

THINGS PRESENT
NO. 870

A SERMON
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“Things present...all are yours.”
1 Corinthians 3:22

SOME of the Corinthians had attached themselves to one great religious teacher and others to another. There was a disposition amongst them to set up rival leaders of opposing parties. A band would follow Paul, another company admired Apollos, and a third extolled Peter. The apostle, in order to take off the minds of believers from estimating any one of their blessings at too high a rate, leads them to contemplate the exceeding length and breadth of the treasures which God had given to them. Why should they glory in man when all things were theirs? It is the part of a poor man to set a great value upon the one thing in which he delights.

As in the parable of Nathan, the poor man had but one ewe lamb. This lay in his bosom, this was fed from his own table. He who was possessor of ten thousand sheep in the vale of Jezreel thought but little of any one lamb. Even so, if believers were poor, and God had given them but one mercy and that one mercy were either Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, it were but according to nature that they should exalt the gift and prize it at the highest conceivable rate.

But when the bounteous Lord has given to His people all ministries and countless spiritual blessings, it becomes unseemly in those who are so rich to glory in any one part of their portion. Even as it has been said—

*“A little knowledge is a dangerous thing,
Drink deep or taste not the Pierian spring;”*

so the sense of possession exercised upon a little will contract and hamper the soul, but a sense of great, yea, infinite possession, will enlarge and ennoble us.

If our mind, enlarged and stimulated by faith, can stretch its arms like seas, and grasp the whole shore of the present and of the future, and seize upon all things as given us by the bounty of heaven, we shall be cured of the tendency to exaggerate the value of our merely temporal mercies—all shall so be delivered from covetousness.

How shall they thirst who swim in the cool clear stream? How shall they hunger who sit down at banquets where the provision is beyond all measure? Happy are they who are too rich to care for gold, too happy to hunt after joy, too exalted to be proud, too high to be lifted up.

Amongst the matters which Paul catalogs as belonging to believers, he enters this item which contains a mass of mercy, “things present.” This is a huge nugget of virgin gold and one which the mind is ever ready to appreciate. We reckon present things at the highest rate—as the old proverb has it, “A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.”

Things present, though in very truth they may be far inferior to things to come, or even in certain respects less precious than the things of the past, yet usually exercise the greatest influence over us from their nearness. Even as the moon, though far less than the sun, has the greater power over the earth because she is so much nearer to it.

A present mercy rates higher in the market than a great blessing which was received years ago and now only lives in recollection. A crust for present hunger is better than the festival of last year. And a

small inconvenience, if pressing upon us at this present moment, will distress us far more than the great trial which is threatened, or the still greater affliction which has passed over us. A slight shower of rain today will more inconvenience you than the heavy snowstorm which overtook you on the Alps seven years ago.

The little present, to our apprehension, eclipses the great past or the greater future. Since, then, from the constitution of our nature, we are so out of all proportion affected by present things, it is well for us to look at them until we can see them in the bright light which this text casts upon them, for then we shall be all the happier, and being the happier, all the stronger for good. Present things, then, believer, be they bright or dark, present things, through the covenant of grace, are yours today.

I. Subdividing this great and comprehensive term, we shall first observe that, in the case of the true Christian, HIS TEMPORAL POSSESSIONS are his own.

You will say that this is a most trite remark. So be it, yet as a brown husk may hide a golden seed, so may there be important truth within a plain sentence. The ungodly man for a while engrosses the good things of this life, but they are sent to him oftentimes in anger, they bring a curse with them, and are taken away again in wrath. They are not his in the same cheering sense in which they belong to the children of God.

As for you, O true believer, whatever of earthly goods the Lord has apportioned you is, in a peculiar sense and in a most blessed manner, your own. I grant you that all our worldly goods belong to God and that we are but stewards of whatsoever He bestows upon us, yet for all that, the good things of this life are ours by a deed of gift far more valid than the title-deeds of noble families or the charters of kings.

