

GOD'S INNUMERABLE MERCIES

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A SERMON

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"I know not the numbers thereof."

Psalm 71:15.

THE writer of this Psalm describes all the dealings of God with him under the head, "righteousness" and, "salvation." That description is perfectly accurate, for all that God does for His people is, first of all, in faithfulness to His promise. As He has spoken, so He does. Never, even in the sharpest trial, can the heir of heaven accuse God of being unfaithful to what He has promised. He told His disciples that they would have to endure tribulation—and when it came, they proved the truth of His prophecy—and everything that God does to us, whether little or great, whether sharp or kind, will prove to have been done in accordance with His faithful word.

And then the Psalmist calls the dispensations of God's providence by the name of salvation. And this term is also the right one, for everything that He does for us who are His people tends to our ultimate salvation. He is working out our deliverance from inbred sin as well as from outward temptation and trial. Very often the darkest days that we have are bright with divine mercy, even though we cannot discern the brightness. There is a good reason, a necessity, for all that He sends to us and that reason is to be found in the fact that He intends to present us "faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." Open your diaries, Beloved, and write across the record of your daily experiences, "All this is being done to us in righteousness and all this is working out our full salvation." Never read the book of your life's history without putting that headline upon every page! Emblazon that motto as an illuminated picture at the beginning of every distinct chapter of your life--and believe that it is all righteousness and all salvation from first to last!

Having thus comprehended all God's mercies under these two heads, the Psalmist adds, "I know not the numbers thereof."

I. In considering these words, let us think, first, of THIS THING WHICH WE DO NOT KNOW, NAMELY, THE NUMBER OF GOD'S MERCIES.

Have you ever tried to count them? Probably you never did that for even any *day* in your life. I would like you to undertake that task and to jot down every mercy you receive from God in a single day—from the moment when the eyelids of the morning are opened till the moment when the curtains of the night are drawn. If your judgment were sufficiently enlightened to discern all the items, you would find that your arithmetic would fail to tell the total of them. But, brothers and sisters, the days of most of us have been many and there are some here who are approaching the longest period of human life. If the mercies of *one day* would surpass their computation, what shall we say of the mercies of all these days in which they have been living as gentlemen commoners upon the bounty of God, pensioners upon the lovingkindness and faithfulness of the Most High? Truly, they may say, in the retrospect of all the lovingkindness of the Lord, "We know not the numbers thereof."

Let me now—not by way of attempting to help you to count the mercies of God, but by way of showing you the utter impossibility of even numbering them—just remind you, first, of *the divine promises which have been fulfilled to you*. They are very many. As you turn over the pages of Sacred Writ, you see them sparkling like grains of gold in the bed of some African or Australian river. God's words of promise are there in great abundance, each of them as mighty as those words of power which built the skies and, in your experience, from first to last, these words of promise have been fulfilled. It would be a colossal task for you to write out all God's promises that have been fulfilled to you. Take your Bible and put a pencil mark in the margin for each one that has been proved true to you. Your task will be blessed to your memory and will move you to gratitude. And the most of God's promises have been fulfilled to us over, and over, and over again! We have taken these promissory notes into the great bank of heaven and we have received what was promised in them. But we have taken them to the bank, again, for, strange to say, after the Lord has fulfilled His promise today, that promise still stands good

for tomorrow and right on until the end of time! Reckon up the multitude of God's promises and think of the many times in which those promises have been fulfilled to you and others of His children, for this will help you to realize how innumerable are the mercies of God!

