

A SONG, A SOLACE, A SERMON AND A SUMMONS

NO. 787

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“For His mercy endures forever.”
Psalm 136:1.

THIS 136th Psalm was constantly sung in the Temple by appointed singers, among whom the names of Heman and Jeduthun are mentioned. These, we are told in the Book of Chronicles, were chosen to give thanks unto Jehovah, whose “mercy endures forever.” This continued service of song was most fitting, for, if Jehovah’s mercy endures forever, our praise should endure forever! If His goodness never ceases, our thanksgiving should never be silent! It seemed to me most appropriate to direct your attention to this text in the closing Sunday of the year because it is a fit accompaniment to that upon which I addressed you on the *first* Sunday. [*Good Cheer for the New Year*, Sermon #728.]

You will remember that we then spoke of the ever watchful mercy of the Lord our God, from the words, “The eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.” Having almost reached the close of the year let us acknowledge that the mercy has been equal to the promise—that God has not failed to fulfill his gracious Word, “for His mercy endures forever.” May all your hearts be full of gratitude and the music of your spirits stand in the stead of trumpets and cymbals which of old proclaimed the joy of Israel when they made mention of Jehovah’s name!

I. At the outset we shall regard the text as A SONG. So it was originally intended to be used. It was a song for all singers, for it was the refrain of each verse, the chorus to be taken up by the whole assembled multitude. I suppose that the practiced singers commenced thus, “O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good,” and then the entire multitude, whether they were taught in psalmody or not, chanted the chorus, “For His mercy endures forever.” Then would the choir again sweetly sing, “O give thanks unto the God of gods,” and a fresh burst of many voices would reply, “For His mercy endures forever.”

In imitation of that ancient mode of singing, I shall ask the whole assembly to make a chorus with their *hearts* and mentally to bless the Lord whose “mercy endures forever.” Let the young and the old join in the common praise! Let the rich and the poor, the instructed and the ignorant, yes, let the *saved* and the *unsaved* each take a part in the choral music, for the Psalmist so words the Psalm that even the unconverted may claim a share in it! He bids us praise God for common mercies—common as we frequently call them—and yet so priceless that when deprived of them we are ready to perish! He bids us sing concerning the great lights whose radiance is universally enjoyed. He bids us extol the Maker of the sun and the moon, for without the cheerful light of the celestial lamps we should live in perpetual darkness, if, indeed, we lived at all!

Let us bless God for the eyes with which we behold the sun, for the health and strength to walk abroad in the sunlight. Let us praise Him for the mercies which are new every morning, for the bread we eat, for the raiment which clothes us, for houses which give us shelter. Let us bless Him that we are not deprived of our reason, or stretched upon the bed of sickness. Let us praise Him that we are not cast out among the hopeless, or confined among the guilty. Let us thank Him for liberty, for friends, for family associations and comforts. Let us praise Him, in fact, for *everything* which we receive from His bounteous hand, for we deserve little, and yet are most plenteously endowed. “His mercy endures forever.” Every morning’s light proclaims it, the beams of every moon declare it! Every breath of air, every heaving of the lungs, every beating of the pulse are fresh witnesses that “His mercy endures forever.”

But, Beloved, the sweetest and the loudest note in the chorus must always be reserved for those who sing of *redeeming* love. A few verses further down the Psalmist writes, “To Him that smote Egypt in their first-born, and brought out Israel from among them with a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm, for His mercy endures forever.” Yes, God’s redeeming acts towards His chosen are forever the favorite themes of praise. Many of us know what redemption means. Let

us not refuse our sonnets of thanksgiving. Glory be to God, we have been redeemed from the power of our corruptions, uplifted from the depth of sin in which we were naturally plunged! We have been led to the Cross of Christ—our shackles of guilt have been broken off—we are no longer slaves but children of the living God!

We can look *back* to the source of that redemption in the council chambers of eternity where the plan was first ordained and settled. We can look *forward* to the results of that redemption, and antedate the period when we shall be presented before the Throne of God without wrinkle or any such thing. Even now by faith we wave the palm branch and wrap ourselves about with the fair white linen which is to be our everlasting array! And shall we not this day give thanks to the name of the Lord whose redeeming “mercy endures forever”?

Child of God, can you be silent? Shall there be one dumb soul here this morning? Awake, awake, you heritors of Glory, and lead your captivity captive as you cry with David, “Bless the Lord, O my Soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name!” Further on our poet invites the experienced Believer to join in the Psalm. Just as some among us, whose voices are deep, can take the bass parts of the tune, so the educated saint who has been for years in the ways of the Lord can throw a force and a weight into the song which no other can contribute.

