

GOOD NEWS FOR SEEKERS

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A SERMON
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BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*"They shall praise the Lord that seek Him."
Psalm 22:26.*

THESE are the words of Jesus on the cross, which the inspired prophet wrote beforehand concerning Him. When the Savior uttered this sentence, He had just passed through the experience of a seeker as far as it was possible for Him to do so. He had been engaged in earnest, fervent, pleading prayer on account of His having been left without His Father's presence. He had cried, "Be not You far from Me, O Lord: O My strength, hasten You to help Me." With strong crying and tears He had implored salvation from the lion's mouth. He had, at last, been heard and delivered, and He exclaimed with joy, "He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, neither has He hid His face from Him; but when He cried unto Him He heard. My praise shall be of You in the great congregation: I will pay My vows before them that fear Him." Thus, you see, because He had known the agony of an anxious seeker, had been heard in His seeking, and therefore, felt praise rising in His own soul. He learned sympathy with all seeking souls of every age, and foresaw that they also would magnify the name of the Lord. Jesus knows every experience, for He has passed through the same. Does not this thought already whisper comfort to your soul? My seeking friend, is it not a good omen that Jesus was heard in that He feared? Does not the fact that Jesus can sympathize with you raise some hope in your heart? It is true He never lived without the presence of God, as you have done, in consequence of personal *sin*, but for a grand reason, namely, because He stood in our place, He was forsaken of God, and therefore, was compelled to cry after Him, even as you are doing, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me?" He, therefore, understands the grief which troubles your fainting heart, and enters into all your distresses while you are bewailing yourself, and lamenting that you cry in the daytime, and the Lord hears not, and that in the night season you plead in vain. This reflection, at the outset of our discourse, should be as the note of a silver bell, soft and restful to your wearied ears! Jesus foretells your success in seeking as the result of His own experience!

Our Lord's great objective in laying down His life upon the cross was the Father's glory. No other objective was worthy of Him. He sought the salvation of men in order to the glory of God, and so in His extreme agonies, our Lord Jesus placed this joy before Him, and consoled Himself by foreseeing that God would be praised by seeking souls in consequence of His death. He solaces Himself with the reflection, "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship You." He dwells upon the truth of God that, "They shall praise the Lord that seek Him," and He sees in this honoring of God the reward which His soul sought after! What He foresaw from His lookout upon the cross is actually taking place everyday—for seekers are learning to be *singers*! The choirs of heaven, how shall they be filled? As yet there are many vacant seats, and the full chorus is not as yet heard. From where shall they come who shall complete that orchestra? They shall be called by grace from among ungodly men, and led to long for God—"They shall praise the Lord that seek Him." Fear not, for the number of the elect shall be accomplished, and no part of heaven's music shall flag for lack of minstrels. From the choirs of earth the saintly souls are being withdrawn, one by one, to unite in the harmonies of heaven. Just when their voices become most mellow, and most clear, they leave us for the ivory palaces and their ceaseless melodies. How shall the praises of God be maintained here below? If one by one the sweet voices grow dumb, and the singers are laid in the sepulcher, from where shall we replenish our numbers and maintain the daily praise? Fear not, there are new voices on the way. "They shall praise the Lord that seek Him."

There are souls now weeping because of sin, and longing for a Savior who will soon find Him—and then will become most hearty singers of the new song! They are coming, coming in their thousands even