God gives us all things richly to enjoy and rights established upon divine gift are beyond dispute. When the Lord makes our lines to fall in pleasant places, we are not to receive the boons of providence with fear and trembling, as if they were not lawful to be held by Christians. Nor are we to look at them with shy suspicion, as if they could not be consecrated to noblest ends. The temporal gifts of heaven are ours, as the text declares, and we are bound to regard them as love-gifts of our covenant God.

It is a great comfort when a man knows in his conscience, “What I have, be it little or much, is mine at least in this sense, that I have *honestly come by it*.” The Christian owns no stolen property or unrighteous gain. A thief may secure his goodly Babylonian garment and his wedge of gold, but when he has gotten it, though no other man claims it, yet it is not his—he must bury it in the earth, it is a stolen thing, a thing accursed and bringing evil with it. How can men live in peace with fraudulent property about them?

David, when he gets the water from the well at Bethlehem, acts towards it as every honest spirit would act towards gold and silver accumulated in unjustifiable speculations, or coined out of the savings of the defrauded poor, or gathered by adulteration and trickery—David would not drink the water, but poured it out. And some men’s riches might well be poured out even into hell itself, where devils might rue the draught if they dared to drink thereat.

Ill-gotten substance will rot the belly which is filled therewith. Dishonest persons may be purse-proud and live in great style, but none of their riches are in truth their own. Like the jackdaw in the fable, they wear borrowed plumes. Though no man may get back his own from the man of fraud, and no court of law may make him disgorge, yet his gettings are not his, or only his so as to sting him in the end as does a viper.

But what you have, believer, is your own. In the getting of it you remembered your Master’s word and abstained from covetousness. You strained not after it with an unhallowed greed, and now, when it comes to you, though it is not your god, and you do not value it in comparison with spiritual blessings, yet it comes with this satisfaction, that you have not gathered it with unrighteous hands.

The believer’s possessions are his own, because *acknowledged to the great Giver with becoming gratitude*. Gratitude is, as it were, the quit rent to the great superior owner, and until we discharge the claim, our goods are not lawfully ours in the court of heaven. Some lands are held upon the tenure of a peppercorn, so are our daily mercies.

At each meal there should be this payment of the peppercorn in the giving of thanks, which is peculiarly a Christian custom to be carefully observed. On our anniversary occasions, our birthdays, and times of memorial, there should be especial seasons for blessing the name of the Lord. And indeed, whenever any great blessing is brought home (and what if I say *any* blessing, for to such as we are, all blessings are great), there should be the payment of hearty gratitude, for only then the mercy becomes legitimately ours!

Wealth is not truly ours till we thank the Lord for it. We have not paid the royal dues upon it, it is contraband, and we are illegally using it. Beloved, as you have not failed to give unto the Lord your loving thanks, your mercies are now yours to enjoy as in His sight.

I hope, too, that the most of my brethren can feel that their temporal possessions are theirs because they have *conscientiously consecrated the due portion* which belongs to God. From the loaf there should be cut the crust for the hungry, from the purse there should come the help for the Lord's work. The tithing of the substance is the true title to the substance. It is not altogether yours till you have proved your gratitude by your proportionate gift to the cause of the Master.

Cheerfully may we look upon the heap which remains when of the gold and the silver a portion has been given to God to conserve the rest from the rust and the canker. You may eat of your harvest with gladness when the Lord's sheaf has been waved, and your increase shall be sweet when the first fruits have been laid on the altar. All things are yours in a special manner when dedicated in tithe and sanctified by gratitude.

Our mercies are our own, too, because we seek to be *graciously guided in the use of them*. We dare not spend them on our lusts, they are not ours for such a purpose. They are not bestowed upon us so absolutely that we may set them up and cry, "These be thy gods, O Israel." They are ours within the lines of law and Gospel. Ours within bounds of sobriety and holiness. Ours not as gods, but as gourds, not as masters, but as mercies.