We are reminded in the Psalm that the Lord led His people through the wilderness and smote their enemies, “and gave their land for an heritage: for His mercy endures forever.” You who are men and fathers among us, bless the Lord who has safely led you until this hour. The pillar of cloud, the column of fire you have not seen, and yet you have been conducted as pilgrims in the desert, safe and well. The heavenly manna has been your food and the water from the living Rock has been your drink. Your mightiest foes have been slain with the sword of the Lord. Temptations sharp and strong have not prevailed against you. Trials incessant you have been able to bear.

“Up to now the Lord has helped you.” What is your experience worth if it does not kindle the flames of gratitude? To what end has God manifested all this goodness to you unless you delight yourself in God in the remembrance of it? Remember all the ways by which the Lord your God has led you these 40 years in the wilderness! Remember how He has hedged you about, and kept off your enemies and given you peace within your soul and fed you with the finest of the wheat! If you are silent you will be most guilty of all the ungrateful ones! Therefore, Believer, take the cymbals, yes, the high-sounding cymbals, and with all your might dance before the ark of the Lord your God, and praise and magnify His holy name!

The peculiar point which is brought out in this chorus is the enduring character of Divine mercy—“His mercy endures forever.” By this I suppose is intended that God’s mercy, as an attribute and as a rule of His action, is continual throughout all ages. He was a merciful God to our first parents. At the fatal portal of Eden when they were first driven forth into the world in judgment, the sweet promise came like the breath of Heaven upon them, “The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.” Abraham and Isaac and Jacob received mercy at His hands. Samuel and David and Solomon found Him gracious, and the Prophets and those who loved the Lord in their days knew that He turned not His love from His people. The multitude understood the abounding mercy of the Most High when healing was given by our Lord on the right hand and on the left.

In Apostolic times the first champions of the faith drank deep at the fountain of God’s love, and afterwards our sires, who upheld the banner of the Cross in ages of persecution, trusted in God and bore witness that His mercy endured unto them. It is the same today! God has not quenched the lamp of His goodness—the river of His mercy flows deep and broad as before. I was musing upon this—God’s mercy through the ages—and I saw as before my eyes the goodness of God conquering the sin of many all along the ages.

Did you ever stand upon the field of Waterloo and see the golden harvest waving there? So you have seen how the mercy of God has blotted out the cruelty of man. There where man struggled with his fellow and dyed the ground crimson with human gore—Mercy came and covered all with a robe of emerald, covered with fairest flowers, turning Acedama into Eden! Moreover, Mercy so triumphs over Judgment that before long men look upon the judgments as a noble form of mercy! When our ancient city was consumed by fire and the distressed inhabitants walked among the ashes of all their precious things, the pulpits rang with the cry of the judgment of God.

But what do we say now? Why, that it was a most gracious visitation—destroying pestilence in its lair, and banishing the plague from the land! Thus it is seen that “His mercy endures forever.” If Jehovah shall shake the earth with earthquakes, or dash down the dwellings of men with tornadoes, or make the cruel sea to engulf a navy, the after results

teem with blessings to mankind! While the judgment itself vanishes, flowers bloom amid the rifts of the earthquakes, and children play where the hot lava ran from the red lips of the volcano! Mercy still abides, and judgment is but for a little season.

Doubtless, also, the Psalmist meant that mercy continues in its fullness. We make great draughts upon the mercy of God, but we do not *diminish* it. There are fears that we shall one day exhaust those great storehouses in which the earth's best fuel is laid up. This may be probable, and is certainly possible—a few hundred years will make a heavy demand upon our mineral treasures—but quarry as you will in the mines of God's *blessing*, neither you nor your children, nor your children's children shall complain of a deficiency!—

*“Great God, the treasures of Your love
Are everlasting mines,
Deep as our helpless miseries are,
And boundless as our sins.”*

May we not also understand by, “His mercy endures forever,” that the patience of God abounds? Have you ever reflected upon the infinite, long-suffering of God? Consider, for a moment, the sins of men are all before the Lord. You and I can readily put up with offenses which do not touch us in the quick, or actually under our own eye—but the sinner's sin is perpetrated before the countenance of Jehovah! No word is said behind His back. No blasphemy is uttered in secret to Him—and sin affects God as it does not affect us. We have grown so hardened that the heinousness of iniquity is little discerned by us—we take it as a matter of course.

