

## THE OVERFLOWING CUP NO. 874

A SERMON  
DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING JUNE 6, 1869,  
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“My cup runs over.”  
Psalm 23:5.*

THE fault of being too happy, if it exists anywhere, must be a very scarce one; a far more prevalent vice is that of dwelling upon the dark shades of life to the forgetfulness of its brighter lights. We drink our wormwood in ostentatious publicity, but eat our honey behind the door. It is noteworthy that if a man's life is prosperous, it glides away rapidly, and leaves little trace upon his memory. We write sorrows in marble, and mercies in the sand; the history of nations becomes dull and unromantic when it flows happily, so that it has been wisely written, “Blessed is that nation which has no history.” When affliction comes, there is an event to mark, a notch to be scored on the tally; war, famine, pestilence are landmarks of history, but when nations continue in an even flow of peace, history is like a vast unbroken dead level; our mind tenaciously retains the remembrance of its sorrow, but human nature is so constitutionally ungrateful as to forget its mercies without an effort. How much of the staple of our conversation consists in complaint! It is so cold for the season, it is so intolerably hot, there is too much drought, or the rain is perfectly awful, business is shocking, the young wheat is turning yellow for want of dry weather, or the turnips are just good for nothing for lack of rain. We are great experts in discovering reasons for murmuring—like ill-humored curs, we bark at everything or nothing, and I suppose if we should fail to discover any reasons for discontent, we would think it quite sufficient cause for utter weariness of this mortal life! More or less we are all bitten with this madness; it comes so natural to us to detail our grievances and hardships, and only by mere accident, or as a conscientious duty, do we relate the story of the Lord's goodness towards us. Come, my brothers and sisters, let us see if we cannot touch a sweeter string this morning; let us lay aside the trombone, and try the dulcimer! With Christians, a cheerful carriage should be the *rule*; of all the men who live, we are the most fitted to rejoice; we have the most reasons for it, and the most precepts for it—let us not fall behind in it. Heaven is our portion, and the thoughts of its amazing bliss should cheer us on the road. Christ has given to us such large and wide domains of grace and glory, that it would be altogether unseemly that there should be poverty of happiness where there is such an affluence of possession. In considering our own portion, which must be a blessed one since “the Lord is the portion of our inheritance and of our cup,” let us see if we cannot find themes for song, and abundant cause to stir all that is within us to magnify the Lord.

**I.** Our privileged lot is described in the text as a *cup*, and a view of that happy portion will, I trust, be suggestive of gratitude. I shall invite you, in the first place, TO SURVEY YOUR PRIVILEGED PORTION.

You have a cup. There is no small privilege implied in the use of such a term as that to describe your lot. Remember you were once (and not so long ago but what your memory may well carry you back to it) wandering in a dry and thirsty land where there was no water. Hungry and thirsty, your soul fainted within you. You hastened to the broken cisterns, but they held no water. All your former confidences were as deceitful brooks which fly before the hot breath of summer. The wells of pleasure were empty, and you were in a parched land where hope smiled not. Your former delights proved to be but a mirage, fair to look upon, but unsubstantial as a dream. You crouched at the foot of Sinai, and even presumptuously attempted to climb its ragged sides, but you failed to find a drop of water there. Do you remember when Christ said to you—

*“Behold, I freely give  
Living water, thirsty one,  
Stoop down, and drink, and live”?*

Oh, what a change for you! You thirst no longer, for within your soul Jesus has an ever-springing well of living water. You believe in Him, and all the cravings of your nature are supplied. Think of the full

cup which Jesus holds to your lips; contrast it with your former poverty when you were ready to perish in despair, and rejoice this morning that you have a royal cup to drink of which will never fail you. Time was, too, when you were in something more than need—you were in a degradation whose remembrance crimsons your cheek; your riotous living ended in a mighty famine, and you gladly would have filled your belly with the husks that swine did eat. A trough was then far more your portion than a cup. Many of us recollect with shame and confusion of face, to what excess of riot we ran, and amazing, indeed, it is that the cup of a holy God should be at our lips! In many cases blasphemy defiled the lips, and lasciviousness polluted the body; but they are washed, renewed, sanctified, and now, with rags removed, and a fair white robe girt about our loins, we are permitted to sit at the table of the banquet where music and dancing make glad the heart, and the wines on the lees well-refined refresh the guests. From such need to such abundance, from such shame to such honor, what a change! Our portion is no longer that of the forlorn or the degraded; we do not pine in despair, or wallow in pollution, but we sit as children at the table, drinking with joy from our allotted cup.

