

“THE KING CAN DO NO WRONG”

NO. 2420

A SERMON
 INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, JULY 7, 1895.
 DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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“And all the people took notice of it, and it pleased them: as whatever the king did pleased all the people.”
2 Samuel 3:36.

DAVID was a great king and a good king, but his character was compromised by the conduct of Joab, who had been one of his chief friends and supporters. Abner came to David, in Hebron, and proposed terms of peace which David accepted. But Joab could not bear that Abner should be his rival and, therefore, he most treacherously murdered him. This abominable act was greatly to the detriment of David’s character; he could not prevent the crime, certainly he had not instigated it, and yet it was only natural that all the people would suppose that David had a hand in it because Joab was not merely one of his subjects, but his prime minister!

Dear friends, in a similar way, the character of our great Lord and King among the sons of men is very much in the hands of His people, especially in the hands of those who are more prominent than others, and whom He uses in His service more than others. We may go and do, on our own account, things that shall bring dishonor to the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and King! He will have no part nor lot in them, nothing that He has taught will suggest them, and nothing that He desires will urge us, thus, to act. We may, however, of our own free will, even those of us whom the Lord uses most, bring grievous dishonor on His holy name. Jesus has often to lift up His pierced hands and when we ask Him, “What are these wounds in Your hands?” He has to answer, “Those with which I was wounded in the house of My friends.” It is evident to each one of you that all the vile insults of infidels could never dishonor Christ as the inconsistencies of His own disciples! No slur ever comparatively attaches to the glorious name of the Well-beloved from His avowed enemies, let them slander Him as they may. But a blot does fall upon His sacred name through the inconsistencies and follies of those who call themselves His disciples, but who are not truly His followers, or, being so, are not careful to walk consistently with their profession!

We may well pity David that he should come under the opprobrium of the conduct of such an one as Joab, for in his heart he was entirely clear of the murder of Abner. Yet rumor was quite sure to attribute complicity in the crime to him. Joab said to himself, “Abner has deceived the king. He cannot, after all he has done, be true in his professions of friendship, so I will go out and slay him.” And it is not at all an uncommon thing for us to dishonor Christ under the notion that we are showing our zeal for the King. We may be doing evil in the hope that good may come out of it! We may be indulging an unchristian, intolerant spirit in our zeal against intolerance! We may grow bitter in our love for love and in our hate of hatred! Such poor judges are we of what is right that we may even deceive *ourselves* into the belief that we are honoring our Lord and Master when we are, all the while, bringing disgrace upon His name! Perhaps Joab acted from this spirit and possibly some of us, at this very moment, are making the same mistake.

It is a grand proof of the stability of David’s character that he did not suffer in the estimation of his friends because of what Joab had done. He ordered a public funeral for Abner. He attended it, himself, wrapped in sackcloth, and he compelled Joab to attend it. He, himself, fasted as a sign of the deepest mourning, and when the people came and begged him to eat, he would not touch food till the sun went down—he sacredly observed the time of fasting for the death of Abner, for whom he sang a dolorous song of real sorrow—“And the king lamented over Abner, and said, Died Abner as a fool dies? Your hands were not bound, nor your feet put into fetters: as a man falls before wicked men, so fell you.” “And all the people took notice of it, and it pleased them: as whatever the king did pleased all the people. For all the people and all Israel understood that day that it was not of the king to slay Abner, the son of Ner.”

Now, it is to the honor of our Lord Jesus Christ that His cause and His character survive all the follies and all the sins of His professed people. There was an eminent minister who once said that Christianity must be true since it survived pulpits. And another one added that he felt more sure of its being true because it survived ministers, for, taking them all round, they were more likely to destroy than to build up the cause of Christ! These things were said only in semi-earnest, but there is a great deal of serious truth about them. The cause of Christ must be true because the Master has survived His disciples! His wisdom has not been eclipsed by our folly. His power has not been lessened by our weakness. The glory of His holiness has not been beclouded by the unholiness of His people. The sun has risen in spite of the many clouds. The morning has come notwithstanding the mists of the night. Blessed King, You conquer with the poorest soldiers that ever fought a battle and You get to Yourself the greater, rather than the less renown, because Your victories are won by such poor followers!

