

WONDERS NO. 1098

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 23, 1873,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“And praise the name of the Lord your God, that has dealt wondrously with you.”
Joel 2:26.*

IN the case which is particularly mentioned in this chapter, the nation of Israel had very grievously gone astray, and therefore they were visited by a very remarkable chastisement. An unusual plague of locusts devoured all the fruit of the field, and the people were vexed with a sore famine. The day of the Lord was very terrible, and none of them could abide it. The prophet Joel was commissioned to exhort them to repentance; and if, indeed, they listened to his earnest entreaties their later history was bright with mercy. By God's good hand upon them, they were brought to repentance—they wept and cried to God. And then the same God, who with His left hand had been wondrous in chastisement, was, with His right hand, equally wonderful in blessing and enriching them. He loaded their floors with wheat, and made their vats to overflow with wine and oil, and restored unto them the years which the locust had eaten, so that they ate in plenty and were satisfied and praised the name of the Lord, who had dealt wondrously with them. He dealt with them by way of wonders when He smote them and by way of wonders when He returned to them in His mercy.

It was no unusual thing for the nation of Israel to meet with wonders. They were cradled in prodigies, they grew up amid miracles, they dwelt among marvels; the history of the favored tribes is a long list of miracles. Do you not remember how the Lord brought them out of Egypt with a high hand, and with an outstretched arm? What marvelous things He did among the sons of Ham, and what wonders He worked in the fields of Zoan? By wonders they were led out of Egypt, and brought through the Red Sea, upon whose shore they sang triumphantly, “Who is like unto You O Lord, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?” Their course in the great howling wilderness for 40 years was a march of wonders. When the manna dropped from heaven, and the water leaped from the rock, the Lord dealt wondrously with them. There was not a single day of the forty years which did not open and close with wonders—the day was shaded by the cloudy pillar, and the night glowed with the light of the fiery cloud. Nor when the desert journey was over did God's wonders cease. The river was divided before them. What ailed you, O Jordan, that you were driven back? They entered into their land, and began its conquest by a wonder, for the walls of Jericho fell flat to the ground, and they continued its conquest by the same marvelous power. For mighty kings fled before them, and the sun and the moon stood still while they smote the hostile armies! When they had driven out the Canaanites, and were established in the land of promise, they sinned greatly, but what wonders of deliverance God worked for them when they cried to Him in their trouble! You have but to remember the names of Gideon, and of Barak, of Jephtha, and of Samson, and you see before you wonder after wonder! The Lord dealt wondrously with them.

In all this the Israelites were a type of true believers, for with all His chosen ones, the Lord has dealt wondrously. We frequently hear the complaint that we live in an age of dullness, we have no adventures now, and events are few. Happy are we that it is so, for it has been well said—“Blessed are the times which have no history.” If peace and prosperity are commonplace, long may the commonplace continue! But indeed, no thoughtful man's life is uninteresting or barren of marvels. A life real and earnest cannot be devoid of memorable occurrences. He who thinks so must either be unspiritual, or he must be oblivious of his own inner history—he must be like the tribes in the wilderness, of whom it is written, “They forget the works of the Lord, and the wonders which He has showed them.” Foolish people run to fiction for wonders, but gracious men can tell far greater wonders, upon which the words, “NO FICTION,” might be written in capital letters. The wonders which we can speak of far surpass the inventions of im-

agination. When we recount them, we may appear unto men to dream, but in very truth no dreamer could dream after such a fashion. Speak of “Arabian Nights,” English days and nights have far exceeded them in marvel. “God does great things past finding out, and wonders without number.” I have seen a volume entitled, “The World of Wonders,” and another named, “Ten Thousand Wonderful Things.” The believer is within himself a world of wonders, and his life reveals 10,000 wonderful things. Mysteries, riddles, paradoxes, and miracles make up Christian experience. God has dealt wondrously with us. Of these wonders I shall try and speak at this time, according to that precept of David—“Talk you of all His wondrous works,” and I shall dwell upon them after the following manner: first, we shall testify that *God’s dealings toward us have been full of wonder, and lead us to praise Him as Jehovah, our God*; and secondly, we shall remark that because of this, *we ought to look for wonders in the future*, and if I may speak so paradoxically, it should not be unusual for us to see wonders. And, then, thirdly, we shall close by observing that *in a future state, we shall yet more clearly see that Jehovah has dealt wondrously with us*.