now! The music of praise shall be continued as long as the sun, and the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. From generation to generation shall the name of the Lord be praised! This brings great gladness to my spirit as a pastor, for I know that there are some present here this day who are seeking the Savior, and it rejoices me to know that they will soon be among the most earnest in praising the name of the Lord! They will not always wear sackcloth. They will put on the silken garments of praise before long. We do not know where they are, for seekers are usually very quiet and retired, but there are some present whom I suspect of secret searches after my Lord. The Lord has seen them as He did Nathanael under the fig tree, and even His servant begins to spy them out. There are young children seeking—boys and girls who dare not yet speak to their parents—are in private, praying for grace. Blessed be the Savior of the young! These little ones shall grow up and praise God when their fathers have gone to their reward. Young men and maidens, too, are turning to Christ, though perhaps they would blush if personally charged with the holy search. Men, too, who are in their prime, are coming to Jesus to spend their strength in the service of the Redeemer. The Lord is gently touching many hearts, and drawing them to Himself, and each one, when he finds the Lord, will make a sweet singer to swell the tune of divine grace. Perhaps in this place there may even be some aged people whose voices are becoming feeble with lapse of years who, nevertheless, will sing with their hearts most melodiously to the glory of the God of all long-suffering. Be they who they may, when they have found the Lord Jesus Christ, they must and will glorify the God of their salvation! So, you see, the great objective of our Lord Jesus was that God might be praised, and He foreknew that this objective would be effected by the praises of those who, in seeking, should find His grace.

This assurance which Christ here gives, that they shall praise the Lord that seek Him, ought to be very encouraging to all seekers, for, my dear friends, it were wise for you to seek the Lord even if you had no stronger hope than a mere, “perhaps He will save us.” It would be wise to do as the men of Nineveh did, to repent and turn to God, even if you had nothing better than, “who can tell?” to encourage you in so doing. But since our Lord Jesus Christ, in dying, felt confident that seekers would find peace and joy, and so would come to praise God, we have double comfort. He could not have been mistaken, rest you sure of that, and therefore, seekers shall have reasons for praising the Lord! It is from the fact that He died upon the cross that it becomes certain that the seeker shall be a finder. This it was which made Him sustain the scorn of men, the faintness of fear, the darkness of death, and the horror of desertion—because He knew that His prostration in agony, and His yielding up the ghost would render it certain that no seeking soul should ever seek the Lord in vain! Had there been no suffering Savior, there had been no way to God. Had there been no dying Christ, there had been no living consolation! But now that His atoning work is accomplished, and He has said, “It is finished,” they shall live that seek Him, and their lives shall be spent in His praise.

The subject of this morning is the plain statement of the text in which I shall handle in all simplicity of speech. “They shall praise the Lord that seek Him.” And you have here three things—the persons, the promise, and the praise.

I. Observe first of all, THE PERSONS—“They shall praise the Lord that seek Him.” Notice how unrestricted the description of the persons is. It does not say *certain* persons who seek God, but *any* persons who seek Him shall ultimately praise Him. You, my friend, among the rest! None are excluded from the sweep of this precious promise, provided they are really seekers. In other matters many seek, and but few find, but the rule of the gospel kingdom is, “He that seeks finds,” and the rule has no exceptions!

But what is meant by “seeking” the Lord? Who are the seekers to whom this promise is made? They include, first, *those who really desire to commune with God*. Some, when they say a prayer, are satisfied with the mere *form*. But he who really prays, desires to *converse* with God in prayer—he longs that his desires should be heard by the Most High—and that he should obtain the needed blessings for which he asks. No devotion can ever satisfy a true heart but that which brings him into contact with the Most High. We do not seek fine words in prayer. We do not seek choice music in praise. We do not seek the church—we seek God—and when any man is really awakened to seek after God, although he may know but very little yet of the true faith, he has a desire within him to which the Lord always gives an answer of peace. You may be a stranger, and a foreigner, and you may have stepped in here, dear friend, quite ignorant of the doctrine and teaching of the Lord Jesus. But if in any nation any man shall really seek

after the one only living and true God, he shall receive further light, and shall ultimately come to praise the Lord!

Those who seek after God Himself very soon discover that they are at a distance from Him, so that one mark of a true seeker is that he is humbly conscious of his having gone astray from the Lord, his God. What a man has, he does not seek after, and what is close at hand is not an object of search. But when a man longs after God, there suddenly springs up in his soul a consciousness that he has departed from the Most High. And he cries unto the Lord to remove the separating mountains, and to fill up the dividing valleys—and he that does this, in very deed, is the man who shall yet live to praise God!

