.

It is a blessed thing to be saved from degradation, but praise be to JEHOVAH, He does not stop there. The Lord does nothing by halves. Oh! the lengths and breadths of love! When He has come right down to where we are, it is only half His journey—it remains for Him to bear us right up to where He is.

Oh! it is a blessed thing to be taken off the dunghill, even if our lot were that of hired servants in our father's house. But this does not satisfy the infinite heart of JEHOVAH—He will lift his people up above all common-place joys, he will take them right up, up, up as on eagles' wings till He sets them in the place of princes, and makes them to reign with Him.

Now let us have a few minutes' consideration of how our blessed Lord lifts his people up from the common level of humanity to make them rank with princes. In the first place, *they are lifted up by complete justification*. Every Christian here this morning, whatever may have been his past life, is at this instant perfect in the sight of God through Jesus Christ. The spotless righteousness of Christ is imputed to that sinner believing in Him, so that he stands, this morning, "accepted in the beloved."

Now beloved, weigh this, turn it over, and meditate upon it. Poor, needy, but believing sinner, you are as accepted before God at this present time through Christ Jesus as if you never had sinned, as if you had done and performed every work of His most righteous law without the slightest failure. Is not this sitting among princes?

Complete justification furnishes the believer with a throne as safe as it is lofty, as happy as it is glorious. Ah! you scions of imperial houses, some of you know nothing of this. This is a note which many an emperor could never sing, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?"

Speak of sitting in pavilions of pleasure, or on divans of state with nobles, princes, kings, Caesars—why the figure flags, it falls short of the mark, for the state of the soul completely justified outshines all this as the sun outshines yon glimmering candle.

Take the next step. The children of God who have been taken from the dunghill, many of them enjoy *full assurance of faith*. They are certain that they are saved. They can say with Job, “I know that my Redeemer liveth.” As to whether they are children of God or not, they have no question. The infallible witness of the Holy Spirit bears witness with their spirit that they are born of God. Christ is their elder brother, God is their Father, and they breathe the filial spirit by which they cry, “Abba, Father!”

They know their own security. They are convinced that neither “things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate them from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus their Lord.” I ask every one of understanding heart, whether this is not sitting among princes?

Beloved, I would not give a farthing for a prince’s throne, but I would give all I had a thousand times told, if I might always enjoy full assurance of faith. For the full assurance of faith is a better joy than Shushan’s palace of lilies or Solomon’s house of the forest of Lebanon could ever yield. A sense of divine loving-kindness is better than life itself—it is a young heaven maturing below to be fully developed above. To know that my Beloved is mine, and that I am His, and that He loved me and gave Himself for me, this is far better than to be heir-apparent to a number of empires.

We go further, the children of God, favored by divine grace, are permitted to have *interviews with Jesus Christ*. Like Enoch, we walk with God. Just as a child walks with his father, putting his hand into his father’s hand, looking up with loving eye, so the chosen people walk with their Father God most lovingly, confidingly, familiarly, talking to Him, telling Him their griefs, and hearing from His gracious mouth the secrets of His love.

They are a happy people, for they have communion with Jesus of a more intimate and tender sort than even angels know. We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. We are married unto Him. He has betrothed us unto Himself in faithfulness and in righteousness. We are dearer to Himself than His own flesh and blood—that He gave to die—and none of us shall ever perish, neither shall any take us out of His hand.

Now, is not this sitting among princes? Princes! Princes! We look down upon your pomp from the eminence on which grace has placed us! Wear your crowns! put on your purple! deck yourselves in all your regal pomp! but when our souls can sit with Jesus, and reign as kings and priests with Him, your splendors are not worth a thought. Communion with Jesus is a richer gem than ever glittered in any imperial diadem. Union with the Lord is a coronet of beauty outshining all the crowns of earth.

Nor is this all—the elect of God, in addition to receiving complete justification, full assurance, and communion with Christ, are favored with the Holy Spirit’s *sanctification*. God the Holy Spirit dwells in every Christian, however humble he may be, he is a walking temple in which resides deity. God the Holy Spirit dwells in us, and we in Him.

And that Spirit sanctifies the daily actions of the Christian, so that he does everything as unto God. If he lives, it is to Christ, and if he dies, it is gain. O beloved, it is indeed to sit among princes when you feel the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. O my God, if I might always feel Your Spirit overcoming my corruption and constraining my soul to holiness, I would not so much as think of a prince in comparison with my own joy.

O my dear brethren and sisters in Jesus Christ, I am sure you can bear witness that when you fall into sin at any time, it brings you very low. You smell that vile dunghill once again and are ready to die under its fearful noisomeness. But when the Holy Spirit enables you to overcome sin, and to live as Christ lived, you do feel that you have a royal standing, and a more than imperial privilege in being sanctified in Christ Jesus.

Moreover, many saints receive, in addition to sanctification, *the blessing of usefulness*. And mark the word, every useful man is of princely rank. I am not exaggerating now, but speaking the sober truth. He

is the true prince among men who blesses his fellows. To be able to drop pearls from your lips might make you a prince in a fairy tale, but when those lips bless the souls of men by leading them to Jesus—this is to be a prince in very deed.

To feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to reclaim the fallen, to teach the ignorant, to cheer the desponding, to inspire the wavering, and to conduct saints up to God's right hand, my brethren, this is to wear a lustre which stars and ribbons, orders and distinctions, could never confer. This is the privilege of each one of you, according as the Spirit of God has given you the measure of faith.

You, who once did mischief, now subserve the interest of virtue. You, who rendered up your members servants unto unrighteousness, now make those same members servants of righteousness to the praise and glory of God. No courts of sovereigns can bestow such true honors as dwell in holiness, charity, and zeal.

And once more, God lifts his people up in another sense—while He gives them sanctification and usefulness, He also *anoints them with joy*. Oh! the joy of being a Christian! I know the world's idea is that we are a miserable people. If you read the pages of history, the writers speak of the gay cavaliers as being men of high spirit and overflowing joy. But the poor Puritans, what a wretched set they were, blaspheming Christmas Day, abhorring games and sports, and going about the world, looking so terribly miserable, that it were a pity they should go to hell, for they had enough of torment here!

Now this talk is all untrue or at best is a gross caricature. Hypocrites, then as now, did wear a long face and a rueful countenance, but there were to be found among the Puritans hosts of men whose holy mirth and joy were not to be equaled, nay, not to be dreamed of, or understood by those poor grinning fools who fluttered round the heartless rogue whose hypocrisies had lifted him to the English throne. The cavaliers' mirth was the crackling of thorns under a pot, but a deep and unquenchable joy dwelt in the breasts of those men—

*“Who trampled on the throng of the haughty and the strong,
Who sat in the high places, and slew the saints of God.”*

Oh! far above the laughter of the gallants of the court, was the mighty and deep joy of those who rode from the victorious field singing unto the Lord who had made them triumph gloriously. They called them “Ironsides,” and such they were, but they had hearts of steel, which while they flinched not in the day of danger, forgot not to flash with joy even as steel glitters in the shining of the sun.

Believe me, however, whatever *they* were, that we who trust in Jesus are the happiest of people—not constitutionally, for some of us have great depression of spirits, not always circumstantially, for some of us are much tried, and are brought to the utter depths of poverty, but inwardly, truly, really, our heart's joy, believe us, is not to be excelled.

I would not stand here to lie for twice the Indies, but I will speak the truth—if I had to die like a dog tomorrow, I would not change places with any man beneath the courts of heaven for joy and peace of mind. For to be a Christian and know it, to drink deep of that cup, to know your election, to understand your calling—I do assure you yields more peace and bliss in one ten minutes than will be found in one hundred years in all the courts of sin, though wantonness should run riot, and pleasure should know no license.

*“Solid joy and lasting pleasure
None but Zion's children know.”*

So when I read the text that He sets us among princes, I think little of the figure, it halts, it limps, for the Lord puts us far above all earthly princes. And were it not for the next sentence I would even that the figure broke down altogether, but that clause makes it right, “even the princes of his people”—this puts soul and force—these are princes of another blood, these are peers of another realm, and among such God sets His people.

IV. To conclude, we have to notice in the last place, WHERE IT IS THAT OUR LORD SETS HIS PEOPLE.

“Among princes,” we are told. We have already dwelt upon the same thought, but we will examine another side of it. “Among princes,” is *the place of select society*. They do not admit everybody into that charmed circle. Among an aristocracy the poor plebeian must not venture. The blue blood runs in rather a narrow channel, and it cannot be expected that the common crimson should be allowed to invigorate the languid current.

The true Christian lives in very select society. Listen! “Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” Speak of select society, there is none like this! We are a chosen generation, a peculiar people, a royal priesthood. “We are not come unto Mount Sinai, but we are come unto the blood of sprinkling and unto the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven.” This is select society.

Next, *they have courtly audience*—the prince may be expected to have admittance to royalty when common people like ourselves must stand afar off. Now the child of God has free access to the royalty of heaven. Our courtly privileges are of the highest order. Listen! “For through him we both have access by one spirit unto the Father.” “Let us come boldly,” says the apostle, “*to the throne* of the heavenly grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” We have courtly audience and peculiarly select society.

Next to this it is supposed that among princes there is *abundant wealth*, but what is the wealth of princes compared with the riches of believers? for “all things are yours, and ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”

Among princes, again, there dwells *peculiar power*. A prince has influence. He wields a sceptre in his own domain—and “He hath made us kings and priests unto God, and we shall reign for ever and ever.” We are not kings of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and yet we have a triple dominion. We reign over spirit, soul, and body. We reign over the united kingdom of time and eternity. We reign in this world, and we shall reign in the world that is yet to come—for we shall reign forever and ever.

Princes, again, have *special honor*. Everyone in the crowd desires to gaze upon a prince and would be delighted to do him service. Let *him* have the first position in the empire. He is a prince of the blood, and is to be had in esteem and respect.

Beloved, hear you His Word—“He hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus,” so that we share the honor of Christ as we share His cross. Paul was taken from the dunghill of persecution, but he is not second to any in glory. And you, though you may have been the chief of sinners, shall fare none the worse when He comes in His kingdom. But as He owned you on earth, and redeemed you with His precious blood, so will He own you in the future state, and make you sit with Him and reign among princes, world without end.

May the Lord bless these words for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 SAMUEL 2:1-10 AND PSALM 113

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.