We eat and drink, feeling that God, even our own God, has blessed our basket and our store, and therefore whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we do all to His glory. We put on our raiment with joy, because the Lord thus clothes us. That which we possess the Lord has cleansed, and therefore we count it no longer common or unclean. The benediction of heaven sweetens the lawful use of earthly goods. The nether springs are the more delightful because drops from the upper springs fall into them. To see God's hand in every temporal mercy is to enjoy life.

But alas! some men will not so see the hand of God, but only see the bare mercy and fall in love with the creature to the neglect of the Creator. Their worldly goods are perverted into stumbling-stones, and are no longer as they should be, a ladder to lift us nearer to God.

Beloved in Christ Jesus, whatever God has given you in this life, upon the conditions which I have already mentioned, are yours, ceded to you by divine love. Need I say it is not required of you to play the ascetic? John came neither eating nor drinking—you are not John's disciple. The Son of Man, who is your Master, came both eating and drinking.

There is no piety whatever in your accounting the gifts of providence as necessarily temptations. You can make them so, but that is your folly and no fault of theirs. If God has blessed you with wealth or competence, use your substance with joy for His glory and the good of your fellow men, and see upon all that you have the smile of heaven. Sit not down sullenly to hoard up your gold as though it were a thing of darkness to be concealed, but arise and use the gifts of God in the light and in gladness.

Vain are those who sneer at nature and the lavish bounty thereof. To me the sunshine is JEHOVAH's smile, and the grass which grows beneath my feet is begemmed with ten thousand flowers, all speaking out my Father's thoughts of kindness towards me. "The earth is the LORD's and the fulness thereof."

This planet is no Pandemonium or Tophet. It is no sin to gaze with delight upon verdant valleys and majestic mountains. It is no crime to enjoy the beauties of nature, but a sign of idiocy to be unaffected

thereby. Fair scenes, sweet sounds, balmy odors, and fresh gales—your Father sends them to you, take them and be thankful.

If there are any men in this world to whom nature belongs, these men are the children of the living God. I count it squeamish, sickly sentimentalism, and not manly piety, which leads certain excellent men to depreciate their Maker's works, and speak of river and forest, and lake and ocean as if evil spirits haunted every scene, and the whole earth were a temple of Satan.

My brethren, it is true that the creation has been made subject to vanity, but not willingly, and that unwillingness of God leaves a sunlight upon nature which mercy would have her children perceive and rejoice in.

*“The earth with its store
Of wonders untold,
Almighty! Thy power
Has founded of old;
Hath stablish'd it fast
By a changeless decree,
And round it hath cast,
Like a mantle, the sea.*

*“Thy bountiful care
What tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air,
It shines in the light,
It streams from the hills,
It descends to the plain,
And sweetly distils
In the dew and the rain.*

*“O measureless might!
Ineffable love!
While angels delight
To hymn Thee above
The humbler creation,
Though feeble there lays,
With true adoration
Shall lisp to Thy praise.”*

There is no sin in trees and winds, brooks, and lakes, and oceans, and in towering mountains, virgin snows, and silent glaciers, there are no promptings to evil. The sin is in ourselves, and if we will but be right-hearted, and ask God to enable us to behold His works with a clarified and anointed eye, we may see God Himself mirrored in creation. At all events, all these present things are ours, neither shall any man rob me of my right to rejoice in the works of God's hands.

Let us note well before we leave this point, that any of God's saints who are in straits, and have but little of this world's goods—and these are generally the majority of the church, and the holiest, and the best, may yet remember that all things are theirs, so that up to the measure of their necessities God will be quite sure to afford them sustenance.

The Lord is your shepherd and you shall not want. You may be pinched, but you shall not perish. Your strength shall be equal to your day, your bread shall be given you, your water shall be sure. And brother or sister, remember that a man's life is not to be judged of by what he has or has not, but by the contentment of his heart—for there lies all true treasure.