But God, who is infinitely pure, is, if I may use such an expression, infinitely sensitive in regard to sin. He knows sin to be sin and the heinousness of it, which we do not perceive, is all before His mind continually. And yet His mighty patience reigns over all and bears with men's iniquities. Remember, too, that these insults against Heaven are constantly repeated. The most patient man at last yields to anger. Constant dripping will wear away a stone. But here is God insulted, as I have said, to His face thousands and thousands of times a *day*, and yet keeps His sword in its scabbard and bids His thunder sleep!

A wish would blast the rebels into everlasting torment, but He wills it not. As the Lord lives He says He has no pleasure in the death of him that dies, but would rather that he should turn unto Him and live. To all this you must add the reflection that all the while rebellious sinners are partaking of God's mercy—the rebel wears God's gifts of clothes upon His back, and sits at the table of God's Providence. The breath that is in his nostrils is the gift of Divine charity and yet the wretch uses this breath against his Maker! Can you understand this? Could you bear to be insulted for a single day by one who was receiving all he had from you? Would you not, by-and-by, yes, very speedily, say to him, “Get out of here! If you are my enemy, why should I treat you as I treat my friend?”

Then be it remembered that God is not only sparing the guilty, but is putting ways of mercy before them. Some of you are invited to repent as often as the Sunday dawns! With some of you there are incessant movings upon your conscience—you seldom pass a day without hearing the voice say, “Turn you, turn you, why will you die?” God is always wooing you to come to Him, inviting you by His mercy and threatening you by His judgments. And yet while His long-suffering should lead you to repentance, you add sin to sin and ripen in your iniquity!

One thing more I would have you remember and I think you will admire the amazing patience of God, namely that He is doing this with millions! Millions! Perhaps a thousand millions at this moment, for I suppose—though no one can ascertain accurately—there are a thousand millions of unregenerate men upon the face of this earth at this very moment—all enemies of God! They are either worshipping gods of wood and stone or else such spiritual idols as their imaginations have fashioned. And with all these God is compassed about as with bees but He does not destroy them! He still has patience, and still He cries, “Come unto Me! Repent! Believe in My Son and you shall have eternal life.” Truly “His mercy endures forever,” if you think upon these things.

May not the endurance of Divine Grace be faintly pictured in the following scene? Out yonder, just beyond those grinding rocks, there is a vessel rolling and tossing on the jagged granite, and evidently going to pieces. See you not the mariners clinging to the masts? It is not possible that they should escape except by help from the shore. The rocket apparatus has been used and a rope is fastened to the vessel—and now a cradle is drawn along the rope. What joy! One man is safely landed, but the rope is weak, and it is doubtful whether it will bear the strain. Two at one time are clinging to the rope and the ship is nearly broken up—will the rope bear them?

The wind howls terribly and the waves lash furiously—will the rope hold out? Another is venturing! Ah, see how the rope dips! The waves have gone over him. Will it be able to sustain his weight and save him? Now we never have such anxiety concerning the salvation of souls by Christ Jesus, “for His mercy endures forever.” The salvation of God brings every soul to shore that hangs on it, and, when the world is gone to wreck, Free Grace will bring all who trust it to the eternal shore! Should the biggest sinner out of Hell hang upon that rope of mercy, it will bear him up and bring him safely to land!

I would liken God’s mercy to a great temple which strong men have sought to overturn with their utmost might. They have labored to overturn the two great pillars where the house leans. The ancient temple of the Philistines stood firm enough till an unexpected hero entered it—Samson felt for the pillars, and finding them, bowed himself with all his might—and the pillars snapped! And down came the house upon the Philistine lords, and Samson himself perished. Many a Samson-like sinner has gone into the temple of God’s mercy and bowed with all his might to overturn it—to see if he could not wear out the patience of God and blaspheme himself into swift damnation—and yet these bold and gigantic sinners have never been able to do this! And very frequently these very men have been subdued by Divine Grace and have worshipped Him in the temple which they once sought to destroy. Yes, Philistia’s house may bow, but the house of Jehovah stands fast, and “His mercy endures forever.”

There is but one reflection to make the subject of the song complete, namely that the potency of God’s mercy in delivering His saints is equally immutable. He is always able to deliver His children, so that we may say in the language of the three holy children, “Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us out of the enemies’ hands.” There is no possibility that a child of God should be cast into a difficulty out of which the stretched out arm of Jehovah cannot bring him. He who brought His people of old from the brick kilns of Egypt, and led them through the Red Sea and the howling wilderness will surely bring all His elect ones out of all their trials safely to their heavenly rest.