In Christ’s conquests, it is never the soldiers’ battle, it is always the Captain’s battles and the Captain’s victories. On His head are the many crowns of all who follow Him, for there is not one of them who has *earned* a crown. Their crowns are all deserved by Him and when they are given to them, by Him, they naturally and of right give them back to Him, crying, “You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for You have created all things, and for Your pleasure they are and were created.”—

*“Not unto us, to You alone,
Blessed Lamb, be glory given!”*

So, you see, our text has already led us into this profitable meditation upon our Lord! Good David, with his character in jeopardy through the wrongdoing of his prime minister, nevertheless passed through the trial, and his fame survived it. And the character of our Lord Jesus Christ is such that, while daily put in jeopardy by us, yet it will still survive and His kingdom will continue to increase—and His glory will never wane.

This brings me, now, to dwell upon the second part of the verse—“Whatever the king did pleased all the people.” Wherever this is the case with any king, we may say of it, first, *this is the outflow of love*. Secondly, *this is the consequence of knowledge*. Thirdly, *this is the secret of rest*. And fourthly, *this is the fountain of obedience*.

I. First, then, wherever it is the case that whatever the king does pleases all the people, **THIS IS THE OUTFLOW OF LOVE**—and as it is the case with our King, that whatever He does pleases all His people, we can truly say that this is the outflow of our love to Him. Let us dwell upon that matter for a few minutes.

Dear friends, if we love the Lord Jesus Christ with all our hearts, whatever He does will please us! We shall sum up all His past history in this one sentence, “He has done all things well.” And we shall foretell His future history just as briefly, for, “He will do all things well.”

Whatever our King does pleases us because we love Him and, true love, in the first place, *banishes suspicion*. When we do not love our rulers, we are afraid of the power that is over us. We think, perhaps, it may be exercised without tenderness, and we begin to tremble, lest, in some awful moment, the great foot should crush us, or the powerful hand should smite us. But when we truly love, we are not the victims of any such impression! No dark suspicions come across the soul that is once enamored of the Lord Jesus Christ. “No,” says the heart, “He will not hurt me. He will not destroy me. He will not forget me.” We cannot admit one ill thought concerning Him when, with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength, we have come to love Him. Love at once banishes all suspicions!

It also inspires *implicit confidence*. When we love Jesus Christ, our blessed King, we feel that He must do that which is kind, that which is tender, that which is right—and we do not need to ask Him any questions—we leave the whole matter with Him to do as He pleases. We are willing to let His will be like the apocalyptic book, sealed with seven seals, if necessary, and we unhesitatingly say, “Let His will be done.” He who loves Christ much does not keep on asking for tokens, signs, evidences and manifestations!

That is an odd story, which is told of two Welshmen, but it has a great deal of truth in it. They were going out to preach and they parted at the crossroads, one to go this way, and one to go that. One of them said to his friend, “Brother Jones, may you get the light of His countenance in your preaching today?” “I hope so, brother,” he answered, “but there is one thing—if I do not get the light of His countenance, I will speak well of Him behind His back.” Yes, just so! When we see His face, we realize what a blessed Christ He is, but if we do not see His face, we are not going to find fault with Him! We believe in the truth of Kent’s hymn—

“What cheering words are these!”

*Their sweetness who can tell?
In time, and to eternal days,
'Tis with the righteous well.
Well when they see His face,
Or sink amidst the flood;
Well in affliction's thorny maze,
Or on the mount with God!
'Tis well when they can sing
As sinners bought with blood,
And when they touch the mournful string,
And mourn an absent God.
'Tis well when on the mount
They feast on dying love,
And 'tis as well, in God's account,
When they, the furnace prove.”*

If Jesus smiles, He is my Lord, but if He frowns, He is my Lord just the same! “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” That was a splendid utterance of Job when he reached that point and that is where true love always comes—it makes no enquiries or bargains, but it says, “My Lord is such a glorious King that I trust Him in the dark. I make no covenant or stipulation as to what He will do or will not do. I implicitly put myself in His hands and say, ‘Not as I will, but as You will.’” This is the sweet effect of love—it banishes suspicion and inspires confidence—and thus it comes true that whatever the King does, pleases all the people.