The soul that is, *by the Holy Spirit* made conscious of distance from God, if it is really seeking God, is anxious that everything should be taken away which created the distance, and which keeps it apart from God. If it is unpardoned sin, the true seeker longs for such forgiveness as God may justly give. If it is the power of sin in his members, the earnest seeker cries for power to overcome every *thought* of evil. The awakened soul soon becomes conscious that nothing separates it from God like the love of sin, and therefore, it seeks to have sin slain, lust crucified, and the enmity towards God forever destroyed. O how we long to be delivered from every false way, from every pollution, and even from every *appearance* of evil which would tend to prevent our walking in happy fellowship with God! We know that two cannot walk together except they are agreed, and therefore, seeking after the Lord leads the soul to grieve over sin, and to strive with all its might with holy violence, to break away from pernicious habits which bind it, and to tread under foot tendencies which would lead it astray. Are you conscious, dear friend, of such a seeking of God as this? Do you desire Him as the weary watcher on the castle wall desires the morning light? Do you pray to have everything taken away from you which separates between you and your God? Do you long for someone to bridge the chasm, and to bring you near to the Lord in spirit and in truth? If such is the case, the promise of the text is certainly yours! “They shall praise the Lord that seek Him.”

What the seeker longs for is that he may so approach the Lord as to feel himself a friend of God, and know that divine love is most surely all his own. Oh, the sweetness of knowing that there is nothing between God and you but amity and love—that all the sad past is forgiven, and even blotted out of the Lord’s remembrance—and that now you may speak to Him without fear, and trust in Him without dread! Atonement has removed His righteous wrath and settled fast His boundless love! Now you may come and lie in His bosom, for it is your *Father’s* bosom, and hide, even, under the dark shadow of His wing, for it is your *Father’s* wing, and it will cover you from all harm even as a hen covers her chickens. It is the prelude of heaven to feel that—

*“The God that rules on high,
And thunders when He pleases,
That rides upon the stormy sky,
And manages the seas,
This amazing God is ours!”*

All His power is for our protection; all His wisdom for our direction; all His tenderness for our consolation; all His truth for our encouragement; all His grandeur for our ennobling, and all the infinity of His nature for our eternal glorification! He wills that we should be partakers of the divine nature, and dwellers in the divine blessedness. This is very sweet, and this is what the soul that seeks God is following after. It aspires to walk with God, and to dwell with God. It longs to abide in Him, to be forever His beloved, to be accepted in Christ Jesus and to become daily more and more conformed to the divine image. To be cleansed from everything which is alien to the design and the nature of God and to be perfectly at one with God is our grand ambition! O beloved, this is a blessed longing for a soul to have and he that has it, by the grace of God, though he may mourn and languish now, shall, one day, praise and bless God!

It may help you to discern whether you have such longings if I say that the man who really has them is in earnest to seek after God *now*. He hates the idea of postponement. A moment’s delay to a seeking soul is a dreadful thought—he desires immediate salvation—he would be reconciled to God at once! As the hungry man does not wish the meal to be postponed, but would gladly be fed at once, so in the true seeker his heart and his flesh cry out after God, for the living God—even as the hart pants after the water brooks, so does his soul pant after God. This desire is abiding, and cannot be turned aside to another ob-

ject. Not always can a man perceive this desire with vividness because he is in the world and his thoughts must be somewhat diverted by his ordinary business and cares. But, still, the desire is always alive in his soul and whenever the stress of worldly care is taken from his mind, his heart flies back to its longings and begins, again, to sigh and cry after God. Such a man will break away from his fellows to plead with God alone. He will be praying without as much as the movement of his lips, even when he is in company. He will lie at night tossing on his bed and saying, “Oh that I knew where I might find Him!” He will wake in the morning with this desire strong upon him and will seek after the Lord as one that searches for hidden treasure. This desire hovers over the man who is subject to it. It overshadows his being and masters him completely! I have known it deprive food of its tastefulness and home of its comfort and make the seeker cry, “Woe is me until I find my God! I draw near unto the gates of death until He appears! Let others ask for the increase of their corn and wine, Lord, lift up the light of Your Countenance upon me, for this, and only this, will content my soul.”