Remember too, beloved, and the contrast will, I hope, inflame your gratitude, that another cup was once set at our place at the table, and of it we should have been compelled to drink had it not been for the interposition of the surety of the covenant. That deep and direful cup of the Lord's wrath, into which He wrings out the wormwood and the gall till its bitterness is beyond degree, was once ours; of that black cup you and I would have been made to drink forever and ever, for we could never have emptied it, but must eternally have been filled with the horror and amazement which are its dregs. Now, as we showed you last Lord's-Day morning [CHRIST MADE A CURSE FOR US, NO. 873] our divine Redeemer has drained that cup on our behalf, for He was made a curse for us, and now we have to bless God that our portion is not with the wicked whom the Lord shall destroy, but with the chosen whom the Lord accepts in the Beloved. Ours is not the cup of *damnation*, but the cup of *salvation*—not the vial of God's wrath, but the flagon of consolation. We have nothing to do with that cup, the dregs whereof "all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out and drink them," but ours is a golden goblet which to the last drop is full of bliss and immortality. From the depths of condemnation to our present standing in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, what a change! As we think of the portion of our inheritance this morning, how shall we sufficiently admire that amazing love which brought us from the jaws of gaping hell, and set our standing on a rock at the very gates of heaven?

To make this cup, which represents our present privileged position, stand out yet more brightly before you, let me now speak of it at length. The intention of the psalmist was to picture himself as a *favoured guest* in the house of the Lord. When you are entertained in an Oriental house, a portion of meat is served out for you which constitutes your mess or portion; to highly esteemed and welcomed guests, a further honor is given, oil is poured upon the head; and yet further, a certain cup is placed before the favored one containing the portion which he is to drink. Now David felt himself to be not a beggar knocking at the door of mercy, receiving a crust and a sip by the way, but he felt that he had been received by the great Master of the feast, and permitted to sit down to receive the supply of all his necessities, and what was more, to receive of the luxuries of the feast as one who was thoroughly and heartily welcomed to all that was provided. Brothers and sisters, a little while ago you and I were among the blind, and the halt, and the lame lurking in the hedges and the highways, far off from the heavenly banquet—but eternal mercy has brought us, by living faith, to sit down at the feast which mercy has prepared! This day ours is the lot of those who are saved! Ours is a portion with the justified! We sit at the table, this day, with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob—having been made children and heirs of God, even as they were. We participate in the pardon, the justification, and the security which God gave to His saints in the olden times, and which Christ clearly revealed to His apostles in the latter days. All heavenly things are ours! We are denied none of the luxuries of the banquet of mercy. Whatever belonged to any child of God belongs to us; whatever was enjoyed by the brightest of the saints may be enjoyed by us, if by faith we are sitting at the table of divine grace! This day we are no more strangers and foreigners, no more excluded and shut out—we are brought near by the blood of Jesus, and our portion today is like that of the ewe lamb which ate of its master's bread, and drank from his cup. In David's use of the term "cup," far more is included; for I take it he refers to accepted *worship*. In some of the rites of the Jewish law, you will remember that after the sacrifice, the worshippers and the priest together sat down and partook of the remainder of the thank offering. God had received His portion of the meat offering, then the drink offering was poured or laid upon the altar, and then the worshipper himself, in token of God's acceptance, was permitted to eat and drink of the same. Now, beloved, at this moment every believer here

is accepted in the Beloved. That precious Christ, who has satisfied God on our behalf, has now become our satisfaction, too. He who offered Himself to God an offering of a sweet smell, has become to us our meat indeed, and our drink indeed—what God feeds upon, we feed upon too! As He feels an intense satisfaction in the life and work, and death of His dear Son, we find the very same kind of satisfaction after our measure and degree. Is it not most delightful to think that it is a part of my life's privilege, as a child of God, to live as an accepted worshipper, dear to the heart of God? It is a high joy to know that my prayers and praises, my soul's high desires to honor her God, her sighs, her tears, and her works are all accepted of God. Oh, greatly blessed is that life which is thus honored! He has made us priests unto God, and we drink from the bowls before the altar with holy joy and reverent exultation.