Love also *suggests unquestioning reverence*. When you come to love your Lord as He ought to be loved, with a worshipping, adoring, reverential affection, it is almost like treason, even, to begin to enquire the reason for *anything* that He does! “It is the Lord, let Him do what seems good to Him.” Is He not a King? Is He not my sovereign and am I not only His subject, but His beloved one, and shall I begin to ask questions of Him as if I were a stranger and He were a tyrant? As if I were under a foreign rule? No, I am His Hephzibah, of whom He says, “My delight is in her.” And He is no more to me *Baali*, my lord, my master, but *Ishi*, my Man, my Husband! He has given Himself that name to show the closeness of His relationship to me and I must not, I cannot, I *would not* desire to raise any question about anything that He does! No, Lord, if it were possible, I would enlarge Your liberty to do with me and mine whatever it pleases You. Take no notice of my whims and wishes, I beseech You. If you were to notice them, they might be to my ruin. Let Your will be my will and Your wish, my wish. I most reverentially yield all to You. Thus, when we come to love our Lord so that we give Him His right place—and *we take our right place*—then whatever the King does pleases all of us who are His people!

Moreover, there is another beautiful feature about love, it *creates sympathetic feeling*. When we truly love Christ, our King, we are sure to be pleased with whatever He does. When our nature gets to be like His nature—oh, what a blessed consummation that is! When our wishes and His wishes travel the same road, though not with equal footsteps—when that which He aims at is that which we aim at after our poor fashion—when we can say that it is more delight to us that *He* should be delighted than that *we* should be delighted and that it is a greater honor to us to see Him honored than it would be to be honored. When we sink ourselves in Him, even as two divided streams, at last, dissolve into one—as I have seen a tiny silver brook come down to Father Thames and pour its whole self into him so as to be no longer anything but part of the great river—so, when our soul yields itself up in perfect love to Christ, to think His thoughts, and live and move in Him so that it is no longer we who live but Christ who lives in us, oh, then it is that whatever the King does pleases all His people! Our heart has yielded up itself to Him and is perfectly content with that which He does, for it has no other will than that which lives in the Prince! When the believer comes to be what he should be in the fullness of His love, his will is lost in the will of Christ. His very life is hidden away with Christ in God and then he realizes how true it is that whatever the King does pleases all His people!

Thus I have shown you that, in the first place, the pleasure of the people in all that the King does is the outflow of love.

II. That leads me, secondly, to notice that the love that manifests itself thus is not at all a foolish love, for IT IS THE CONSEQUENCE OF KNOWLEDGE. Human love is blind, but the love which is worked in us by the Spirit of God is as full of eyes as are the great wheels of divine providence! There is the best of reasons why everything that Jesus does should please all His people—because everything He does is right—and we shall feel this in proportion as we combine knowledge with love, or our love is based on knowledge.

First, I suppose that *we know the character of Christ*. Do you know it, beloved? The God-man, your Brother, and yet the Son of God—do you know His infinite tenderness, His boundless compassion, His unquenchable ardor of affection, His unfailing wisdom? If you have a true idea of who the Son of God is, who is now enthroned at the right hand of the Father, invested with supreme power over all things and always working for the good of His people—if you really know Him—then, whatever He does will please you! One who is so wise, so kind, *ought* to be supreme! He that is so good ought to be an Autocrat and to issue decrees of His own! Do we not all feel that it should be so? If it were otherwise, then we might quarrel with Him, but such a blessed Savior as our Well-beloved is, why, we will not even in *thought* differ from Him, but we will feel that whatever He does, because of His great love, must please us!

Then, next, if we know Christ at all, *we know something of His designs*, and we know that He designs the glory of the Father through the salvation of those the Father gave Him. He has laid Himself out to bring many sons to glory. When we know that Christ’s love has such sweet designs and that He has purchased our eternal salvation, how can we, after that, quarrel with Him? Now, we not only know something of His character, but we also know something of His divine intent and we, therefore, know that we may assuredly say, “All that You will, and all that You do, O our glorious King, aim only at this one thing—the perfecting of Your own loved ones and bringing them Home to Your glory! Do as You please, for we will never raise a question with You about anything that You do.”