II. I now use the text as A SOLACE. We have many troubles and we need comfort. God is willing that we should be comforted, for He says, “Comfort you, comfort you My people.” Moreover, He has provided for it, for He has given us the Holy Spirit to be the Comforter. I shall use the text as a solace as to the *past*. The year is all but gone. Have we not found, up till now, that His mercy has endured forever? If the stories of all could be told who are sitting here, I suppose a great roll of lamentation would need to be written, and around every roll we could bind the silken cord of mercy!

Beloved, whether you will say it or not, I must, as the minister of such a congregation as this—involved in so many cares, with so many labors and so much of anxiety pressing daily upon my soul—I must bless my God that up till now, to me, at any rate, His mercy has endured. It brought me to tears when you were singing just now—

*“He His chosen race did bless
In the wasteful wilderness.”*

Yes, it is a wasteful wilderness to us—but He has blessed us—He has made it blossom like the rose where we expected nothing but weariness and barrenness. Blessed be God for the past! We will comfort ourselves with recollections of the past because He will not change in His dealings. He that has helped us thus far will not forsake us. “Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings will I rejoice.”

But the chief solace about the past lies in this—every right-minded Christian at the close of the year looks back upon his sins of omission and sins of commission. I shall not invite you to any lengthy confessions this morning, but which of us would not blush scarlet if his sins could be known? Beloved, acknowledge them now into the ear of your God and then remember that mercy covers all. Whatever it may have been, mercy covers all, and, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.”

I am no more a sinner than I was at the end of last year, and yet I have committed thousands of sins. There is no more in God’s book against me than there was then—there was *nothing* then, blessed be His name!—for the blood had cancelled all. There is nothing *now*, for the same atoning sacrifice has taken all my sin away. Come to the Cross, my Brothers and Sisters! Come to the Cross again, and as you look up to the wounds of Jesus which bled for you, believe that “His mercy endures forever.” Your sins, however innumerable, are cast behind His back, yes, thrown into the depths of the sea.

Our text is also a very sweet consolation as to the *present*. Have we, at this moment, a sense of present sin? Then, “His mercy endures forever.” Our Lord comes to us, in the language of this text, girt with the towel and bearing the ewer, and

the basin, and washes our feet yet again. From the accumulated dust of a year's journey He cleanses us! May you have no consciousness of sin, but on the contrary, a consciousness of *reconciliation* in the Beloved. But perhaps you have on your mind some spiritual disability. Perhaps you have been so disquieted at home that you cannot concentrate your thoughts, and however the preacher may try to bring you to the point, your mind is so disturbed that you cannot appreciate it.

There is a fog in your soul as well as in the streets. Beloved, thank God our acceptance is not injured by our depressed state of mind! Whether we are depressed or exalted, whether we are enjoying communion or not, we still stand in the Beloved all fair and glorious in the sight of Him whose mercy endures forever! Possibly you have come here today and brought with you too much of yesterday's troubles. These ought not to come into the Sunday, for this is a day of rest. Still you cannot help it—you are beset with such daily anxiety that while sitting here you have been mentally looking into your ledger, or nursing the sick child. Your mind has been in the fields of vanity when it should have been on the mountain with God. Drive out your cares by remembering that "His mercy endures forever!"—

*"Come, make your needs, your burdens known!
He will present them at the Throne,
And angel bands are waiting there,
His messages of love to bear."*

You cannot be in such a difficulty that He cannot sustain you in it, or bear you out of it. "His mercy endures forever."

As to the *future*. Ah, we are poor fools when we begin to deal with the future! It is a sea which we are not called upon to navigate. The *present* is the whole of life, for when we enter into the future it *is* the present! Yet, standing here this morning, I can conceive some who feel infirmities creeping over them, trembling with the foreboding, "What shall I do when I come to extreme old age? My friends are gone. I have none who are likely to maintain me. When these fingers cannot perform their daily work. When my brow is wrinkled and I can scarcely totter to my toil, what shall I do?" Ah, "His mercy endures forever."