But by the cup was meant yet more than loving entertainment, and sacrificial acceptance, for the psalmist, in the 116<sup>th</sup> Psalm, at the 13<sup>th</sup> verse, speaks of taking the "cup of salvation." Such a heavenly cup belongs to every believer throughout the world! It is a part of your heritage this day, beloved, that your sins are forgiven; that you are justified through the righteousness of Christ; that you are saved from the wrath of God—so saved as to be preserved in the future, and to be ultimately brought into the kingdom and the glory. You have at this hour, salvation as your portion! Some of God's people only *hope* that they are saved; such can scarcely sing that their cup runs over; others conceive that they are saved for the present, but are not thereby saved eternally. Oh, but those who have come to know that God never plays fast and loose with us; that if He has saved us once, our salvation is secured beyond all risk; that the love of God is everlasting love, and cannot be removed; that the blood of Jesus Christ does not in *part* redeem, but effectually redeems—those I say, who have come to understand the fullness, the infinity, the immutability, the eternity, of the mercies of God in Christ Jesus—those are they who can rejoice in an overflowing cup! The lines have fallen unto them in pleasant places, and they have a goodly heritage; the lot of the saved is a lot to be envied—theirs is a right royal heritage.

Jeremiah further mentions a "*cup of consolation*," and that cup of consolation, O believer, is also yours this morning! You have your trials, but oh, what a comfort to know that your trials work your lasting good! You are vexed with adversities, but what bliss to learn that they last but for a moment, and end in eternal glory! We mind not the black clods of trouble when we learn that the Light of God is sown in them for the righteous; it is true we are sometimes if need be, in heaviness through manifold temptations, but our mourning ends at morning; our dark nights will soon be ended, and then a daylight comes of which the sun shall go down no more forever! The cup of comforts, which the Holy Spirit fills and brings to us, is so rich, so suitable, so operative upon our nature, that we may well rejoice as we think of it this morning. The saint's lot has its blacks, but it has also its whites; drops of wormwood are ours, but milk and honey are not denied us; we mourn at Marah, but we sing at Elim; Bochim still stands, but Bethel is ours too; the lion roars, but the turtledove also yields her cheering note; clouds are above us, but the stars smile on us; our sea has its ebbs, but by turns, it comes to the flood; winters bluster and freeze, but summer comes soon, and blossoms with merry joys, and autumn follows with its mellowness. We are cast down, but we are not destroyed—no, we are not even injured—for if for a little time we seem to be losers by our castings down, we before long discover our greater gain! Happy are the people who are in such a case, yes, *blessed* are the people whose God is the Lord! The cup of tried David is far better than that of proud Belshazzar; none are so comforted as those to whom the Holy Spirit is Comforter.

Still let us dwell for a minute or two longer upon the portion of the righteous. We read in the New Testament of the "*cup of blessing*," and although that alludes to the cup at the Lord's Supper, yet without wresting the words, we may say that the whole portion of God's saints is a cup of blessing. You are blessed in all respects, believer! As last Sabbath morning it was our painful duty to remind the *unconverted* that they were *cursed* everywhere—in basket and in store, in their home and abroad, in all that they had and did—so now with joy we remind you that those who love the Lord are *blessed* in all respects! Their cup, that is to say, their lot in life, is all blessing! Even that which you like least is filled with blessing! You are blessed by every morning's sun—its beams speak benediction; you are blessed with every setting sun—the darkness is but a curtain to screen your rest; you are blessed in your poverty—contentment shall cheer you; you are blessed in your abundance—grace shall consecrate it. You are blessed every way! Your cup has not a single drop in it from the surface to the bottom but what is sweetened with the unchanging love of your divine Father.