Furthermore, if we have truly become acquainted with Christ, *we know something of His modes of operation*. We have learned that it is His habit, often, to disguise Himself. His way is in the sea and His path in the great waters, and His footsteps are not known except to those who are familiar with Him. We also understand that the bitterness is given to promote our sweetness and that, oftentimes, Christ’s frown is but a covered smile. It is the way with Him to lead His people into the wilderness when He means to ultimately bring them into the rest of Canaan. Knowing all this, let us have no altercation with our Spouse, our constant Friend. If all this is true, and it is, then let Him have His way! If this is His way of giving us superior blessedness, we will, without question, yield to Him, for whatever the King does, pleases all His people.

Moreover, if it were not so, *we know something of our Lord’s rights* and, therefore, we can never venture to interfere with His actions. Oh, what rights my Lord has over me! As I stand here, I confess that I am not my own, but that I am bought with a price. And you confess it, too, do you not, beloved? Have you *any* rights apart from your Lord, you who are Christ’s purchased ones? What if you are jewels? You are only jewels in His case. What if you have a will? It is a dangerous possession to have a will unless you yield it up to your Divine Controller. Paul said, “I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus,” as if he had been bought in the name of Christ and branded in the name of Jesus with a hot iron—to be Christ’s slave forever. Shall you and I have any will in opposition to our Lord’s will? If it is His will that we should be poor and despised, or that we should lie sick in bed, shall we raise any question with Him? Let Him have His will with us, whatever it is!

Some of you may remember the story Dr. Hamilton once told of a poor woman who said the Lord had taught her to yield herself absolutely to Him. She fell ill and she was bed-ridden, but she never murmured, for she said, “If the Lord wishes me to lie here and cough, I will lie here and cough. What He has done for me is so wonderful and so good that I cannot question His will, but I will yield myself up to Him altogether.” “Whatever the king did pleased all the people.” Yet this referred only to David—shall it not be so, when David’s Lord is the King and we, redeemed with His precious blood—are the people who have to deal with Him?

So, in the second place, this pleasure in the King’s actions is the consequence of knowledge as well as the outflow of love.

III. Thirdly, beloved friends, **THIS IS THE SECRET OF REST**—“Whatever the king did pleased all the people.”

If any of you are greatly distressed and troubled, I believe my text indicates to you where you can find rest. If whatever the King does pleases you, you may let down the anchor, for you have come into port! You will now be perfectly happy. To know that the King has done it and *to see His divine hand in anything* is more than half the battle, which ends in sweet content! If the Lord has done it, questions are out of the question! And truly, the Lord *has* done it. There may be a secondary agent, there probably is—the devil, himself, may be that secondary agent—yet the Lord has done it! It was God who afflicted Job, yet it was Satan who did all the mischief to God’s servant with an evil intent. But the patriarch could see God’s hand in it all. So, whatever has happened to you, see the hand of God in it! A dog, if it is struck with a stick, bites the stick. Well, that may be all that we can expect from a *dog*, but you, who

are no dog, must look to the hand that *holds* the stick, and not to the instrument with which you are smitten! And then you dare not bite the blessed hand that only intends your good in striking you. See God’s hand, then, in all that happens to you, and that will help you on the way to a very blessed state of contentment.

When you have seen God’s hand, then say, “*I would not have it otherwise than it is.*” I know several persons who are always in trouble and unhappy because there is a dispute between them and God. I remember one to whom I solemnly spoke, years ago, and not long after, he passed away. I went to see his dying child, the only one he had left, and he said to me, “Do not talk to my daughter about death, do not mention it to her.” “Well, then,” I said, “if I may not to mention death, I will not go upstairs.” The father said to me, “God could not take that child away.” He had lost several children, before, and he said that if his daughter died, he would call God a tyrant, and I know not what. As last I stood before him and I said, “You are making for yourself a rod that is much heavier than God, Himself, lays upon you. I fear that you will, yourself, die if you act in this way.”

As he could not be brought to reason, and kicked and rebelled against God’s dealings with him, I was not surprised to learn that soon after his child died, he, himself, also died. It does not do to quarrel with God. Let the potsherd of the earth strive with other potsherds if they will, but woe to him who contends with his Maker! Instead of that, bow before Him, not simply because you must, but because you delight to acknowledge Him as your Lord. Are you setting yourself up as the judge of God? Do you dare to summon Him to your bar? Are you wiser, better, mightier than He? Oh, lay aside this rebellion, I beseech you! Sob if you will, but let it not be the sullen sob of one who will not yield, but that of a dear child who sobs himself asleep upon his mother’s breast. Great God, You have done right in all that You have done! If we cannot prove Your wisdom, we know by faith that it is right, and we kiss Your hand and acknowledge that it is so with us that whatever the King does pleases all the people!