Think of the mercies of God in another form, namely, *the many deliverances which have been granted to you*. You have had deliverances when you knew nothing of your danger, when the Lord—

*“Watched over your path
When, Satan's blind slave,
You sported with death.”*

You have had deliverances from sickness when, had death come to you, you would have died unforgiven. You had deliverances, perhaps, in childhood, from many temptations which would have been your lot had you been born under less happy auspices. Then came the great deliverance when your soul was released from the bondage of sin and Satan—and how many deliverances are wrapped up in that one? David says that God delivered him from all his fears—and that day when He delivered us from all our sins, He emancipated us from every yoke of bondage that had rested on us. O happy day of glorious liberty when Christ made us free indeed! Well may, each one of us, sing—

*“Oh happy day, that fixed my choice
On You, my Savior and my God!
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And tell its raptures all abroad.
'Tis done! The great transaction's done!
I am my Lord's and He is mine—
He drew me and I followed on,
Charmed to confess the voice divine.
High heaven that heard the solemn vow,
That vow renewed shall daily hear
Till in life's latest hour I bow
And bless in death a bond so dear.”*

From that day onward, our march through the wilderness has been a series of remarkable deliverances and salvations! You have been delivered, dear friends, from pride—you have been brought low when you were exalted above measure. You have been delivered from depression of spirits—your eyes have been delivered from weeping and your heart from fainting. You have been delivered in your seasons of bereavement. You have been succored in your times of pain and sickness. You have been delivered during the rush of business and you have been delivered in the time of solitary temptations. You have been delivered from self, from sin, from Satan, from the evil that alarmed you and from the more insidious mischief that sought to fascinate you! Until now the Lord has held you up and you have been kept in safety even while passing by the dens of lions, or fighting with Apollyon down in the Valley of Humiliation. Can you count all your deliverances? I feel sure that you must say with the Psalmist, “I know not the numbers thereof.”

Let us think for a minute or two, just to stir up our gratitude to God, of *the innumerable mercies attending our very existence*. Any physician can tell you what a wonderful thing our life is. Dr. Watts truly wrote—

*“Our life contains a thousand springs,
And dies if one is gone!
Strange, that a harp of thousand strings
Should keep in tune so long!”*

The operations of nature are conducted in a most intricate manner. The continuation of our life depends upon the slenderest thread—yes, often, upon particles of matter which are so minute as scarcely to be perceived by the eyes! As the blood circulates through our system, there is a risk of death at every beat of our pulse. As the air is inhaled by us, there is a further risk every time our lungs are inflated. I am not an expert, neither is it a part of my duty to dissect the fabric of the human body—but those who have searched into it have told us that life is a continued miracle from the cradle to the grave. We cannot even imagine what innumerable mercies, from the crown of our head to the soles of our feet, are concerned in our continuing to still be in the land of the living!

Think, again, of *the numberless mercies connected with happy existence*—any one of which taken away would make life sadder—many of which removed would make life an intolerable torture. Can you ever pass a lunatic asylum without thanking God that your reason has not left her throne? Can you pass by a place where idiots are dwelling without thanking God that your mind has not become lowered till it has almost ceased to be? Can you go by our great hospitals without blessing God that you are not tossing on a bed that grows hard through unceasing pain? Can you look upon the many diseased folk whom we

see in our streets and not thank God for the health you enjoy? I like to feel grateful for every minute that my teeth do not ache, or that my head does not ache, for some of these lesser pains do so distract us that we can scarcely attend to our daily duties! When we have to endure these pains, we think how grateful we should be if they were gone—but when they are gone, we are apt to forget the mercy which has removed them!

Think, dear friends, of the mercies which have made life happy for you in your domestic circle. “Ah,” say some of you, “but we now have sore sorrows there.” Yes, it may be so, but you ought to think how long you had almost pure happiness! If a man lends you something and after a long while takes it back, you ought not to mourn because he takes it, but to thank him for letting you have it so long! Think of the ten thousand mercies that cluster around a happy fireside. What music there is in that blessed word, “home!” Yes, and with all the troubles that a family may bring, those dear little prattlers bring a world of happiness with them and you ought to be thankful if they are still spared to you—and not only spared, but in robust health, firm of limb, clear in intellect and many of them hopeful and promising in moral and spiritual things! Truly, if I were to attempt to record the mercies that make life happy here below, I would need a vast volume written within and without with thanksgiving! And even then I should have to make the Psalmist's confession, “I know not the numbers thereof.”