Are you content, and can you cast your cares upon God? Then you are richer than a thousand anxious misers and wealthier far than ten thousand who eat the bread of carefulness. Are you satisfied to sing—

*“Father, I wait Thy daily will;
Thou shalt divide my portion still:
Give me on earth what seems Thee best,
Till death and heaven reveal the rest”?*

Then are you truly rich. Envy makes men poor—this it is that strips the purple from the prince and dashes the goblet with gall. Strange is it, and yet most true, that covetousness which seems to be the common sin of professors nowadays, is never attributed in God’s Word to any one child of God. They had many faults, but never covetousness. No heir of heaven was charged with that in the Word of God—that is the vice of Judas, the son of perdition and not of Peter, or David, or Lot, or Samson.

This evil one touches not the saints. Into the deep ditch of greed, the saints shall not fall. My poor, but believing brother, you will thank God that you have but little, believing that it is all that would be good for you. You do ask the Lord to give you day by day your daily bread, and you have it in answer to prayer, and in proof of divine faithfulness. Your heavenly Friend may suffer you to be brought very low, but He will not utterly leave you, nor suffer your soul to famish.

I pray God the Holy Spirit to enable my dear brethren in their poverty to believe that their want is overruled for their true riches. Whereas an abundance of possessions may bring a blessing, the lack of that abundance is far more constantly a source of good. Our present circumstances, whether prosperous or painful, are covenant blessings from the God of grace.

*“If peace and plenty crown my days,
They help me, Lord, to speak Thy praise;
If bread of sorrows be my food,
Those sorrows work my real good.”*

II. In the long list of things present we must include TEMPORAL TRIALS.

Tribulations are treasures. And if we were wise, we should reckon our afflictions among our rarest jewels. The caverns of sorrow are mines of diamonds. Our earthly possessions may be silver, but temporal trials are, to the saints, invariably gold. We may grow in grace through what we enjoy, but we probably make the greatest progress through what we suffer. Soft gales may be pleasant for heaven-bound vessels, but rough winds are better. The calm is our way, but God has His way in the whirlwind, and He rides on the wings of the wind.

Saints gain more by their losses than by their profits. Health comes out of their sicknesses and wealth flows out of their poverties. Heir of heaven, your present trials are yours in the sense of medicine. You need that your soul, like your body, should be dealt with by the beloved Physician. A thousand diseases have sown their seeds within you—one evil will often bring on another and the cure of one too frequently engenders another.

You need, therefore, oftentimes to gather the produce of the garden of herbs which is included in your inheritance—a garden which God will be sure to keep well-stocked with wormwood and with rue. From these bitter herbs a potion shall be brewed, as precious as it is pungent, as curative as it is distasteful. Would you root up that herb garden, would you lay those healing beds all waste? Ah, then, when next disease attacked you, how could you expect help?

I know the good Physician can heal without the lancet if He will, and restore us without the balm, but for all that, He does not choose to do so, but will use the means of affliction—for by these things men live and in all these is the life of their spirit. Be thankful, therefore, for your trials, and count them among your treasures.

Our present afflictions also strengthen us greatly. No man becomes a veteran except by practice in arms. We shall not man our fleet with able-bodied seamen at home, on the boisterous deep, and in the thundering battle, if we search amongst mere landsmen and gentlemen whose boldest voyage was on the glassy Thames.

Experience works patience, and patience brings with it a train of virtues—and all these make the man a man and cause him to be mighty amongst his compeers. Be grateful, then, for that without which you probably would be always children, apart from which you must remain always untried, and consequently unskillful. Be grateful for your present trials and count them the choicest of your goods.

Brethren, our trials ought to be greatly valued by us as windows of agates and gates of carbuncle, through which we get the clearest views of our Lord Jesus Christ. Trial is the telescope through which we gaze upon the blessed Star of Bethlehem more clearly. Christ says to us, “Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; there will I give thee my loves.”

When there fails a blight on creature comforts, and the withering blast goes out against terrestrial joys, oh, then how bright is the Rose of Sharon and how fair the Lily of the Valley in the esteem of His people!

“Come up with me to my cross,” says Christ, and the mystic invitation, though it involves so deep an anguish, is not to be rejected. Do you understand what it is to come up to Christ’s cross and to be conformed unto His death? It is only as you do this that you will have fellowship with Jesus and understand what His love was towards you.