I. THE LORD’S DEALINGS WITH US UP TILL NOW HAVE BEEN FULL OF WONDER, AND LEAD US TO PRAISE HIM. Let us speak of what we know, and have tasted and handled. The Lord has dealt wonderfully *toward us*. Begin at the beginning. It was no small wonder that He should love us before the earth was. There were many other things to exercise Jehovah’s thought besides thinking upon man—“What is man, that You are mindful of him?” And if He must think of man, there were many kinds of thoughts that the Lord might have had towards man besides thoughts of love. Yet the Lord was mindful of us, and though we are poor and needy, the Lord thinks upon us. “How precious also are Your thoughts unto me, O God; how great is the sum of them!” Why were they thoughts of love? Admiring gratitude gives us the only reply. And if they must be thoughts of love, yet it is a wonder of wonders that they should be thoughts of love to me! Each Christian will feel it to be so in his own personal case—“Why did divine love settle itself upon me?” Well might we say of our God what David said of Jonathan, “Your love to me was wonderful.” The song of the Virgin may be upon each one of our lips, “He has put down the mighty from their seat, and has exalted them of low degree.” He has thought of us who were inconsiderable, while the great ones of the earth have been passed by. Eternal love in its sovereignty is a marvel, and comes from the Lord of hosts, who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.

That divine love should have continued faithful notwithstanding our unworthiness of it; and the provocations by which we have tried it, is another wonder. The immutability of His counsel calls for adoring wonder. Has there been a day since we have been responsible for our actions in which we have not tested the faithfulness of God by our transgressions? The children of Israel for forty years provoked God in the wilderness; were they not most sadly the prototypes of ourselves? Yet never, never has the Lord paused or changed in His love. As it is said of our blessed Redeemer, “Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.” And so is it true that the “Father Himself loves you,” and rests in His love.

If the divine love is, in itself, a wonder, brethren, it is equally a wonder that, in consequence of this love, God should enter into covenant with us. He has promised us a thousand mercies, and He has engaged Himself to the performance of those promises in a remarkable way which increases the consolation of the promise, for He has given us His oath—“I have made a covenant with My chosen; I have sworn unto David, My servant.” Now, by David is meant the Lord Jesus Christ, and God has entered into covenant with us in the person of the Son of David. A covenant ordered in all things and sure, confirmed by His oath, and sealed by blood, by which He has bound Himself, by His own word and oath, that in blessing, He will bless us, and glorify His Son in us. Behold and wonder—the Infinite enters into covenant with the finite; the Holy engages Himself to sinners. We may well sit before the Lord as David did, rapt in astonishment and then say from our heart of hearts, “Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house that You have brought me up to now?”

It is equally wonderful that a part of the covenant should run thus—“I will be a Father unto them, and they shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord God Almighty.” If God wanted sons, beside the Only-begotten, He might have chosen yon bright seraphs that outshine the sun. Why did He look here, upon this ant hill, to elect a seed out of such ants as we are? Why did He come down in the person of His Son to make a match with our frail humanity? O, matchless grace, that God should adopt for His

children those who were heirs of wrath, even as others. Behold, of these stones He has not only raised up children unto Abraham, but unto Himself also—“Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.”

Beloved, let us admire and wonder, that being His sons and daughters, the Lord should stake His honor upon the bringing of us securely to heaven, for in the covenant He has pledged all His attributes for His people’s security. He cannot be a glorious God unless His people ultimately are a glorified people. He cannot be true unless His people are kept to the end, for He has pledged His honor for their safety. Jesus has said, “I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand.” Yes, the Lord Himself has declared that, “Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation; they shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.” Heaven and earth shall pass away, but God’s word shall not fail; sun and moon shall cease their shining, but He will not alter the thing which has gone forth from His lips. Has He said, and shall He not do it? Has He spoken, and shall He not make it good?