Now, beloved, all this seeking of the soul which I have feebly described prepares a man for praising God when he finds mercy at the cross, as you will readily see upon reflection. This is the *Holy Spirit's* way of tuning the harp for future psalmody. No man can praise God like the believer who has sought the Savior, sorrowing as His mother and Joseph did in the days of His flesh, and at the last found Him. The seeker knows the bitterness of sin and, therefore, he can appreciate the sweetness of pardoning mercy. He has been made to know his own lost estate and, in consequence, he will be the more rejoiced when he is *found* by the Good Shepherd and restored to his home by his Great Father! He knows his helplessness. No one knows it better, for he has tried the works of the law and failed. He has even tried prayer and gospel ordinances—but he has not succeeded in them so as to find rest unto his soul. He knows that he is broken in pieces, all asunder and, therefore, when he finds his help in the Lord Jesus, even he who feels himself to be such a helpless worm, what praises Christ will have and what love in return for all His gracious aid! The poor seeker has known in his own heart what he deserves at the hands of the law. He has had a glimpse of the world to come and the terrors of judgment and the burnings of eternal wrath. And with the unquenchable fire scorching his very face, he must and will praise His deliverer who has plucked him as a brand out of the burning! All his seeking, I say, helps him to prize divine mercy, when he receives it, and trains him to praise God according to the promise of our text, “They shall praise the Lord that seek Him.” Never is a babe as dear to its mother as when it has just been restored from a sickness which threatened its life. Never does a father rejoice over his little child so much as when he has been long lost in the woods and, after a weary search, is at last brought home. No gold is so precious to a man as that which he has earned by hard labor and self-denial—the harder he has toiled to gain it, the more rejoiced is he when, at length, he has enough to permit him to rest. No freedom is so precious as the new found liberty of a slave, no enlargement so joyous as that of one who has long been sitting in the valley of the shadow of death, bound in affliction and iron. No return to a country is so full of delight as that of sorrowful exiles who come back from cruel Babylon, by whose waters they sat and wept, yes, wept when they remembered Zion. “When the Lord turned, again, the captivity of Zion, we were like men that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, the Lord has done great things for them. The Lord has done great things for us, of which we are glad.” If there are any seekers here at this good hour, I hope that if they have seen themselves in the picture which I have outlined they will still further be enabled to take heart and be of good courage! I am laboring, this morning, to drop words of consolation, even as the reapers, when Ruth came into the field of Boaz, let fall handfuls on purpose for her, that she might glean and return with a full portion.

II. Now we come to THE PROMISE—“They shall praise the Lord that seek Him.” Blessed promise! It is gradually, but surely, fulfilled.

First, *it is fulfilled unconsciously while the man is seeking.* Did you ever think of this? Without knowing it, the humble seeker is *already* praising God. That confession of sin which he made with so many tears was a glorifying of God by bearing witness to the justice of God's law, and the truth of the charges which it brings against our fallen nature. “My son,” said Joshua even to Achan, “I pray you give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto Him.” There is a measure of true praise in confession and it is as pure and real as that which angels present before the throne of God! The seeker, when he acknowledges that he deserves to be sent to hell is, in fact, praising divine justice—he is ador-

ing the Judge of all. Even though in so doing there is a mixture of unbelief, and a forgetfulness of other attributes, yet there is a firm belief in divine Justice, and a suppliant adoration of it which is far from being unacceptable. There is also in the seeker a measure of delight in God's mercy, for while the poor sinner's soul is craving for pardon, it confesses heartily how sweet mercy is, in itself, if it might but obtain it, how gracious forgiveness is, how precious loving kindness is if it might but be favored with them. No living man has so keen an eye to the tender attributes of God as he whose soul is covered all over with wounds, bruises and putrefying sores through a sense of sin! Meanwhile, the seeking soul is really praising the Lord Jesus by appreciating the preciousness of His love and the value of His blood and saying within itself, "Oh that I might know the value of these in my own case! Oh that I could but touch the hem of His garment for myself! Would God I did but know what it is to be washed in His blood and to be covered with His righteousness!" There is in all these emotions a measure of latent praise none the less accepted of the Lord because it is not perceived by man. There is a precious fragrance of deep reverence and holy awe about a seeker's prayers which render them sweet unto the Lord. So, you see, the seeker is already praising God and, thus, in a measure, the promise is fulfilled.