The sufferings of Christ are not learned by the hearing of the ear—though we set them forth constantly to you, yet you will not really comprehend them. It is in the drinking of His cup, and being baptized with His baptism, that by sympathy you will comprehend what your Lord really endured for you. Thus will you be more effectually planted with Him in the likeness of His death, that you may be planted in the likeness of His resurrection.

Brethren and sisters, you who are cross-bearers this morning, I would remind you for your comfort that you have to bear *the cross, but not the curse*. Your Lord endured both cross and curse, but to you there is not so much as a drop of divine anger in all that you are suffering. There may be much vinegar, but no venom. There may be anguish, but there is no anger. The penal result of sin Christ has exhausted—He endured it all, and now the cross that comes to you is garlanded with love, all over it is inscribed with lines of affection.

I know that this is hard to be believed, especially while you are carrying a green cross, new to your shoulder, for this always frets the soul. It is when you become accustomed to sorrow by having borne the yoke in your youth, that you fret not, and mourn not, as though some strange thing had happened to you. I cannot speak so favorably of some men’s crosses as I can of the crosses of believers who patiently wait upon their God, for some make their own crosses in wantonness of discontent.

There are crosses made of crab tree, put together by our own wicked temper, and these we ought to burn at once. I can promise you no cures for crosses which you make for yourself. If you plait your own crown of thorns, and find your own nails, your own vinegar and sponge, it is your own crucifixion, and you may find your own comfort. But when it is Christ’s cross, a cross that Christ sends, a cross that providence ordains—remember it is a thing of mercy to be rejoiced in as a benison of heaven.

So too, believer, remember that your Lord sends you *a cross but not a crush*. It is meant to bear you down, but not to break you and grind you in the dust. Your cross is proportioned to your strength. In all the potion there is not one chance atom—the medicine has been compounded by no ordinary skill. Infinite wisdom, which balanced the clouds and fixed the cornerstone of the world, has been employed to compound the ingredients of your present trial. Your affliction shall not be too much for you—it shall be just such a trial as you require. There shall be no more and no less of weight in it.

It may help to comfort you if you remember that *your cross is not a loss*. It may look like a loss, but it shall only be a putting out to interest that which is taken from you that it may be returned soon with

usury. Weep not because the vessel of your present comfort has gone out to sea and you have lost sight of the white sails. It shall come back again to you laden with nobler treasure.

Weep not because the sun has gone down, for it descends that the dews may be brought forth, and the earth may be watered, and the flowers may drip with perfume. Wait you awhile, and the sun shall come back to you again, and the morn shall be the brighter because of the gloom of the night.

O sorrow not, heir of heaven, because the skies are clouded, the clouds are big with mercy, and each cloud is the mother of ten thousand blossoms and harvests lie concealed in yonder darkness! O be you confident that amongst all your jewels, all your precious ornaments and tokens of love that God has given you, you have nothing brighter than the jet jewels of affliction, no diamonds of a finer water than those of trouble.

May we understand by faith, then, the great truth of God that our present trials are our treasures, to be looked upon with thankfulness.

III. In the third place, all our CIRCUMSTANTIAL SURROUNDINGS ought to be regarded by us as ours.

I have already touched upon a branch of this subject, namely, that all our outward circumstances are meant to be conducive to our perfection. I have already said that our trials and troubles are by God's grace, and the gift of the Holy Spirit, really made to promote our growth. So ought all, whether of brightness or darkness in our present lot, to be helpful in preparing us for the better land and the mansions of glory. I shall also insist upon another point—all our circumstances are ours as subservient to our usefulness.

Has this ever struck you? You wish to win souls? Before you enter upon the actual service, you say to yourself, "I wish I were a minister," but very probably you have not the gift of utterance. You have a family round about you and you are evidently tied to something far other than a pulpit. You have to keep to that farm, to manage the shop.