Well, now, if we can get as far as that—and God grant that we may—we are on the road to peace! Let us come, then, to this point, and *absolutely leave all things with Him as to the future.* “Whatever the king did pleased all the people” and if we are willing that our King should go on doing as He pleases, let us leave it so. I wish that our whole nature would consent to God’s will, not one faculty, only, but our whole being. Let all that God does please all of us. Yield your understanding, your will, your affections, your desires, your memory—yield *yourself* up fully unto the Christ who loves you—then shall you have perfect rest, but not till then!

It may be, dear friends, that some of us will soon die—let us have no questions about that matter—but yield ourselves to whatever the King pleases. Perhaps some of us may live to an extreme old age, when sight and hearing will fail, and it will be undesirable to survive. Let us raise no question whatever about that. If it is so, let it be so. I have heard of one good woman, a child of God, who was asked whether she did not wish to depart, for she was such a sufferer. Said she, “The Lord’s will be done! I have no wish about it.” “Well,” said one, “but if the Lord would say to you that you might choose, what would you choose?” “Oh,” she answered, “I have been so little accustomed to think about choosing that I should turn round and say to Him, ‘Choose You, Lord Jesus, for me.’” Why, dear friends, if we had to choose our own lot and got into trouble, we would have the responsibility of it. Is it not far better for us to say to the Lord, “You shall choose our inheritance for us”?—

***“I dare not choose my lot,
I would not if I might!
But You choose for me, O my God,
So shall I walk aright.”***

If we take our own way and get into difficulties, then we may say, “How foolish we were to make this choice!” But if, instead, we yield ourselves up to the supreme Director, to be led wherever He pleases, and follow Him as the sheep follow the shepherd, it is amazing what a sweet contentment our spirit will feel! The Lord bring us all to enjoy that rest and peace!

IV. Lastly, THIS WILL BE A LESSON IN OBEDIENCE.

Whatever service the King requires of you will please you. He may put you in a pulpit, or He may put you in a kitchen. He may put you in a place of honor, or He may put you in a place of dishonor. It is yours not to reason why, it is yours to do the work appointed! It has been well said that if there were two angels in heaven and the great King had said to them, “I have two errands to be done upon the earth—one of you must go and announce the birth of Christ to the Virgin Mary. The other must go and stand and sweep a street-crossing.” The angels would not have a preference between the two services, it would be enough for them to do their Lord’s will! May we come to that point, that we may not be picking and

choosing, but may be pleased with whatever the King gives us to do, and whatever our hand finds to do, may we do it with all our might!

But suppose that, all of a sudden, there should be no service to be rendered, and that *you should have to suffer, instead?* That there should be no battle for you, Soldier, no shout of war, no noise of music and no rushing against the foe, but instead of that, you should be sent into the trenches and have to lie there in the cold and wet, or be ordered into a hospital and have to lie there, to go upstairs, and never to come down again? If we have come to this point—that whatever the King does pleases all the people—how readily shall we lie still and suffer instead of going forth to serve! If God is glorified, does it really matter where *we* are? What becomes of us is of small consequence compared with bringing glory to His great name!

Oftentimes we are permitted *to work hard and yet to meet with great discouragement*. The congregation gets smaller or grows careless. The district seems as if it refused to be blessed. We meet with many impediments in our service. Well, if they are not impediments of our own making, if they come in the order of providence, let it be so and let us still say that whatever the King does pleases all the people! It was a pretty remark I read, the other day, of a Christian man who said, “I used to have many disappointments until I changed one letter of the word, and chopped it into two, so that instead of, ‘disappointments,’ I read it, ‘His appointments.’” That was a wonderful change, for “disappointments” break your heart, but, “His appointments” you accept right cheerily! What if I am to have no success? I will pray for it and labor for it, and be ready to die for it—but if I do not get it, I will still go on. What said the poor Negro about obeying God’s command? “Massa, if the good Lord bids me jump through a brick wall, it is for me to jump at the wall, and it rests with the Lord whether I jump through it or not.” He can make the walls vanish if it pleases Him! And if He desires it, I could believe, even, in the impossible! Love laughs at impossibilities and faith cries, “It shall be done.” Therefore, let us pray the Lord to bring us into this happy state, that whatever He does may always please us.