Take another measuring line, beloved friends, think of *the preventing providences of God* and you have quite another vista opened before you. Walking in the street yesterday, you might have fallen and injured yourselves, for another did so. Sitting even in your house, the deadly fever might have entered—it did go in at a neighbor's door or window. In traveling, you might have been killed as many others have been, or have been mangled and scarcely escaped with life. We talk of providences when we have hairbreadth escapes—but are they not quite as much providences when we are preserved from danger? I have told you before what the old Puritan said to his son who had ridden several miles to meet him. “Father,” said the son, “I have had a remarkable providence! My horse stumbled badly three times, yet did not throw me.” “Ah, my son,” said the father, “I have had a still more remarkable providence than that, for my horse did not stumble once.” We do not think, as we should, of the preventing providences of God which keep off evil from us. It is a mercy that so many of you are not brought to poverty—that when so many others are out of work, you workingmen are not among the unemployed, but are able to provide for your families. We could probably all make a long list of trials from which we have been preserved and, after making out the list, we would still have to say, “We know not the numbers thereof.”

But when I turn to a still wider field, the best arithmetician must find his powers in vain. Think of *the bounties of God's grace*. Your sins, though many, are all forgiven and every forgiveness a mercy—do any of you know the numbers thereof? The evils which sin has worked in you, all remedied by the great physician, or to be ultimately removed by His gracious hand—do you know the numbers thereof? Think now, you are the elect of God—trace the streams of His love up to that eternal council in which He planned your redemption and then say, with David, “How precious, also, are Your thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand.” Besides that, you have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ! Do you know the number of mercies included in that one word, “redeemed”? It includes that mercy of mercies—God descending to take our human nature into union with Himself! It includes the whole life of Christ and His death upon the cross—yes, and His resurrection, and ascension, and the glory of His second coming—for all this has to do with your redemption! Truly, you know not the numbers thereof! You have also been called by grace. You resisted God's calls, perhaps hundreds of times, yet were the sweet persuasions of the Holy Spirit continued until you were at last constrained to yield! And repentance was given to you, faith was worked in you—you were made to pray and your prayers were heard and answered. Do you know the numbers of all these mercies?

Further, the work of sanctification has gone on in you by the power of the Holy Spirit. Every good thought you have ever had, every right word you have ever spoken, every holy action you have ever done has been a mercy from God to you! He gave these blessings to you, or else you would never have had them—and I challenge you to try to count this great budget of mercies! Besides all that, you are this day an heir of God and a joint heir with Jesus Christ! You have heaven in reversion, assured to you by the faithful promise of God who cannot lie! Sit down and take your pen and count your mercies if you can. Even as you count them, your mercies multiply—and every beating pulse increases the innumerable multitude of them so that you must utterly despair of counting them! To what shall I liken them? To the countless odors that rise from the garden when the summer's sun is smiling on the innumerable beauties that are gathered there? Shall I liken them to the drops of dew that sparkle on ten thousand times ten

thousand blades of grass? Shall I liken them to the innumerable birds and insects that fly in the air, or to the fishes without number that swim in the seas, or to the beasts untold that wander on the mountains or range the woods and forests? Shall I liken them to the innumerable leaves of autumn that fall when the frost comes, or to the shells or sands upon the seashore, or to the stars of heaven which no man can number? I know not whereunto to liken God's mercies to you, for all comparisons fail me—and I can only wonderingly say with the Psalmist—"I know not the numbers thereof."

II. Now, turning from that to another point—as we know not the numbers of God's mercies, we need not be surprised that **THERE ARE OTHER MATTERS WHICH ARE ALSO BEYOND OUR KNOWLEDGE.**

To know the numbers of certain things would not be so difficult as to know *their value*. My God, I know not the numbers of Your mercies and I do not even know the value of any one of them! If I were to take one of them and try to estimate its worth, I would find that it would exceed all my powers of computation. I have never been able to weigh one of them in the scales and especially Your loving kindness in working by Your grace in my soul. To have been washed in the precious blood of Jesus—angels, can you tell what a priceless gift this is? Devils, call *you* tell—for you are still covered with sin! Lost spirit in hell, can you even imagine what it must be to be a forgiven soul? Bright spirits before the throne of God who have washed your robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb—do not even you, who have experienced this wonderful bliss, continue to marvel at the greatness of it? Then, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, we need not be surprised that we do not know the value of the mercies which our God has so abundantly bestowed upon us!