By shifting the kaleidoscope, we shall get another view of the same matchless wonders. The Lord has acted wondrously *for* us. Having loved us, and covenanted with us, He gave us His Only-begotten Son to be born in our nature, and in that nature, to suffer even unto death! I will not attempt to show you that this is a wonder. I believe that the angels, though they have known of the incarnation nearly these nineteen hundred years, have never ceased from astonishment for one single moment. That God, the Word, should be made flesh, and should dwell among us, and that He at last should bleed and die, excels everything that is wonderful besides. That Jesus Christ, the King of kings, should be a Servant of servants! That He who wrapped the earth in the swaddling bands of ocean, and spread upon the firmament its vesture of blue should gird Himself with a towel, and wash His disciples’ feet, is beyond measure, a wonder! Yet this sacred office He is virtually fulfilling every day in His perpetual intercession for His people, and in all His acts of love towards them; this is indeed dealing wondrously with us.

In the gift of the Lord Jesus, we have obtained pardon, justification, sanctification and eternal life, all of which contain a mine of wonders. Perhaps to penitent hearts the chief of all these is the forgiveness of sin, and of such sins as ours—

***“Great God of wonders!
All Your ways
Are matchless, God-like, and divine!
But the fair glories of Your grace
More God-like and unrivalled shine!
Who is a pardoning God like Thee?
Or who has grace so rich and free?
In wonder lost, with trembling joy
We take the pardon of our God;
Pardon for crimes of deepest dye;
A pardon bought with Jesus’ blood;
Who is a pardoning God like Thee?
Or who has grace so rich and free?”***

Having given us His Son, the Lord has also, in Him, given us all things. I put these things into words, and sum them up, but indeed, there is an ocean of thought in every syllable I utter, for the Lord has given us this world, and worlds to come. He has given us earth and heaven! He has given us time and eternity! “All are yours, and you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” Believer, there is nothing in providence but what is yours, for, “All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose.” That which looks like evil is good to you, and the good has a goodness in it which you do not yet perceive—an inner core of excellent mercy which will be opened up for you in due time through the abounding wisdom of God. Walk now abroad like Abraham of old, and lift up your eyes to the north and to the south, and to the east and to the west, for all this has God given you in giving you His Son. He has dealt wondrously with us in this respect. He has made the angels to be our servitors, glad to wait upon us, and to bear us up in their hands lest we dash our feet against a stone. Making the angels to be our servants, He has made the angels’ home to be our home, only He has brightened it with special glory for us. It is not written that many mansions are prepared especially for

angels, but Jesus our Lord has gone before to prepare a place for us, made ready especially for our delight. Has He not said it—"I go to prepare a place for you?" To crown all, He has not given us merely the angels of heaven, and heaven itself, and Jesus to prepare a place for us, but He has given us Himself to be our God, for, "The Lord is my portion, says my soul," and He has confirmed it—"I will be their God, and they shall be My people." Thus has He dealt wondrously with us.

Beloved, I shall now ask you to look at your own experience a little, you that know the Lord, when I remind you that the Lord has worked wonders *in us*. A little while ago we were dead; He made us live. We were loathsome lepers, and He made us whole; we were blind, and He gave us sight; we were lame, and He made us leap; we were prisoners, and He set us free; we were condemned, and He justified us by His grace. Marvelous were the changes which He worked in us, we marveled while we felt them. We were amazed to feel the hardness of our heart removed. Years ago, nothing could move us, neither terrors nor love could stir us, but the Lord came and smote us as Moses smote the rock, and straightway the waters of penitence gushed out—no, the rock itself became a standing pool. What a change the grace of God makes in the matter of repentance. The very man, who was like adamant one day, becomes like wax the next; and he who never cared for God, nor wept for sin, loathes and abhors himself in the deepest and most humble contrition! Then, blessed be God, another wonderful change comes over him, for the man whom you saw broken in heart for sin, unable to derive a grain of comfort from anything around him, all of a sudden believes on the name of Jesus as it is brought home with power to his soul by the Holy Spirit. And straightway he wipes his eyes, and his mourning is turned to dancing. He becomes supremely happy through faith, and breaks forth with such songs as this—