Perhaps some may find Christ, tonight, if they will get into the spirit of the text. If they will be pleased with God’s way of salvation and come and receive Jesus, now, just as He is, and just as they are, they will go out of this house saved! This is, after all, only faith in one of its forms, this being content with Christ, this yielding up of the will to Him. The Lord bless every one of you, dear friends, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *PSALM 147.*

Verse 1. *Praise you the LORD: for it is good to sing praises unto our God.*

You that know Him, you that love Him, “praise you the Lord.” “It is good.” “It is right, it is acceptable. It is good for you—the Lord counts it good. “It is good to sing praises unto our God.” And to God alone. There is no better argument for anything than that it is good, for good men delight in that which is good because it is good. For it is pleasant. That is a very happy conjunction, for it is not everything that is good that is pleasant, medicine to wit. It is not everything that is pleasant that is good, for there are some things that are pleasant in the mouth, but they are poison in the stomach. But to sing praises unto our God is both good and pleasant!

1. *And praise is comely.*

Or, beautiful, delightful. It is the right thing. Men never look so like angels as when they are praising God, and angels are never more heavenly than when they are engaged in the worship of heaven. And that worship is praise. Here are the psalmist’s reasons for praising God—

2. *The LORD does build up Jerusalem.*

Praise Him for that. He is the great Builder, the Builder of the Church. He laid the foundations in the everlasting covenant. He carries on the building with infinite skill by His divine Spirit—“The Lord does build up Jerusalem.”

3. *He gathers together the outcasts of Israel.*

These are the stones with which He builds, men who were like outcasts. What wonderful living stones these outcasts make! They love the Lord best who once were most His enemies. None sing of “free grace and dying love” with sweeter accents than the men who have had much forgiven. “The Lord does build up Jerusalem: He gathers together the outcasts of Israel.” Mark the context between the two—it is when great sinners are saved that the Church is built up! There was more done when Paul was converted, I know, than at almost any other time, for he became the great apostle to the Gentiles through whom myriads were saved.

4. *He heals the broken in heart, and binds up their wounds.*

To be a builder and a physician, too, are strange offices to be combined in one, yet so it is with God. Is there a broken heart, here? The Lord is ready to heal you! See how He does it. “He binds up their wounds”—puts on the strapping, wraps round the linen cloth, and secures the flesh until it heals. A wonderful surgeon is the Lord God Almighty, there is none like He! “He heals the broken in heart and binds up their wounds.” What a singular thing it is that the next verse should be what it is!

5. *He counts the number of the stars; He calls them all by their names.*

In His condescension, stooping over a broken heart. In His omniscience, counting the number of the stars! The word signifies as when a merchant counts his money into a bag. So does God, as it were, count the stars, like so many golden coins. “He calls them all by their names,” as when the muster-roll is read and the soldier answers, “Here!” so does the Lord speak to the stars and they answer to their names!

5, 6. *Great is our Lord, and of great power: His understanding is infinite. The LORD lifts up the meek.*

They are down very low in their own estimation, but the Lord lifts them up.

6. *He casts the wicked down to the ground.*

The Lord is the great changer of men’s positions—those that are up He throws down—and those that are down He lifts up. Thus the blessed virgin sang, “He has put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.”

7, 8. *Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God: who covers the heaven with clouds, who prepares rain for the earth, who makes grass to grow upon the mountains.* This is the true science, this is the real philosophy; not merely the laws of nature, but God everywhere: God cloud-making, God rain-preparing, God clothing even the hilltops and out of the way places with grass which no man has planted and which no man will ever mow! Perhaps there is somebody here who, when at home, is like grass on the mountains, away from all means of grace, with nobody to help you, nobody to guide you. Listen to this Psalm and praise the name of the Lord, “who makes grass to grow upon the mountains.”