But the praise exceedingly abounds when the desire is granted. As a bird lies hidden among the heather but is seen when, at last, it is startled and made to take to the wing, so does praise take to the wing and display itself when, at last, those who seek the Lord are permitted to find Him! What thunderclaps of praise come from poor sinners when they have just found their all-in-all in God in the person of Christ Jesus! Then their joy becomes almost too much for them to hold, vastly too much for them to express! Oh, the praises, the day and night praises, the continuous praises which rise from the returning, repenting soul which has, at last, felt the Father's arms around its neck and the Father's warm kisses on its cheek, and is sitting down at the table where the happy household eat and drink and are merry! *Praising* time has come, indeed, when *finding* time has arrived. Happy day! Happy day when we meet with God in Jesus Christ!

Now, dear soul, the promise secures that you *shall* find God in Christ, because the promise is that you shall praise Him—and you cannot praise *Him* until you have found His grace and favor in *Christ*. Therefore I am sure you will enjoy salvation before long! Oh, it is not to be thought of that a soul should seek after God and not find Him! Imagine the penitent prodigal son seeking after his father, reaching his father's house, searching in the chambers of his father's mansion, going abroad into his father's fields and crying, "My Father, my Father, I have lost you! Will you not be found of me?"—doing all this, I say, and doing this by the month and the year together and not finding his father, after all! There is no such parable as that in Holy Writ, nor could there be one—it would not be God-like or Christ-like! There is nothing like it, as a matter of fact, nor shall there ever be, except where *unbelief* comes in and wickedly misrepresents the Lord. My God, in Your universe You think of everything! The beast has its lair and the sea bird has its home. The fish finds its food and even the insect has a table provided for it! And as for Your poor creature, man, though greatly erring, You do not forget him! You have made us wonder that You are so mindful of him, that You have such tender regard unto him, and do visit him so graciously! It is not possible that any of all your creatures should be seeking after You like a child that cries after its mother in the dark, and not find You, for after all, You are not far from any of us!

God may try you, He may let you wait awhile before He grants you the comforts of realized pardon. There may be that about you, especially that *unbelief* about you, which prevents your finding Him, but found of you He must be and He shall be before long! Which of you has a child who has offended you, but who, with many tears, comes to you and says, "My Father, forgive me," and you will not forgive? You know that, for a while, you may chide and say, "The offense is great, it has been oft repeated. I cannot readily pass by it this time." But if you see your child still weeping and still with a broken heart imploring your favor, does not your heart yearn over him? Do you not long to say, "My child, I have forgiven and forgotten your fault"? You know you do! And if you, being evil, know how to forgive your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give pardon and free grace to them that seek Him! You shall praise the Lord that seek Him! Lay hold on that promise.

Well, and when you have found Him, to the joy of your heart, the promise of the text shall be fulfilled in a third sense, *for you shall go on seeking and you shall go on praising*. Seeking the Lord is sometimes used in Scripture as the alias for *true religion* and it very aptly describes it, for our life consists in endeavoring to know the Lord yet more and more. Now, since Christ has died, true religion is

praise. The genius of the Christian religion is joy, its proper spirit is delight, and its highest exercise is praise! “They shall praise the Lord that seek Him.” Now we go up to the house of the Lord with the congregation of the faithful with songs of holy joy! Now we draw near to the feast of communion at the Lord’s table with delight and, before we depart, we sing a hymn. Now we go forth to the good fight of faith and our battle song is a jubilant psalm! Now do we even go to our beds of painful sickness and sing the Lord’s high praises there! Since Jesus died, our heaviness is dead, our murmuring is buried in His tomb. Since Jesus endured the wrath of God, which was due to us, that wrath has passed away forever and it is now the privilege, no, the *duty* of every Christian to rejoice in the Lord! Let all the people praise Him and let the redeemed of the Lord be foremost in the joy!