*"I will praise You every day,
Now Your anger's turned away!
Comfortable thoughts arise,
From the bleeding sacrifice."*

Have not your souls, at times, been as hard and cold as marble, and yet all of a sudden they have dissolved as ice melts in the sun? Has not your soul been tossed up and down like the Atlantic in a rage, and yet been suddenly made smooth as a "molten mirror" by God's wondrous hands? Your experience within you, I am sure, is a verification of the statement that Jehovah your "God has dealt wondrously with you." What wonderful conflicts our souls have known! What wonderful victories we have won through divine grace! Immortal sins, as they seemed to be, have received their deadly wound; unconquerable lusts have been made to bite the dust. Our victories shall never be forgotten, but the crown of them shall be put upon the head of Him who enabled us to be more than conquerors. And what wonderful Revelations God has granted to us. Has He not full often poured a flood of His light upon a truth we saw but dimly before, and made our spirit leap for joy? He has opened our eyes to behold wondrous things out of His law. Why, I bear witness that sometimes when my Lord Jesus Christ has been revealed in my soul, I have been unable to collect my thoughts of joy, much less to put them into language that should make them intelligible to other people. For the glory and the beauty are transcendent, and the love and the fellowship of Christ are transporting, ecstatic, ravishing—they bear the soul away. These wonders of revelation bring with them wonders of consolation. Have we not seen Christians dying full of life? Have we not seen them sinking in body, but soaring in soul—sick, weak, feeble, panting for their breath, and yet full of glory, ready to burst with the new wine of the kingdom that has been poured into their frail vessels? Have we not heard some of them sing between their groans such songs as only God's sweet love could have taught them? The angels could sing no sweeter songs, and assuredly they know no sweeter themes! Yes, beloved, our inner experience has been full of wonders. We have committed terrible sins, and suffered awful sorrows, but we have received wonderful pardons, and enjoyed wonderful raptures. We have passed through bloody fights, but we have gained wonderful victories. Black has been our darkness, but we have seen marvelous light. Coleridge has said, "That in wonder all philosophy begins, in wonder it ends, and wonder fills the inner space." Truly I may say the same of all vital godliness. Another has said that, "The wise man only wonders once in his life, but that always." The same may be affirmed of the man made wise unto salvation. It may be true that our first wonder is born of ignorance, and at any rate, much of ignorance mingles surprise with it; but certainly, afterwards, our wonder becomes the parent of adoration. We wonder when we grow in grace, not because we do not know,

but we wonder at what we do know of amazing love and grace. Our little children look up to the stars, and think them little pinholes in the sky and they say—

*“Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are.”*

But when the astronomer fits his glass to his eye, and peers upon those mighty orbs, he says with greater truth—

“How I wonder what you are!”

Man’s wonder grows with his knowledge. As he wades into the river of wisdom, he is less and less able to keep the foothold of calm reason, and is more and more liable to be lifted up and carried off his feet by the current. It is so with Christian experience—the more we know of God, the more wonderful His dealings to us appear.

Now, beloved, I must ask you, once again, to consider that as the Lord has dealt wondrously towards us, wondrously for us, and wondrously in us, so He has also dealt wondrously *by* us. What a field of battle, what a throne of victory the person of a poor child of God often becomes! Why, in this narrow plot of human clay, this little Isle of Man, this United Kingdom of soul and body, the powers of heaven and hell have mustered all their armies on many a day for conflict. And God and His grace and truth have fought with Satan in our hearts, and, blessed be God, on that battlefield God has won many a victory over the allied armies of the world, the flesh, and the devil. In the plains of Mansoul, Michael and his angels have fought against the dragon and his angels; and the old dragon has been defeated and led captive. We have been garrisoned against besieging sins, delivered by force of heavenly arms from the power of our corruptions, and brought forth by sovereign grace to delight in the Lord our God. When we get to heaven, we shall be “Men wondered at,” set for signs and wonders forever, immortal witnesses of boundless grace. We shall publish abroad, in the celestial streets, the “deeds of infinite love,” to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places should be made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. Will they not—the angels—say to one another, “Here are men and women who were tempted in a thousand ways, who carried about with them bodies of sin and death, who were tried with all sorts of afflictions, and passed through much tribulation, but look what they are! Look how God has triumphed in them. Look how He has defeated the evil one, and overcome the powers of evil, for these tempted ones have come through great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. There is not one in whom God has been defeated; there is not one in whom the eternal purpose has failed; there is not one in whom electing love has been baffled; there is not one in whom the power of Christ’s blood has been ineffectual; there is not one unto whom the Spirit came without winning a complete victory. Let us praise our God anew and sing, ‘Worthy is the Lamb.’”