The cup of our life is moreover, a *cup of fellowship*. The whole of a Christian's life ought to be fellowship with Jesus. What the cup is at the Lord's Table that our entire life should be. If we suffer, we

suffer with Christ; if we rejoice, we should rejoice with Him; bodily pain should help us to understand the cross, and mental depression should make us apt scholars at Gethsemane; while the high joys which our soul sometimes partakes of should conduct us to Tabor, and lead us upward even to the place where the Conqueror sits high aloft on His Father's throne! It is a great blessing to a child of God, whatever happens to him, if he can see it overruled to the conducting of him in the footsteps of his Master into fellowship with his covenant Head.

I shall notice but one more matter about this cup, though, indeed, the phrase seems to me to be rich even to excessiveness with suggestions for thought. Our life cup is distinctly *connected with the covenant*. "This cup," said the Lord at the table, "is the new covenant," and so the whole of life which is compared in our text to a cup, manifests the covenant faithfulness of God. Nothing happens to a child of God but what was in the covenant; the whole of the Christian life is studded with God's fulfillment of the covenant. You have your troubles, but it was promised that you should have them; in your sadness you are revived with consolation, for it was promised you that God would set the bow in the cloud that you might look upon it, and see that He was faithful still. Oh yes, if you did but know it, the smallest event of your history, as well as the largest incident in your biography—all would fit together like pieces of mosaic, and when all fitted together you would read clearly, "Covenant love and covenant faithfulness." To come back to our simile, all the wine of the cup of human life is to the believer warm with the spices of eternal faithfulness. There is not a single drop in all the contents which is not aromatic with the unchangeable, immutable veracity and faithfulness of our covenant God. Will you, dear hearers, put these things together, which I have poured from the cornucopia of the text? Look upon the whole of your life, O Christian, in that light now cast upon it—for life is a very sacred thing with us, and though the many say death is a very solemn thing, we have learned that life is equally so. Regard a Christian's life as sublime—reaching far beyond the level of the unbeliever's barren existence, because the *spiritual* is elevated, pure, heavenly; it is God in man struggling with Satan; the Christ of God fighting with evil; heaven and hell in the believer's life find a battlefield where hottest warfare rages. Our life in Christ is a sublime thing, a thing that angels look down upon with wonder and astonishment! The cup which is set on our Master's table for us is no common cup, it is a celestial chalice for solemnity, it is a royal bowl for dignity, a golden cup for richness. The portion of every believer, when it shall be seen by clearer eyes, and understood by loftier intellects, will be perfectly amazing in its rare displays of the loving-kindness and faithfulness of God!

**II.** Secondly, I invite every believer here to REJOICE IN THE ABUNDANCE OF HIS PRIVILEGE. "My cup *runs over*."

Two or three words about this as far as it may relate to *temporals*. A small number of believers are entrusted with much of this world's goods—their cup runs over with wealth. Here is cause for thankfulness, for God has never taught us to deprecate riches, nor to wring our hands in sorrow if they happen to fall to our lot; be thankful to the bounteous Lord for your abundance! At the same time, here is a note of danger. Our Lord Jesus once said, and He has never retracted the saying, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." That is to say in plain language, it is impossible for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven unless something more than ordinary is done. Our Lord has told us, however, that while it is impossible with man, it is possible with *God*, and we rejoice to constantly find a slender line of these camels going through needles' eyes! Rich men are led into the kingdom of heaven—the human impossibility becomes divine fact! Still, riches are no small hindrance to those who would run in the ways of the truth of God. The danger is lest these worldly goods should become our *gods*—lest we should set too great store by them. Andrew Fuller one day went into a bullion merchant's, and was shown a mass of gold. Taking it into his hand, he very suggestively remarked, "How much better it is to hold it in your hand than to have it in your heart!" Gold in the hand will not hurt you, but gold in the heart will destroy you! Not long ago a burglar, as you will remember, escaping from a policeman, leaped into the Regent's Canal, and was drowned—drowned by the weight of the silver which he had plundered! How many there are who have made a god of their wealth, and in hastening after riches have been drowned by the weight of their worldly substance! Notice a fly when it alights upon a dish of honey; if it just sips a little and away, it is fed, and is the better for its meal, but if it lingers to eat again and again, it slides into the honey, it is bedaubed, and it cannot fly away; it is rolling in the mass of the honey to its own destruction! If God makes your cup run over, beware lest you perish, as too many have done through turning the blessing into a curse! If your cup runs over, take care to use what God has given you for His glory; there is a responsibility attached to wealth