It does not stop at 70, nor pause at 80—it will bear you safely over 90—if your pilgrimage is so far prolonged. When I looked the other day upon a number of poor old men and women in the wards of the workhouse, some of whom had not risen from their beds at all for *years*, I thought to myself it was far better to die than so to live. And yet, if they had a good hope, I was mistaken, for if Christ should make that bed to become soft as downy pillows with His Presence, there might be a Glory in the workhouse, and a Heaven in the midst of poverty and they would there learn as well as anywhere, that "His mercy endures forever!" "Even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry and will deliver you." Therefore trust in the Lord, and be not afraid, you whose days of weakness are coming, for He will not fail you nor forsake you.

We are sometimes alarmed at the prospect of the storms of life. They are not few. In the past they have been many—we may expect more. He who reckons upon smooth weather between this and the Fair Haven, reckons without his head! But, Beloved, come what tempest there may, "His mercy endures forever." There must have been some trepidation on board that mail steamer a few weeks ago when the tornado was thundering over the West Indies. The captain very wisely put on all steam and faced the wind—but with what anxiety must they have asked the question—"Will she have force enough to face such a mighty whirlwind? Can the engines keep up speed enough to battle with the hurricane?"

The engines groaned and every timber creaked as the good ship steamed right into the teeth of the tempest, sailing, as it were, between the very jaws of death and into the throat of the grave. Surely they whispered to one another, "Will she brave it out? She seems but a mere cockleshell in the midst of these huge Atlantic waves! Will she be carried on the reef and dashed to pieces as hundreds of others have been, or will she conquer the furious blast?" When the good vessel kept her head to the wind and pierced the waves, holding her own against such odds, there must have been great joy on board! You and I are in a nobler vessel! With her head to the tempest Jehovah steers her! And we shall not only outlive the storm, but sail into port with all our colors flying to the praise and glory of His name whose "mercy endures forever!"

Looking forward to the future, there are some who say, "We are most of all alarmed because of far travels which we are expecting." Out of this congregation a considerable number emigrate from year to year, called to a distance from friends and kinsfolk. Should that be your case, dear Friend, is it not a comfort to think that God's mercy endures forever? Two friends agree never to go farther apart than they can communicate with one another by telegraph. One of them

has crossed the Atlantic, and resides in the United States or in the far west, but still he has only to go to the office where a wire can be touched and a message will flash to his friend in England and tell him his needs.

This is just the compact God has made with His people! They shall never go where there is not a telegraphic communication between them and Himself. You may be out at sea, or in Australia, but the communication of prayer is always open between your soul and God! And if you are commanded to ride on the wings of the morning to the uttermost parts of the sea, or if for awhile you have to make your bed in the abyss—if you are His child, still will you be able to reach His heart! Neither distance, nor time, nor eternity itself, shall divide an heir of Heaven from the mercy of God which endures forever!

I think I hear one say, “I am not looking forward to that, for I have no doubt I shall lay my bones among my brethren. But I have lost many friends and others are pining with consumption, and are likely to be taken from me.” This is a grief which occurs more often to us as we grow older. The young man may look upon his wife and children and see his father, and mother, and friends about him—but as sure as we are men, either we must go from them or they from us—for no unbroken families can long remain on earth. And the less of death we have had the more is yet to come. We are those who have not drunk the cup, but we must and will drink it even to the dregs. What a comfort to know that we sorrow not as they that are without hope! If we lose our friends and dear ones in the Lord, we part to meet, and we meet to part no more. If they die—if our best beloved ones depart—yet “the Lord’s mercy endures forever.”

And this year some of us *will* die. As I look around here I feel that truth most solemnly. The young *may* die. The old *must*. Some of us must tread the dark valley this year. It may be the preacher—there are many more unlikely things. It may be you—you young people. It may be any of us. Do we know the mercy of God? Then God forbid we should lift our little finger to have it otherwise, for His mercy will endure when the death dews lie cold on our brow! We shall find that last day to be no more dreadful than the ordinary days of life. Yes, we shall perhaps be favored with such visions of angels and such sights of the better land that we shall be *glad* for evening, to undress that we may rest with God!

III. I wish we had time to use the text more fully in that light, but we have not. Therefore, I shall come, now, in the third place, and with much brevity, to use the text as A SERMON—a sermon with three heads.

1. “His mercy endures forever.” Then, in the first place, let *our* mercy endure. Have you, during this year, or at any time previously, offended another or been offended so that there is any ill-will in your mind between you and anyone? Then may I entreat you, as this is a most fitting day, at the close of the year, to end it at once! Even if we feel we have been grossly ill-treated, grossly insulted, yet now let the token of reconciliation be given by every one of us. Remember, you Christians *must* do it or you are *not* Christians. You are nothing better than deceitful hypocrites if you harbor in your minds a single unforgiving thought.