Nor is this all. There comes another day and another state, when we shall be in another place and then we shall praise the Lord, even we who seek Him. *Every soul that has sought God on earth shall see Him and delight in Him in heaven*. What praises will you and I pour forth then! There are reasons why I consider myself to have been the greatest debtor to God of any man that ever lived—I can see special undeserving in my own case and special mercies on the part of God towards me. I challenge you all to bear witness that I am under bond to praise the name of the Lord more ardently than you because I am more deeply indebted to His grace. Each one of you, I have no doubt, cater to the same vein of thought and not without reason. You will each feel as if you had the most cause to magnify His blessed name when you find yourself seated among the blood-washed and in your hands the palm branch of eternal victory! Oh, what a song shall go up then! What “shouts of them that triumph, and songs of them that feast” shall make heaven’s high arches ring in that glad day when “they shall praise the Lord that seek Him.”

What a promise this is! I leave it in your hands, only remarking that it takes the most delightful shape possible, because if you are a true seeker, the thing you want above all things is to be able to glorify God! You desire to be pardoned and to be renewed in heart with this objective—that you may be able to render acceptable praise to Him whom you have offended. Well, that is the very blessing which is promised you! “They shall praise the Lord that seek Him.” And it includes, of course, the removal from your heart of everything that would prevent your praising Him—and the breaking down of every barrier that would keep you back from joining celestial choirs who, day without night, with their eternal symphonies circle His throne rejoicing!

III. Thirdly, THE PRAISE. “They shall praise the Lord that seek Him.” What will the praise be about? What will be the subject of the song? Ah, now I have before me an utterly endless task if I am to catalog the subjects of praise for a seeking soul when it has found peace with God! Why, beloved, *we praise Him to think that we found Him as we did!* Some of you found Him so readily—you only heard a sermon and that one sermon led you to Christ! Others of us did not find Him so soon or so easily and, yet, we found Him in the very nick of time. Just when we were going to lie down in despair, when Satan suggested that no hope remained, then man’s extremity was God’s opportunity and we found the Lord exactly to the tick of the clock at the best moment! Blessed be His name! Oh, to find Him at all! How great a blessing! If a man should lie a thousand years in the prison of despair, yet if he did but find Christ, at last, it were worth while to have suffered the thousand years of daily death! If we may but at last say, “My God, my God,” with unfaltering tongue and a heart that feels itself reconciled to Him, we shall make it our heaven to praise Him with all our might!

The chief point of praise, perhaps, with most saved ones is *that they found such a Savior*. Our Lord is represented as on the cross when He utters this promise, “They shall praise the Lord that seek Him,” and when we find the Lord we always find Him in Christ upon the cross—and the atonement becomes a chief feature in our joy. Do you remember the first time you had a view, by faith, of the Incarnate God bearing human sin—when that grand doctrine of substitution flashed on your soul like the first sight of the sun to a man that had been blind? Do you remember when you first really knew that God did lay on Christ *your* iniquities and that *He* was punished instead of you, so that you cannot, by any possibility, be punished, for it were unjust, twice, to exact the penalty for one offense? Did you ever get the glory of that light concentrated on your soul, so that you knew, absolutely, that God, for Christ’s sake had forgiven you and justly forgiven you because of the blood of Jesus? Did you ever drink in the meaning of those words, “faithful and just to forgive us our sins”? Then I know after the first overwhelming impression of intense delight you did praise God, yes, and you have not left off doing so, for there is enough in

that one simple fact to set you praising God throughout the ages of eternity! Salvation by substitution so satisfies the conscience that it fills the heart with overflowing delight—

*“The love I prize is righteous love,
Inscribed on the sin-bearing tree.
Love that exacts the sinner’s debt,
Yet, in exacting sets him free!
Love that condemns the sinner’s sin,
Yet, in condemning, pardon seals.
That saves from righteous wrath, and yet
In saving, righteousness reveals.
This is the love that calms my heart,
That soothes each conscience-pang within,
That pacifies my guilty dread,
And frees me from the power of sin.”*