Our God has also worked wondrously by some of us, fulfilling His promise, “The people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits.” His strength has been perfect in our weakness. There are some among us, whose lips have fed many, and yet they confess themselves to be emptiness itself; their word has brought life to the dead, yet in themselves they have no might. They have scattered the king’s enemies although they are by nature weak as water. God’s ministers are but trumpets of rams’ horns, yet when God has blown through them, the blast has made the walls of Jericho to rock, and reel, and even fall to the ground. They are but lamps enclosed in earthen pitchers, and yet by them Midian has been routed. Glory be to the name of Jehovah our God for this.

Thus you see God has done wondrously *by* us. Praise Him! Praise Him! Shall we pause and sing a psalm of praise now? Our time would fail for that, but, O, you people, praise Him! O you that know His wonders, praise Him! Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He has redeemed out of the hand of the enemy. Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and bless the name of the Lord—“You shall bless Jehovah your God, for He has dealt wondrously with you.”—

*“Let the redeemed of the Lord
The wonders of His grace record;
How great His works! How kind His ways!
Let every tongue pronounce His praise!”*

II. Our second and practical point is this—THEREFORE WE OUGHT TO EXPECT WONDERS. I shall but be able to give hints here. Do you labor this morning, any of you, under a horrible sense of

your sinfulness? Do you seem to yourselves to be the blackest of all unpardoned souls, the nearest to being damned, of all living beings? Do you think that it would be the greatest wonder that was ever worked since the world began if you were saved? Dear brothers and sisters, I have a most precious thought to drop into your ear, may the Holy Spirit drop it into your heart: "The Lord is a God of wonders: He only does wondrous things." He delights to find in our sin and misery, room and opportunity for wonders of grace. Cast yourself upon the mercy of our matchless God, and He will make you as much a wonder of grace as you have been a wonder of sin. Possibly some are saying, "I do not feel my sin as I should; I wish I did; I feel stupid and insensible; if I feel anything, it is only a sort of regret that I do not feel at all." My dear brothers and sisters, you will be a wonder, too, if God quickens you, and makes you tender of heart. In you, too, He finds room for grace. He quickens the dead. He kills, and makes alive, He wounds and He heals. Cry to the Lord to make you sensitive through His wounding and killing work. If your heart is cold as ice, ask Him to melt it, for it is written, "He sends out His word and melts them." Is it not promised in His own covenant, "I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh?" The Lord of love delights to work these transformations.

Do you feel dreadfully depressed in spirit? Have you been long so? Are you one of those who mourn without the light of the sun? Would it not be a great marvel if you should become one of the happiest of God's people? It would. Therefore I believe you will be, for God delights to work wonders. Out of the innermost prison, He can bring His servants. He made Paul and Silas sing in the inner dungeon, and then he brought them out. He can make you sing now, and bring you out into clear full liberty and that on a sudden and today—"The Lord looses the prisoners; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind; the Lord raises them that He bowed down." The prisoners of the Lord shall not be prisoners forever. There is a jail delivery coming, and they shall leap for joy.