which some do not seem to realize; among our great men, how few use money as they should; their gifts are nothing in proportion to their possessions!

Alas, things are even worse than this with some who are miscalled honorable and noble. Our hereditary legislators are some of them a dishonor to their ancient houses, and a disgrace to the peerage from which they ought to be ignominiously expelled. What rights have gamblers to be making laws? How shall we trust those with the affairs of the nation who bring themselves down to poverty by their gambling, and set an example which the poorest peasant might well scorn to follow? God will visit our land for this; wickedness reigns in high places, and there the reckoning will begin. Would to God that our great men would remember that they are responsible, and that wealth is not given them to lavish upon their passions, but to employ for God, and for the common cause. If your cup runs over, call the poor to catch the drops, and give an extra spill that they may have the more! Moreover, the church of God needs your substance. Thank God we can, some of us, say with regard to our churches, there is not so much a lack of divine grace, or a need of men, or of anything as of the financial means, and the gold and the silver are somewhere. God has given it to His church; it is somewhere. But there are very many church members who hold back the wealth which they ought to consecrate to the cause of God, and if they do this, their running-over cup will witness to their judgment, and will not be to their honor and glory in the day when God shall judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ!

But I do not intend to dwell on that. I shall speak rather of *spirituals*. I want each believer here now to look at his lot in a *spiritual* light, and in it to feel that his cup is running over.

Our cup overflows because of the infinite extent of the goodness itself which God has bestowed. The spiritually good things which God has given to us are so many, that we never can contain them all! If the capacity of our mind could be enlarged a thousand-fold, yet such are the exceeding riches of God's Christ, that we never could contain all that God has laid up in Him as the portion of His people. Think for a minute: the Lord God has given to every believer here, a whole Christ, a full Christ, an everlasting Christ, an exalted Christ, to be his eternal portion! Now who can hold the whole of Christ? Behold His matchless Godhead, His immaculate manhood, His power, His wisdom, His beauty, His grace! Look at His works, His life of innocence, His death of disinterested affection, His triumph over hell and the grave! Look at His Second Coming, and the splendors of His millennial reign. Now all these belong to us if we belong to God, and how shall we compass them all? Must not our cup of necessity run over?

Remember next, that God has made with every one of you who love Him, even the poorest and the weakest, a covenant of grace of which the beginning is beyond all human doubt, for that covenant was made before the earth was—a covenant which is ordered in all things and sure, and which will never run out because it is the *everlasting covenant*, and will stand as long as eternity endures. In that covenant all things are yours! God has given over to you even Himself! "I will be their God, and they shall be My people." God the Father is yours! God the Son is yours! God the Holy Spirit is yours! Oh, what can you say if all this is yours? Your soul cannot hold them all; your cup *must* run over!

Look again, beloved, at the *promises* which are given us in Holy Scripture. Why, any one promise is more than enough for us. "I will never leave you nor forsake you." Why, there is a meal for a man for the next 12 months if he will never read another verse! "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, they may forget, yet will I not forget you. Behold, I have engraved you upon the palms of My hands." Oh, do but let *that* lie under your tongue like a wafer made with honey! Take but one such promise, and you shall be like Ruth, who did eat and was satisfied, "and left"—for you cannot receive it all. But then take the range of the promises from Genesis to Revelation. How is this book, like a beehive, filled with 10,000 cells, and every cell distilling virgin honey such as enlightens the eyes of the man who tastes of it! Oh, who can hold the fullness of the promise? Who can contain all the words which the Holy Spirit has written, full of consolation to the mourning children of God? But suppose you could, by some enlarged capacity, grasp all the promises? Yet, beloved, how would you be able to receive *God Himself*, and yet He is yours! The infinite God is the portion of the faithful! You have sometimes enjoyed the visits of the Holy Spirit; you know what it means for the Holy Spirit to be at work in your soul. Now, I am sure you will bear witness that at such times you have been conscious of the narrowness of your soul; you have felt, "O that I could hold my God! This sweet love of His, of which I am now conscious, is more than a match for me; Holy Spirit, how can You come to dwell with such a poor one as I am? I am but a bush, and You a fire, and matched with You I am like a glowing, burning bush. How can I bear such glory? I tremble lest I am consumed with over excess of bliss and love." Many of God's saints have been ready to die while they have had