It is even more to be regretted that *we have never felt due gratitude for the mercies of God to us*. We might be forgiven for not being able to number that which reaches almost to the infinite. That would be an imperfection rather than a sin, but alas, we have been so ungrateful that we have not been thankful to God for the favors which He has so liberally showered upon us. They have been buried in forgetfulness and yes, have gone on, from year to year, as if we owed nothing to the Lord, but had received all His good gifts by mere chance! How many men are like the swine that eat the acorns which fall from the oak, but never thank the tree on which they grew, or the God who made it grow? They receive the blessings of heaven, but thank not the God of heaven for them as they should. The mercies of God are uncountable—the ingratitude of man is unaccountable! We, Christian men and women, cannot tell how it is that we can be so impassively indifferent when we ought to be so devoutly thankful to God for all His goodness to us.

And, beloved, as our gratitude has never kept pace with God's goodness, I am also sure that *our praises have not*. How many tongues there are that are blistered through their murmuring and complaining because of the hard lot which God has given them? There are some of us who have learned too well how to make discord, yet who know little about harmonious *praise*. Yet our God is a good God. Let us say so and stand to it—and repent that we have not said it more often and proclaimed it more publicly among the sons of men! God has been so gracious to us that we cannot count His mercies! May we be pardoned for our past silence concerning them—and henceforth may our mouth be filled with His praise and with His honor all day.

And, my dear brothers and sisters, as we have fallen short in our praise, I am sure that we have fallen much more short of anything like *a proper return for God's goodness in our conduct and conversation*. If we had been His slaves, we could not have served Him worse than we have done though we are His children. If He had been a tyrant to us, we could scarcely have done less for Him than we have done although He is our Father! I have often felt that I could blot my diary with tears again and again, and again, as I have said to myself—

*“What have I done for Him who died
To save my guilty soul?
How are my follies multiplied
Fast as my minutes roll!
Much of my time has run to waste,
My sins how great their sum!
Lord, give me pardon for the past,
And strength for days to come!”*

Let these practical reflections abide in your memories, dear friends. You do not know the number, or the value, or the weight of God's mercies. You do not feel the gratitude for them that is due. You do not give to God the praise that is fitting, nor live the life that is consistent with His goodness to you. Here are reasons for deep humiliation and for seeking the grace that will enable us to mend our ways.

III. Now, lastly, while there are these things which we do not know, **THERE ARE SOME THINGS WHICH WE DO KNOW**, which ought to increase our thankfulness.

First, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, you and I know very well *the source from which all these mercies come to us*. We cannot count them, but we know that they all spring from the eternal love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord towards His own people. We can trace every one of these sacred drops of mercy to the fountain of God's discriminating, distinguishing love. He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and He will have compassion on whom He will have compassion. It was according to the greatness of His lovingkindness to us, before the earth was, that He chose us to be a people to show forth His praise—a people to be “filled with all the fullness of God.” Let us trace even our common mercies up to this source and let us especially see the love of God in every spiritual gift that we receive, for so shall we be moved to praise and bless Him more than we have ever yet done!

Further, we know *the channel through which every mercy comes to us*. It comes through our blessed Lord and Mediator, Jesus Christ. And—

***“There's never a gift His hand bestows
But cost His heart a groan.”***

I like to see the mark of my Master's sufferings upon every jewel with which He adorns my spirit—to know that if I am righteous, it is in His righteousness! If I am washed, it is in His blood! If I am saved, He is my Savior! If I am fed, He is my food. If I am glad, He is my crown of joy and if I ever enter heaven, He will be my bliss forever! All in All is He to His people—everything comes to us through Him—so that we have a reason for gratitude in the way in which the mercy comes to us as well as in the mercy itself! We do not know the numbers of God's mercies to us, but we do know that every one of them comes to us by way of the cross and bears the mark of the Redeemer's blood upon it!