Are you lying at death's door? Do you cry like Heman, "My soul is full of troubles, and my life draws near unto the grave"? Perhaps you are sick in body, possibly you are distracted in mind, and you are ready to die, and therefore you think that it is all over with you. What a desperate case yours seems! It would be a wonderful thing if you should yet obtain light and comfort, would it not? Again, let me remind you that if it would be wonderful, it is all the more probable with the Lord. He is full of compassion, and He delights in mercy. The Lord heals the broken in heart, and binds up their wounds. Wonderful are His ways of consoling His mourners; great is His wisdom and prudence in devising ways to bring back His banished ones. Therefore, ascribe you greatness unto our God, and look for much mercy. Believe in God for boundless loving-kindnesses. If I preached a little Christ for little sinners, some of you would be wise to go somewhere else. But since I have divine warrant for preaching a great Savior for great sinners, who is able to help us through great difficulties, and to overcome great sins—why, He is the very Savior for you. O, bless Him, and love Him, trust Him, and He will work wonders in your spirit. Possibly I speak this morning to one who has desperately backslidden. It is years ago since you knew the truth, and you have, by your sins, fastened upon your soul fetters of iron. Well, the Lord whom you have grieved is full of compassion, and can take those fetters off. Yes, He can break the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron. Wonders of deliverance can the Lord work for His imprisoned children.

"Ah," cries another, "but my case is merely a commonplace one. There is nothing remarkable about me." My dear friend, would not it be a wonderful thing if God were to save such a commonplace and insignificant person as you are? Well, rest in Him, trust in Him, and there shall be wonderful works worked for you also; you shall be one of the men wondered at, in whom God's grace shall be fully revealed.

Let me say in one word, if there is anything about any of you, beloved, at this time which seems to render your salvation difficult, and even impossible. If there is anything in your case that renders it hopeless and desperate, whether it is in your temporals or your spirituals, I would recommend you go with your case to the God of wonders. And see whether or not He does not, before long, make you say, "The Lord has dealt wondrously with me." To sinners who believe in Jesus, salvation is promised, and they shall have it. And to saints who trust in the Lord, deliverance is promised, and delivered they must be. God will work ten thousand wonders, and He will never allow His promise to fall to the ground.

I would earnestly remind all God's servants that we ought to expect wonderful answers to prayer, and we should pray as if we expected the God of wonders to hear us. We ought to expect, in times of trouble, to see wonderful deliverances. If we seem quite shut up, we should then be sure of escaping, for it would be a wonder if we did, and therefore God will work it. We have grounds for expecting wonderful consolations if we are about to endure great troubles. We should look for wonderful joys between here and heaven. We ought to be on our watchtower looking for wonderful discoveries of Christ's beauties and His love. In fact we should always be looking for wonders, and should wonder if wonders do not happen.

In the church we are permitted to expect wonders. We are too much in the habit of going to the assembly for worship, and sitting down and hearing sermons, and if half-a-dozen are converted we are astonished. But we ought to expect thousands to be converted! If the church ever has faith enough to expect great things, she will see great things. When the church falls upon dark times, and error mars her beauty, we may expect God to work wonders to purify and exalt her. In the darkest medieval times God found His witnesses and when the light of God threatened to die out, then Luther came—a man raised up of God; and a train of glorious men followed behind him. Never tremble, never despair, never be afraid. “The God of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge.” Why, brethren, we worship the God of wonders, “Who only does wondrous things.” We have a Savior of wonders. Is not His name called The Wonderful? And did not Stephen say of Him, “Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by signs and wonders”? Then the Holy Spirit also works wonders. He came at first with rushing wind, and cloven tongues, and miraculous gifts, and even now His wonders have not ceased. They have only become spiritual, instead of physical, but the Spirit of God is working mightily. I bear my own personal witness that God has worked wonders for us, far beyond all human ability, wonders which we could not perform; no, wonders that we did not deserve. What is more, He has worked wonders that we could not have expected. And what is more, wonders that we could not have imagined. What is more, wonders which even now that they have happened we cannot comprehend. And I may add, wonders which throughout eternity we shall never be able to praise God sufficiently, even though we spend our whole existence in wondering and adoring the wonder-working God! “How great are His signs! How mighty are His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and His dominion from generation to generation.”