vivid impressions of the love of God, and of the glory which God had prepared for His elect. Their joy has been too great! One heart could not palpitate fast enough! One soul could not hold one 10<sup>th</sup> of the bliss which God was pleased to pour into it! By reason then, of the greatness of the blessings themselves, and the infinity of their number, it often happens that our cup runs over. O you who are sad today, and yet believers; you who are poverty-stricken today, and yet heirs of all this wealth, I would lovingly chide you, and ask how you can thirst when your cup can no more contain all that God provides for you than the hollow of an infant's hand can hold the wide, wide sea?

Furthermore, does not our cup often run over because of *our sinful contractions of its capacity*? I have already hinted at the necessary narrowness of our capacity because we are mortal, how often you and I fill up our soul with carnal joys and cares, and then if God's love *does* come into us, it must soon run over, for there is so little room! How often, too, are we sadly straitened in our longings after divine things, so that when they come to us we have not room enough to receive them! I must confess that I have enjoyed more of God than my desires have ever aspired after; oh, what stinted desires we have! He has said, "Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it," but we scarcely open our mouths at all! Men who are eager after wealth stretch their arms like seas to grasp in all the shore—but we win a little of divine grace, and then we sit down basely content. We have not the consecrated ambition we ought to have. O that our desires were like the horseleech, so that concerning God they should always cry, "Give, give." O that we never felt we had attained, were always dissatisfied with ourselves, seeking to do more, to know more, to love more, to kill self more, and to be more consecrated to our dear Lord! Oh, our flat desires! I have heard that in the old times in England, on Christmas morning the poor villagers were allowed to call at the house of the lord of the manor, each one with his basin, which it was the custom to fill to the brim. I guarantee you the basins grew sensibly larger every year till one would think they had rather brought the bushel measure from the barn than the basin from the cupboard! It was wise of the poor folk, for His Lordship could not do less than fill whatever they brought. Alas, we are not so wise! We rather lessen our vessels than increase their size; you have not because you ask not, or because you ask amiss. God has done exceeding abundantly above what we have asked, or even thought. Mind how you read that text, it does not say, "Above what we *can* ask"—no, no! We can ask for what we will, and can think of boundless things, and God can make us think of as great things as He can do, but *above what we have asked, or think*, God frequently gives to us!

Beloved, I will now ask you a question. How would it be with you if God had filled your cup in proportion to your faith? How much would you have had in your cup? Alas, I lament saying, while my God has never once failed me, but has been very faithful, *constantly* faithful, *abundantly* and *richly* faithful, yet my poor faith, if it were unusually tried, would hardly be found to His honor and glory, unless He should be pleased to greatly enlarge and graciously to sustain it. It is sad that we should have to make such a confession, but we do, with shame. Is not that the confession many of us must make? If it would be only to us according to our faith, and God did not in sovereignty step beyond His own rule in the kingdom, how poor should we be, measured by our faith! Our cup runs over indeed. Suppose, my brothers and sisters, our portion were to be measured by the returns that we have ever made to God for mercies we have enjoyed? Ah, should not we be starved from this day forth? What have I done for Him who died to save my wretched soul? Will you dare turn to the page in which memory records the service you have rendered to your Lord in thankfulness for His great love—ah, cover it up, it is not worth remembering! You have taught a child or two; you have preached to a congregation, you have offered a few prayers. Oh, our teaching, how feeble! Our preaching, how little in earnest! Our praying, how heartless! Our giving, how scant, and how grudging! Oh, how little are our returns compared with what we owe to Him from whom we have received all we possess! We are, indeed, unprofitable servants. If our portion of meat were measured out according to our labor and devotion, long fasts would be our lot, and feast days would be few and far between. But the Lord's thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are His ways our ways, for such is the abundance of His forgiveness and long-suffering that our cup still runs over.