Now the temptation with you will be to say, "These ploughs and harrows, these bullocks and horses—I do not see how I am to serve God with all these! These scales and yard measures, these groceries and draperies—I cannot see how these can be instruments with which I may serve God."

Now, my dear friend, begin by correcting that mistake. All these things are yours, and you are henceforth to look upon them as being not detriments, but assistants to the discharge of your peculiar life-work. You are to consider that the position which you occupy is, all things considered, the most advantageous that you could possibly have occupied for doing the utmost that you are capable of doing for the glory of God.

Suppose the mole should cry, "How I could have honored the great Creator if I could have been allowed to fly!" It would have been very foolish, for a mole flying would be a very ridiculous object—while a mole fashioning its tunnels and casting up its castles is viewed with admiring wonder by the naturalist, who perceives its remarkable suitability to its sphere.

The fish of the sea might say, "How could I display the wisdom of God if I could sing, or mount a tree, like a bird." But you know fish in a tree would be a very grotesque affair and there would be no wisdom of God to admire in fishes climbing trees. But when the fish cuts the wave with agile fin, all who have observed it say how wonderfully it is adapted to its habitat—how exactly its every bone is fitted for its mode of life.

Brother, it is just so with you. If you begin to say, "I cannot glorify God where I am and as I am." I answer, neither could you anywhere if not where you are. Providence, which arranged your surroundings, appointed them so that, all things being considered, you are in the position in which you can best display the wisdom and the grace of God. Now, if you can once accept this as being a fact, it will make a man of you.

My Christian brother, or my dear sister, it will enable you to serve God with a force which you have not yet obtained, for then, instead of panting for spheres to which you will never reach, you will inquire for immediate duty, asking, "What does my hand find to do?" You need not use your feet to traverse

half a nation to find work—it lies close at hand. Your calling is near at home, your vocation lies at the door and within it. What your hands find to do, do at once, and with all your might, and you will find such earnest service the best method in which you can glorify the Lord Jesus Christ.

“A large family,” says one, “what can I do?” Train them in the fear of God—these children are yours to serve the Lord withal. What nobler service can a mother render to the republic upon earth, and to the kingdom in heaven, than to educate her children for Christ?

“Working in a large factory with ungodly men, what can I do?” Needless inquiry! What cannot the salt do when it is cast among the meat? You, as a piece of salt, are just where you should be. Immure Christians in monasteries and nunneries!—why it is like putting salt into a strong iron box and burying it in the ground. Nay, but the salt of the earth must be cast all over that which is to be conserved by it and each of us must be put in a position where our influence as a Christian will be felt.

“I am sick,” says another, “I am chained to the bed of languishing.” But my friend, your patience will magnify the power of grace and your words of experience will enrich those who listen to you. Your experience will yield a richer wine than ever could have come from you had you not been cast into the winepress and trodden by the foot of affliction.

I tell you, brethren, I cannot go into instances and details, but it is a most certain fact that all about you, though it be a blind eye, a disabled arm, a stammering tongue, a flagging memory, poverty in the house, or sickness in the chamber, though it is derision, and scorn, and contempt, everything about you is yours. And if you know how to use it rightly, you will turn these disadvantages into advantages and prosper by them.

Look at the seaman when he finds himself out at sea! does he sit down and fret because the wind will not blow from the quarter that he would most prefer? No, but he tacks about, and catches every capful of wind that can be of use to him, and so reaches the haven at last.

You are not to expect that God would ordain everything just as you would like to have it—feed you with spoon victuals like babes upon the lap. But He will train, and try you, and you must make use of all that He sends for the promotion of His glory. Look at a good commander, he not only selects a good position for his troops, but if he occupies a bad position, he turns that to account, and often makes the worse become the better.

To use a very homely illustration, look at yon miller on the village hill. How does he grind his grist? Does he bargain that he will only grind in the west wind, because that is so full of health? No, but the east wind, which searches joints and marrow, makes the millstones revolve, and the north and the south are all yoked to service. Even so with believers—all your ups and your downs, your successes and your defeats, are all yours, that you may turn them to the glory of God.