9. *He gives to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.*

The very best illustration of that verse is to be found, I think, in crows going to bed at night. You may have heard their caws. White says, in his *Natural History of Selborne*, that a little child said in his hearing, “Hark, Father, the rooks are saying their prayers.” It does seem something like it and I believe David had heard it, and that is why he put it here. “The young ravens which cry,” for those strange birds—rooks, crows, ravens and the like—even with their wild cries speak to God! Who can listen to the birds in the early morning without feeling ashamed of himself for not singing more to the praise of God? Some of the feathered songsters lift up their voices even in the night—the nightingale charms the hours of darkness—and should not we sing unto God when all nature rings with His praise? “He gives to the beast his food.” Any of you who are in great distress may pray to God, “Lord, feed me, for You give, even, food to the beast.” Do any of you need spiritual food? Cry to Him to feed you, for He gives even to the beast his food! Are you not much better than many animals? I remember “Father Taylor” once saying to himself, and then writing it, “I am in distress just now, and full of doubts: but what am I? When the great whale goes through the deep, the Almighty Father gives him a ton of herrings for his breakfast and never misses them—surely He can feed *me*.” Assuredly He can! He can give to all of us all that we need.

10. *He delights not in the strength of the horse: He takes not pleasure in the legs of a man.*

As the kings did in those days, their infantry and their cavalry were their glory. The Lord does not care for that sort of thing. What gives Him pleasure, then? Listen—

11. *The LORD takes pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy.*

As kings have gloried in their troops, so does God glory in tender hearts that fear Him and that hope in His mercy! I love that double description— “them that fear Him” and, “those that hope in His mercy.” There is a mixture there—fearing and hoping—but the mixture makes a sweet amalgam of grace! It is like a fisherman’s net—there is the lead to sink it and here are the corks to float it! If you only hope in His mercy, you will not come back empty from the great banquet of everlasting love—“Jehovah takes pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy.”

12, 13. *Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem; praise your God, O Zion. For He has strengthened the bars of your gates; He has blessed your children within you.*

Happy Zion, which God secures so well that even bars and posts are finished—not merely walls and gates—but the bars of the gates! There is nothing lacking in the covenant of grace. If the gates need

bars, God thinks of the little as well as of the great: “He has strengthened the bars of your gates; He has blessed your children within you.”

14. *He makes peace in your borders, and fills you with the finest of the wheat.*

An old commentator says, “Generally, if you get quantity, you do not get quality, but when you deal with God, ‘He fills you,’ there is quantity, ‘with the finest of the wheat,’ there is quality.” You get *both* in God—an abundance of the best.

15. *He sends forth His command to earth: His word runs very swiftly.*

Great kings have tried to make their postal arrangements act with rapidity. In the olden time they employed swift dromedaries for this purpose, but, “His word runs very swiftly.” When God has a message to send, He can flash it by lightning, or dispatch it in an instant by one of His angels—“His word runs very swiftly.” I wish it would run to some of you who are rushing fast into sin, and that it would overtake you, and arrest you, and bring you to repentance and to faith in God! Here is a verse that may help to cool you on this summer’s evening

16. *He gives snow like wool.*

It is as soft as wool and, like wool, it is a covering, and keeps the earth warm in the bitter frosts and saves the plants from death. “He gives snow like wool.”

16, 17. *He scatters the hoar frost like ashes. He casts forth His ice like morsels: who can stand before His cold?*

I want you to notice how, in the olden days, good men felt God to be very near. They thought that all this was caused by God—“He gives snow; He scatters hoar frost”—and they speak of, “His ice, His cold.” It is a poor progress that philosophers have made, to try to get us farther off from God than we used to be, but I bless His name that He is as near as He ever was to those who believe in Him! They can see His working and feel the touch of His hand! But what a wonder-working God this is who uses snow to warm the earth and makes the frost to act like ashes—yes, who makes bread out of ice, for when there is no frosty weather, the harvests are not half as good—the very frosts break up the clods and help to create bread for men! The Lord works by contraries. Perhaps, at the time that He means to save you, you will think that He is destroying you. If He means to heal you, He will wound you! If He means to lift you up, He will throw you down! Learn to understand His method, then, for this is the mode of His working.

18, 19. *He sends out His word, and melts them: He causes His wind to blow, and the waters flow. He shows His word unto Jacob, His statutes and His judgments unto Israel.*

That is the best news of all, that God reveals Himself to His children! All He works in nature is eclipsed by what He does in grace!

20. *He has not dealt so with any nation: and as for His judgments, they have not known them. Praise you the LORD.*

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