We do not know the number of God's mercies, but we do know *the rule of them*. That is to say, we know that they are always sent in love. If they seem to be stinted, it is love that stints them. And if they are increased, it is love that increases them. The whole of the day God's love is shining upon us and when the natural sun has gone to its rest, there is no harmful moon to smite, us, but the same love of God makes it light within our soul. If the Lord chastens me, it is because He loves me. If He takes away your child, your husband, or yourself, believer, it is because He loves you! The rule of every mercy is the great rule of our Father's wisdom, our Father's faithfulness, our Father's affection!

We know, also, with regard to all God's mercies, *the design of them*. We know that they are all sent to us to be tokens of His love and helps in our journey to heaven. In addition to the mercy and the love that gives it, and the way by which it comes, there is a blessed end that sanctifies it all. The Lord said to Israel, concerning the angel whom He promised to send with them, “He shall bless your bread and your water.” Oh, to have the common mercies of life so blessed that they become spiritual helps to us! It can be so, for it is the design of God—in all that He sends to us—to bring us nearer to Him.

Then, we know, over and above all this, *the grand climax of it all*. I know not the numbers thereof, but I know, my God, that when I shall have received my last mercy on earth, I shall receive my first enjoyment in heaven! When I shall have had the last blessing of this mortal life, I shall have the first blessing of the life everlasting! When the goodness and the mercy that have followed me to the brink of Jordan shall cease, I shall have angels there to escort me up to the celestial hills, and to admit me to my Savior's presence where there are pleasures forevermore! It is an endless chain, beloved! When it has seemed to conclude in one place, it begins in another. David said, “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.” And what did he say next?—“And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” Forever to behold the face of their Father, in His house above, is the portion of all the children of God!

After all that I have said, I hope you will all say that a Christian's life is a happy one. It is! It is! We have our cross to carry. We have our daily sorrows, losses and trials—but each one of us can say, with Dr. Watts—

***“I would not change my blest estate,
For all that earth calls good or great!”***

We enter our Master's service and accept the cross and all He gives us. We take the road to heaven with all its thorns and briers. Yes, let what will come, He is so good and blessed a God who has made Himself to be His people's portion that if the rod is a part of the covenant, then blessed be the rod and the hand that wields it—and let the Lord be praised from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same!

Brothers and sisters in Christ, since God is never wearied in giving, let us never be wearied in serving Him! Let us be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord! Since He never stays His hand in bestowing mercies upon us, let us never stay our patient endurance of any of the ills of life that He is pleased to send us. And since His mercy will continue with us as long as we are here, let us never cast away our confidence in Him! Let us stay ourselves upon Him and fall back into His arms when we are weary. If we faint, let us faint on His bosom.

I wish that all of us here, constantly receiving, as we do, so many mercies, had more thought of the hands and heart from which they come. Alas! Alas! With many, "the ox knows his owner, and the ass his master's crib," but these people do not know God! Feed a dog and he will get to know you. But there are men and women who know not the God who made them and in whose hands their breath is! Let this text abide with you—"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." You have not done anything amiss, you say. You do not drink, or swear, or lie, but, "all the nations that forget God" are to have the same portion as "the wicked" will have. Beware, you that forget God! And if you would remember Him, the easier way to do that is to see His love in the death of His Son, Jesus Christ! Think of Jesus bleeding for sinners. Trust yourself to Jesus and so you shall be saved, for, "He that believes on the Son has everlasting life."

May God bless you all, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: PSALM 71.

This Psalm, written by an old man, is especially suitable for an old man. It is numbered seventy-one and it may suit those who have reached that age—but it is also appropriate to us all in prospect of the days of feebleness that will come to us, sooner or later, if we are spared to grow old.