Standing here now, and taking a somewhat broader range than our own individualities, let me remind you, brethren, that on the great and broad scale of providence, all things belong to the church of God. There are great changes in politics just now—there will be greater changes still. Fancy not that anything is stable that is of merely human appointing. Imagine not that any form of government can eternally survive the waves of change which break at its base. The ensign of this age is, “Overturn, overturn, overturn, till *He* shall come whose right it is, and *He* shall have the kingdom.”

But there shall be no crumbling columns, there shall be no bowing wall or tottering fence, but what shall minister to the solidity of the church of God. All changes, however radical, all catastrophes, however horrible, shall all happen to the advantage of the cause of Christ. All things are yours.

Earthquakes of popular opinions may make dynasties shake and reel, and at last lie prone in ruin. Opinions, institutions, and customs, which we would fain conserve at the peril of our lives, may be rolled up and cast aside like worn out vestures. Heaven and earth may shake, and stars may fall like fig leaves from the tree, but everything must subserve the progress of the conquering kingdom of Christ.

His glory *shall* fill the earth. All flesh *shall* see it together. From land and sea, there must yet go up the universal hallelujah unto the King of kings, the Lord of lords, The Wonderful, The Counselor, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. All things then, O church of God, are yours.

IV. I have somewhat outstripped my time, and therefore I must only give a hint or two on the last point. SPIRITUAL PRIVILEGES, which are many of them present things, belong to believers.

Now what are they? The favor of God is not for heaven only. It is ours today. Adoption into His family is not for eternity only, it is for this present time. We are today heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus. Today to be instructed, to be fed, to be clothed, to be housed, to have the Father's kiss, and live in the Father's heart. All things are ours. God Himself is ours, our eternal inheritance. Lift up now your eyes, O heir of grace, and see what a treasure is opened up to you!

Again, Christ is present and He is ours. There is today a "fountain filled with blood," which puts away all sin. It is ours. There is a mercy seat where all prayer is prevalent—it is open today. It is ours—come to it boldly. There is an Intercessor who takes our prayers and offers them. He is ours, and all His mighty pleas and divine authority, which make Him so successful an advocate, are all at our service today. Not were ours yesterday, nor shall be ours in some happier hour, but they are ours now.

Are any of you depressed, do you feel yourselves great sinners?—then the fountain is yours as sinners. The Intercessor is yours while you are yet guilty, for it is written, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father." O lay hold upon these present things and rejoice.

The Holy Ghost, too, is a present blessing to you. The Comforter comes to you as a present blessing from Christ, and He brings you present enlightenment, present guidance, present strength, present consolation. All these are yours, all beams of the seven-branched golden candlestick and all the oil that is treasured up for the lamps. The light and the source of the light are alike yours and yours now.

And if, beloved, there be any promise today written in the Word of God, if there be any blessing today guaranteed to the elect family, if there be any mindfulness of providence, or any abundance of grace—all these are yours and yours now.

Come, then! Why pine you, you saints? Why mourn you and lie upon your dunghills till the dogs of hell lick your sores? Come, wrap you yourselves in your scarlet and fine linen, you heirs of heaven! Live according to your portion, fare according to the banquet. All things are yours. Let those harps be taken from the willows, and let that sackcloth and ashes be laid aside. Put on the beautiful apparel of gratitude, and sing the song of thankfulness unto the Shepherd who has promised that you shall not want and whose all-sufficiency will fill your heart, till like a cup it runs over.

May God bless these words, and especially bless them to the unconverted, that while they look over the hedge, as it were, and see the fruit that grows from God's people, they may wish that they had right to enter. If any of you do so wish, let me remind you that there is a door to enter by, and that door is Christ, and whosoever trusts in Him shall have every mercy of the covenant to be his present and eternal portion.

May you be led so to trust in Jesus, and unto God shall be the glory, world without end. Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—
PSALM 23 AND JOHN 14**

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