There are some sins which may be in the heart, and yet you may be saved—but you cannot be saved unless you are forgiving. “If you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” Those are Christ’s own words. If we do not choose to forgive, we choose to be damned! Now, there is a good deal of lying about this. People will say, “Yes, I will *forgive* it, but I cannot *forget* it.” You mean you do *not forgive* it! Everything like enmity must be renounced if you would be saved.

When Mr. Wesley was going out to America with General Ogilvie, he heard a great storming and raging going on in the cabin. It was the general scolding his servant. He said, “I had so many bottles of Cypress wine put on board for me—the only wine I am allowed to drink—and that villain has drunk it all himself. I have put him in irons, and I am going to send him on board a man-of-war to be flogged, for I never forgive.” “Well,” said Mr. Wesley, “I hope you never sin.” The inference was so irresistible that the general said, “Here, Sir, take my keys. I forgive you this time.” If we would be forgiven, let us forgive.

2. The second head of the sermon is this—if God’s mercy endures forever, then let us learn the duty of hoping for everybody. You have no right to say of the poor fallen girl in the street, “Oh, it is no use looking after those outcasts, they always turn out badly before long.” God’s mercy endures forever! If *you* had any of it, you would not talk so! You have no right to say of the drunken man who has been reclaimed three or four times, but has gone back, “It is no use trying any more with him.” Brothers and Sisters, “His mercy endures forever.” Would you be more severe than your Maker? He bears with sinners—surely we may!

Especially this ought to be so with our relatives and children. A mother's love must never burn out, and a father's patience never expire. Hope for the most hopeless. Till they are in Hell pray for them. Till they are in their graves, hope for them. Till they die, labor to bring them to Christ. God's mercy endures forever—let our tenderness endure.

3. And, in the third place, if God's mercy endures forever, then see the duty of hoping for *yourself*. If you have been ever so guilty, do not say, "There is no hope." "His mercy endures forever." Away with that whisper of Satan, "Too late." It is NOT too late. So long as you desire Christ, it is not too late for Him to receive you. It *will*, one day, be too late, when life is over. Then will you hear those words, "Too late! You cannot enter now!" But it is not too late for repentance and faith to be accepted. *Despair* is *sin*—hope is the duty of man with regard to God. I pray you cast not yourself away. Till God has cast you into Hell, have hope, and come to Christ.

IV. I cannot say more upon the sermon, time is gone. The last head is A SUMMONS: "His mercy endures forever." Is not that a most loving and tender summons to the wandering child to return to his Father? To the backsliding professor to approach his God? To the chief of sinners to humble himself before the Mercy Seat? There is mercy—seek it! There is mercy in Jesus—believe in Him! Bunyan tells us that Prince Emmanuel hung out the white flag upon Mount Gracious. It is still there! Surrender, Man! Surrender today, and fight no more against yourself and your eternal interests. Behold the white flag! You have but to trust your Lord, and leave your sin, and He will be merciful to you.

When that man of God, Mr. Andrew Fuller, was once preaching in Scotland, the place was very crowded and numbers were outside. A woman, the worst woman in the town, seeing the crowd, thought she would push into the Kirk to listen to the English minister. He was preaching from the text, "Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth." "Ah," said she, "I have gone far, but I have not gone over the ends of the earth, at any rate, and if God says, 'Look, and be saved, all the ends of the earth,' He must mean me." She did look, and became afterwards an honorable woman in that parish, converted by the Grace of God!

On this last Sunday morning in the year, I solemnly present those same words as fresh from God's lips to every unconverted person here, "Look unto Christ, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth." "Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet they shall be as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool." May God bring you to obey that gentle summons to come to your heavenly Father and live!

Believers, the summons is also meant for you. It says this, "His mercy endures forever," therefore let your love to souls continue! Let your labor for conversions abide! Let your generosity to God's cause abound! Let your endeavors to extend the kingdom of Christ endure evermore! At this season, let me say, enlarge your exertions! If you have done much, do more! If you have done little, be ashamed and begin afresh!

If God's mercy continue forever, do not let us talk about resting and taking things easy! No, time is very precious, every hour has six wings, like a cherub, and flies like the lightning's flash. Let us live and work while we may, "for the night comes when no man can work."

END VOLUME 13