Verse 1. *In You, O LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion.* "Stand by me, O Lord, for I only stand as You uphold me—and if You should leave me, after I have trusted in You—what could I say or do? Therefore, O Jehovah, since I put my trust in You, 'let me never be put to confusion.'"

2. *Deliver me in Your righteousness, and cause me to escape.* "I am like a poor dove taken in a net—I cannot get away. Stretch out Your hand, O Lord, and tear the net and so deliver me, and cause me to escape. I cannot do anything for myself, except pray to You to deliver me."

2. *Incline Your ear unto me, and save me.* "My prayer is weak. Therefore, O Lord, bend Your ear down to my lips, that You may catch my faintest words. Listen to my lisping, O Lord, and save me."

3. *Be You my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: You have given commandment to save me; for You are my rock and my fortress.* If David wrote this Psalm after the rebellion of his wicked son, Absalom, I think there is an instructive illustration here. You remember that when the troops went out from Mahanaim to fight with Absalom, David commanded the three captains of the host—Joab, Abishai and Ittai—"Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom." They might slay his followers, but he commanded them to spare him. Alas, David's command was ineffectual, for Joab slew Absalom! But God's command was certain to be obeyed, so the Psalmist wrote, "You have given commandment to save me," with the full assurance that he would be saved. And all God's people can say to Him, "You have commanded angels and men, 'Touch not My anointed, and do My prophets no harm.'" And each believer can say to Him, "You have given commandment to save me; for You are my rock and my fortress."

4, 5. *Deliver me, O my God, out of the hands of the wicked, out of the hands of the unrighteous and cruel man. For You are my hope, O Lord GOD: You are my trust from my youth.* Happy is the man who can truthfully say that, "You are my trust from my youth." God does not cast off His old servants, as men often do. Those who give Him the best of their days will not find that He will desert them when the feebleness of age creeps over them.

6. *By You have I been held up from the womb: You are He that took me out of my mother's womb: my praise shall be continually of You.* We do not think, as often as we should, of what we owe to God for His care over us at the time of our birth. Our mothers returned thanks on their own behalf and ours, but, as we look back, we are bound to return thanks, too, for that kindly care of God in our most extreme weakness—when the little candle of life was scarcely lighted and might have been so easily blown out. Then, as God took care of us in our first infancy, do you not think that He will take care of us when we get into our second childhood? We are never likely to be quite as weak as we were then, but, as the Lord guarded us at that time, will He not guard us in those dark days which are already looming before some

of us? Of course He will! Therefore, be of good courage, for He shall strengthen your heart and your praise shall be continually of Him.

7. *I am as a wonder unto many.* A prodigy to some, a monster to others, a marvel, a mystery, a riddle to all, but here is the solution to the problem that puzzles so many.

7. *But You are my strong refuge.* Even the weak are strong when God is their refuge! The most defenseless are safe when God is their defense. Wonder not at the mysterious life of a Christian, for this truth of God explains the mystery—"You are my strong refuge."

8. *Let my mouth be filled with Your praise and with Your honor all day.* What a blessed mouthful, and what a sweet mouthful this is—and what a blessed means of keeping the mouth from saying unkind, slanderous, or murmuring words!

9, 10. *Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength fails. For my enemies speak against me and they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together.* When the lion is sick, every cur is bold enough to bark at him. Men were afraid of David when he was strong, but when he grew feeble, they began to howl at him and gather round him like a pack of hounds around a wounded stag. Worst of all, they uttered this monstrous lie, which was most grievous to David's heart.

11. *Saying, God has forsaken him: persecute and take him; for there is none to deliver him.* If they had possessed even ordinary compassion, they would have said, "Since there is none to deliver him, let us not attack him. If God has forsaken him, he is in misery enough, so let us try to comfort him." But, instead of doing this, they acted after the fashion of their father, the devil, who has no tenderness and nothing of a compassionate spirit within him.

12. *O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste for my help.* Notice the still more intense grip of faith in the second clause. The Psalmist first says, "O God," then He says, "O my God." It is grand pleading when we so grasp God with the personal grip of faith that we cry, "O my God, make haste for my help."