I shall only detain you with one more remark on this point. Note *the supreme excellence* of every blessing which God has given, for this tends to make the cup overflow. Every covenant mercy which the child of God enjoys has this distinguished excellence in it—that it is eternal. The sinner's best lot is only for a time; ours, if it were slender, would far exceed the sinner's, because it lasts forever! Better that a man have but a shilling a day forever, than that he have a gold piece but once in his life, which, being spent, he has no more. If the Lord pardons you, it is *forever!* If He adopts you, it is *forever!* If He accepts you, it is *forever!* If He saves you, it is *forever!* There is eternity set as a divine stamp upon every



mercy. Believer, does not this make your cup run over, to think that everlasting love is yours? Moreover, your portion, whatever it may be, is received directly from God. Ishmael was sent into the desert with a bottle, but the bottle dried up, and Ishmael was thirsty. But we read of Isaac, that he lived by the well Lahai-Roi. There was always abundance for Isaac, for he lived by the well. You have seen a rustic lad lie down at full length at the springhead on a summer's day, and drink; behold in him a picture of the believer's life. The saint does not drink of the stream far down in the valley, warmed by the world's sun, and mired by the world's sin, but he drinks at the wellhead where the current leaps up all cool and living from the great deep.

There is another quality about the sovereign gifts of grace—they come to us in living union with Christ. If I get a mercy apart from Christ, it is like a rose plucked from the bush—it delights me with its perfume and appearance for an hour, but soon it withers, and I put it away. But a *spiritual* mercy is like a living rose on the bush—it blooms and lasts, and we smell it again, and again, and again. Our blessings are dear indeed, as they come to us through Christ Jesus.

And what is best of all, every one of these blessings in the covenant are best to us because they are brought home to the heart by the Holy Spirit. You know a table may be well spread, and yet a man may not be satisfied because he has no appetite, or he cannot reach the food. But the Holy Spirit has a way of making our cup run over because He *gives* us an appetite, He brings the food to us, and helps us to receive it. He enables us to digest it, and inwardly to be satisfied as with marrow and fatness. The mercies of the Infinite are the more choice because the Holy Spirit understands how to break the bread for us, and feed us. He makes us to lie down in green pastures. We would fumble with mercies, and spoil them like bad cooks who spoil good meat, but the Holy Spirit knows how to bring up the meat ready dressed for us, and to give us the appetite, and to make us feed upon His dainties with spiritual palates and refined tastes.

**III.** Now to close, I call upon those who have this cup to RESOLVE ON SUITABLE ACTION, seeing that this is their position, "My cup runs over, then let me, at any rate, drink all I can. If I cannot drink it all as it flows away, let me get all I can." "Drink," said the spouse, "yes, drink abundantly, O my beloved." The Master's message at the Communion Table always is, "Take, eat!" And again, "Drink, drink all of it." Oftentimes, when the Lord says to us, "Seek My face," we answer, "But, Lord, I am unworthy to do so." The proper answer is, "Your face, Lord, will I seek." If you bring a man to a table, and he is not hungry, you tell him to eat, but he may be bashful, and he does not like to help and cut, and carve for himself, and he takes but little. I guarantee you, however, if his hunger becomes very vehement, he will not wait for two permissions—he will cut and carve for himself after a mighty rate! O that our spiritual hunger was greater, for Christ never thinks believing sinners presumptuous in applying the promises, or laying hold upon the provisions of divine grace! The worst form of presumption is *not* to take what Christ offers! I know some in this house today who are very presumptuous, for they might have God's peace, but they will not. God has provided comfort for them, but they will not receive it, and they write bitter things against themselves. Month after month, and week after week their cup runs over, and yet they do not drink. There are promises exactly suitable to their case, but they think they are too humble to drink. It is not so, it is always *proud* humility—wicked, base, *bastard* humility, rank pride, that makes us think Christ is unwilling to forgive, or accept, or bless us. O dear heart, never be hungry for lack of will to come and take! Let God's invitations be your persuasions; let His precepts to believe be accepted over the head of your unworthiness. Say to yourself, "I know these things are too good for me, and I am not worthy of them, but if He does not shut me out, I certainly will not shut myself out; if He bids me come and take, and believe, He means it; He offers like a king, and I will take as a needy one should take from one so rich, who cannot miss it, but who will be glad to bestow it." Well, that is my first piece of advice; your cup runs over—*drink!*