Oh, to think that such an one as Jesus should be our Savior, that heaven’s Darling should condescend to assume our nature and become bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh! That He should live such a life and die such a death! That He should present to God a work so perfect, without flaw, without excess! Is there not room for praises here? Now we are as clean before the Lord because we have been washed in Christ’s blood, yes, we are as pure as if we had never sinned! And standing arrayed in Christ’s righteousness, we are more righteous, even, than Adam before the fall, for he had only a human righteousness, but we have a *divine* righteousness. In Christ Jesus, the second Adam, we are nearer to God than if we had been born of the first Adam while untainted by sin! Now, there is a man who is akin to God, even Jesus, our brother, who is also very God of very God. Man is exalted to the highest conceivable degree in the person of Jesus Christ and we have become heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ. As the seeking soul learns more and more of this, it praises God more and more. Is it not so? Does not your soul bless the Savior? Yes, and the longer we live and the more we know about the Lord the more we find causes for extolling Him! Indeed, everything around us, within us and above us seems to suggest a reason for blessing His name!

Think of *our security*, at this moment and, again, praise God! Many a song has been poured from my soul as I have remembered that my Lord has given me a life that cannot die—that He has written me on His heart from where my name can never be erased—that He has made a covenant with me to which He has pledged His honor and His word! And He has sealed it with His blood! I am His child and, by His grace, I know that He never did and never can tear from His heart’s love even the least of His children—the mountains may depart, and the hills be removed, but the covenant of His peace can never be removed—for so He has declared—

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

There is abundant raw material for praise in all this! Where can you find better? “They shall praise the Lord that seek Him.”

Brothers and sisters, *we see cause for praise in the very fact that we ever sought the Lord at all.* Think what it was which made us seek Him—what but Sovereign grace? What bedewed our eyes with the first tears of Repentance? What fetched from our soul the first sigh of desire after Christ? What, I say, but GRACE? And from where came that grace but from His eternal promise which He promised in Christ Jesus before the world was? And from where that promise but from His divine sovereignty, even as it is written, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion”? Therefore let us glorify His holy name and think not of works or merits, or anything in man that could have won for us the love of the Most High! Boasting is excluded, but praise is secured! Give all the glory to His holy name forever and forever, and let the text stand true in your case, “They shall praise the Lord that seek Him.”

Our final thought on this occasion shall be, if these things are so, let us praise the Lord, even we who have sought Him! If our poor friends, the seekers, are soon to bless His name, let us show them the way! We sought and we found—let us magnify the Lord at once! Do you think we praise our heavenly Father half enough? Do we not rob Him of His glory by getting down in the dumps and giving way to care and, perhaps, to murmuring? This is not the right spirit for a Christian! Where there is so much undeserved mercy, there ought to be more grateful joy! Do you think we are demonstrative enough in our praise? I am sure we are not! Few around us would ever dream that we were half as favored as we are! Do we sing one-tenth as much as Christians ought to sing? We hum over a tune, now and then, very quietly, but we are terribly afraid of being heard and of annoying people. I do not find the giddy world much afraid of annoying us with *their* songs—do they not wake us up at night with their lewd discords? If we were half as earnest as we ought to be, we should sometimes, at least, make the streets ring with the praises of God! It would be well to be a little indiscreet occasionally and, now and then, provoke the charge of fanaticism, for this would be a proof of earnest sincerity! Once, at least, in our lives we should let our Lord ride through the streets, again, in public triumph amid our own most hearty enthusiasm, till Pharisees rebuke us and say, “Do you hear what these say?”—

*“Oh, for this love let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break!
And all harmonious human tongues
Their Savior’s praises speak.”*

Yes, and all inharmonious tongues, too! Let all creatures that have breath praise the Lord—

*“Yes we will praise You, dearest Lord,
Our souls are all on flame.
Hosanna round the spacious earth
To Your adored name!”*

May the Lord set our hearts on fire! May we be full of exulting praise, marching on with hosannas and hallelujahs, magnifying, praising and extolling the Lord whom we sought in the hour of trouble, and whom we found in the day of His grace!

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—PSALM 22.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—563, 775, 548.

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