III. Our last remark is this, that IN THE FUTURE STATE THESE WONDERS WILL BECOME MANIFEST TO US. If we were to read our Bibles attentively, we would be astonished to find how much there is about heaven in them, and how, after all, it is not true that we have mere gleams and glimpses. Studiously investigated, the word of God tells us wondrous things concerning the world to come. Beloved, we shall, in the better land, wonder more than we do here, for we shall there understand far more than we do now, and shall have clearer views and wider prospects. Our present capacities are narrow; there is scant room within our mind for great things. But in yon bright world, the veil shall be taken off, and we shall know even as we are known, seeing no more in part, and through a glass darkly; in the heavenly mansions our growing knowledge will excite in us increasing wonder, and we shall sing, there, the praise of Him who has dealt wondrously with us. I believe the poet was right when he said—

*“And sing with wonder and surprise
Your loving-kindness in the skies.”*

In the abodes of endless bliss we shall see what we escaped; we shall look down from Abraham's bosom, and see the sinner afar off in torment! It will be a dreadful sight, but O, with what hearts of gratitude shall we bless redeeming love, knowing, each one of us, that were it not for divine grace that fate so desperate had been ours. In the heaven of perfect holiness we shall know the true character of sin. When we shall see the brightness of God's glory, and the splendor of His holiness, sin will appear in all its hideousness, and we shall adore that matchless mercy which pardoned us. And we shall bless the precious blood which cleansed us though we had been defiled with such pollution. We think we praise God for forgiving our iniquities, and no doubt we do, in some measure, but compared with the blessing that saints in heaven render to God for deliverance from sin, our praise is as nothing. We do not know sin as they know it; we do not understand its blackness as they perceive it.

Up in heaven, too, we shall see our life as a whole, and we shall see God's dealings with us on earth as a whole. A great many matters which now appear mysterious and complex concerning which we can only walk by faith, for our reason is baffled, will be so clear to us as to excite joyous songs in heaven. "Now I see why I was laid aside when I wanted to be busy in God's work. Now I see why that dear child, whom I hoped to have had spared to me as a stay for my old age, was taken away. Now I understand why my business was allowed to fail. Now I comprehend why that foul mouth was allowed to be opened against me. Now I comprehend why I was assailed with inward fears, and was allowed to go tremblingly all my days." Such will be our confessions when the day dawns, and the shadows flee away. Then we shall say and sing—"He has dealt wondrously with us." We shall feel that the best was done for us that even Eternal Wisdom could devise, and we shall bless the name of the Lord.

Reflect a moment, dear friends and see further reasons for everlasting wondering. In heaven we shall see what God has lifted us up to be. We talk of being sons of God. Did we ever realize that? We speak of Heaven being ours—but do we know what we mean by that language? Truly, "It does not yet appear what we shall be," neither has eye seen nor ear heard the things which God has prepared for them who love Him. When we shall stand on the sea of glass, and hear the harpers, and join their endless music; when we shall see Him who laid down His life for us—yes, see Him as He is; when we shall behold the Lamb of God, who by His bowing to death, lifted us up from our deadly fall—when we shall see Him, who by stripping Himself of His royalties robed us with splendor—we shall be amazed, astounded, and overwhelmed with wonder!

Above all, when we shall see God Himself, what will be our wonder! When our minds shall be able to behold the Infinite Jehovah, and hear His voice, when we shall be brought to speak with God familiarly, and bow before that throne whose brightness today would blind us, if we could gaze upon it; when we shall know Him who fills all in all; I will not say we shall be amazed to think He loved us, there is no need to say that. I will not say we shall be filled with astonishment to think He ever saved us, I need not say that. But that He should permit us to be His sons and daughters, and should, at such an expense, bring us to dwell with Him forever, and make us partakers of His own nature, one with His own Son—this will plunge us in adoring wonder forever, and we shall, "Praise the name of Jehovah our God, who has dealt wondrously with us." I beg you to begin the music here. I long, myself, to spend my time perpetually in adoring the God of wonders! I want, brethren that we should rise above the spirit of discontent, the spirit that finds fault and mourns, and moans, and laments, and makes Massahs and Meribahs by which to provoke the Lord our God. Let it not be said of us, "They soon forget His wonders," but let us go on singing unto Him, "Who only does wondrous things," speaking to one another of all His wondrous works, and in our souls, day by day, and hour by hour admiring our God, world without end. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON— JOEL 2.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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