The next is, if your cup runs over, Christian, and you drink of it, *communicate to others*. We too much neglect the comforting of those who are bowed down. Should not it be a part of the duty of every church member to be a pastor to others who may be dispirited and sad? In such a church as this, of course, the pastorate of one man is something even less than nominal, for I will not even accept the name if it is intended that I am thereby to carry out the duty. We can never have in a church of 4,000 members proper oversight unless every member exercises oversight over the other, bearing one another's burdens, and so fulfilling the law of Christ. I charge you do this! I know many of you are diligent in this duty, but be more so! Look after the sad and disconsolate, and let the telling of your experience be as the putting of the bottle of cooling water to their thirsty lips.

Again, if God has made your cup to run over, then *seek to serve Him*, not after the order and measure of bare *duty*, but according to the enthusiasm of gratitude. I mean, *give* to God, you who have it! If He has given much to you, give much to Him! Depend on it, there is great wisdom in this, even from a selfish point of view; good measure, pressed down and running over, will God return into your bosoms. If you cannot give money, then give your *time*, your *talents*, and believe me, the more you do for God, the more you *can* do, and the more happiness you will have in the doing of it! It is lazy Christians who grow rusty; it is unused keys that lose their brightness; you who rot away in inglorious ease, you know not the joy that belongs to the child of God! The Christian should feel, “I shall do all I can do, and a little more, getting more strength from God than I had, that I may do a little in excess; I will not measure my duty by what others say I ought to do, but reckon that if I draw back, I would not; if I might make some reserve, I could not; if I might deny my Lord something, yet I dare not, would not think of such a thing; the love He plants in my heart will not permit me.” If your cup runs over, let your service run over. Be “fervent in the Spirit, serving the Lord.” Let your generosity run over—give without stint; let your prayers run over—pray without ceasing; let your hymns run over—praise Him as long as you have breath; let your talk of Him run over—tell the universe what a good God He is to you! Praise Him! You can never praise Him enough! Exaggeration will be impossible here; let the loftiest praise be heaped upon the head of Christ, and He will deserve something better! Let the angels make way for Him, and let them pile their thrones one upon the other; let them conduct Him to the seventh heaven—over to the heaven of heavens, and let Him fill a lofty throne there, yet, even then, He is not as high as His Father has set Him! Words cannot describe His glory—it bows down all language beneath its weight. Metaphors, similes, though they were gathered with the wealth of wit and wisdom from all quarters of heaven, and earth, cannot reach even to the hem of His garments. Your love and your fidelity, your diligence and your zeal are not fit even so much as to unloosen the laces of His shoes, He is so great and so good! O talk much of Him then! Let your talk run over like the language of Rutherford in his letters, where he seems sometimes to break through reason and moderation to glorify his Lord! Let your language of Christ be like the apostle Paul, where he puts aside all syntax, grammar, speech, and makes new words, and coins fresh expressions, and confuses tenses and moods, and I know not what beside, because his soul could not express itself after the commonplace language of mankind! O let your praise run over to your Lord and King! Love Him! Praise Him! Exalt Him! Magnify Him! Live out His life again! You can but praise Him so; die in His arms, that you may forever extol Him in the upper skies! May God grant us to be Christians rich in spiritual wealth, spending our strength and substance like the princes we are, for Him who is more than a prince and greater than a king!

### **PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—PSALM 23, & 30.**

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