13, 14. *Let them be confounded and consumed that are adversaries to my soul; let them be covered with reproach and dishonor that seek my hurt. But I will hope continually, and still yet praise You more and more.* Hoping and praising are among the very best styles of living. Hoping honors God in secret—and praising honors Him in public. Oh, for more of these two good things!

15. *My mouth shall show forth Your righteousness and Your salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof.* When David spoke of those who hated him without a cause, he said that they were more than the hairs of his head. He could not count them, but he went as near to doing so as he could. But when he began to speak of God's mercies as displayed in His righteousness and His salvation, he did not draw any comparison, or attempt to number them. This is a calculation in which we are utterly lost—our system of numeration fails us altogether when we come to deal with the loving kindness of the Lord!

16. *I will go in the strength of the LORD GOD: I will make mention of Your righteousness, even of Yours only.* He did not reckon that any other righteousness was worth mentioning—and certainly not his own. The best of men, those who have been the most noted for their good works, have always been the first to feel that they had no works in which they could put any trust! One godly man, when he was dying, said to a friend, "I have been trying to separate my good works and my evil works from one another, but I have found the task too great for me—so I have thrown them all overboard and now I will float to Heaven upon the righteousness of Jesus Christ alone."

17. *O God, You have taught me from my youth: and until now have I declared Your wondrous works.* [Mr. Spurgeon delivered a remarkable discourse upon this text, illustrating the theme from his own early experience. See Sermon No. 2318, Volume 39—GOD'S PUPIL, GOD'S PREACHER—AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] I pray very earnestly for you young people, and I beg you to pray for yourselves, that you may have the great privilege of being able to say with the Psalmist, "O God, You have taught me from my youth." They make good scholars who go to school early and keep at school long—and have such a blessed Schoolmaster as the Psalmist had—"O God, You have taught me." David's mother taught him much that was good, but it was still better for him to have God as his teacher. Then, after being a scholar, he became a pupil teacher. He still went on learning, but he also began to teach—"Until now have I declared Your wondrous works." All God's scholars ought to be pupil teachers, always learning more and more from Him, and then teaching others all that they learn.

18. *Now also when I am old and gray headed, O God, forsake me not; until I have shown Your strength unto this generation, and Your power to everyone that is to come.* Old men ought to tell

younger men what God has done for them. There is great weight in the testimony of a godly man of ripe experience. Full of years, he speaks of what he knows, and testifies of what he has seen, tasted and handled of the truth of God. We need many a Nestor in the camp of Christ, whose valor in former times and whose experience in days of battling for the right may inspire with valor the younger men to whom he speaks!

19. *Your righteousness, also, O God, is very high, who has done great things: O God, who is like unto You?* The more we know of God, the less we think of all others. We sink ourselves out of sight and all other creatures seem to be as nothing in comparison with our God.

20. *You, which have shown me great and sore troubles, shall quicken me again, and shall bring me up again from the depths of the earth.* This we shall experience in part even in our present lifetime, but we shall much more fully experience it on the resurrection morning—

*“When Christ His risen saints shall bring
From beds of dust, and silent clay,
To realms of everlasting day.”*

21. *You shall increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.* Think of poor old David talking like this when he was driven into exile and many of his former friends had forsaken him—“You shall increase my greatness.” I shall get good out of this evil. I shall rise by this fall. I shall be a gainer by these losses.

22. *I will also praise You with the psaltery, even Your truth, O my God.* “When I have proved Your truth. When my joyful experience has proved that every promise of Yours is true to Your servant, then I will praise both yourself and Your Truth, O my God.”

22, 23. *Unto You will I sing with the harp, O You Holy One of Israel. My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto You.* That is the best kind of praise to God when our very lips are happy in singing—when we do not merely speak the sound, but when the meaning wells up from our heart and our lips are glad to sing it out.

23, 24. *And my soul, which You have redeemed. My tongue also shall talk of Your righteousness all daylong: for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame that seek my hurt.*

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