

The Lord Blessing His Saints

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon teaches that the Lord's blessing is a sovereign, almighty gift bestowed upon a peculiar people, marked by grace, fear of God, and resulting in both assurance and duty.

Scripture: Psalm 115:15, Romans 9:15, John 1:14, Ephesians 1:3-4, Revelation 19:5, Joshua 23:13, Isaiah 54:17

Topics: "Divine Blessing", "Election and Grace", "Fear of the Lord"

Description

In this powerful sermon, C.H. Spurgeon explores the profound blessing bestowed by God upon His chosen people. He emphasizes the sovereign grace behind this blessing, its eternal foundation in Christ, and the holy reverence it produces in believers. Spurgeon encourages his listeners to recognize the certainty and power of God's favor, which sustains them through trials and calls them to faithful living. This message offers deep assurance and practical encouragement to all who fear the Lord.

Transcript

BY C. H. SPURGEON,

"You are blessed of the Lord [or of JEHOVAH] which made Heaven and earth." Psalm 115:15.

WITHOUT any preface, (for where there is such a feast before us anything which detains us from the table will be out of place), let us come at once to the delightful words of our text and may the Holy Spirit lead us into their inner sense! Here is a blessing spoken of. The Lord that made Heaven and earth has been pleased to bless His people. And this blessing has several peculiarities about it of which we shall speak particularly. It will help us to reach the marrow and fatness of the text if we consider in detail the orthodox number of five points.

First, it is a blessing belonging to a peculiar people. Secondly, it is a blessing coming from a peculiar quarter. Thirdly, a blessing with a peculiar date. Fourthly, a blessing with a peculiar certainty, and fifthly, a blessing involving a peculiar duty. Where there is so much country to survey we must travel swiftly and make but a short stay upon any single thought.

I. First, we have before us A BLESSING BELONGING TO A PECULIAR PEOPLE. "You are blessed of the Lord." "You." Who are these distinguished persons? We would reply, first, that they are a people whom God has blessed because He willed to do so. He has given us no other reason as the first cause of their being blessed but the fact that He is good and that He is Sovereign in the distribution of His Grace. If you

search to the very bottom of things you hear a voice proclaiming these words, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."

If you go back to the first spring and wellhead of all blessing, you shall not find the merits of man as the guardian of the fountain, nor the will of man as the digger of the well—but you shall find there written, "Not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." The will of God, alone, is the source of the rich, eternal, saving blessing which abounds towards the Lord's elect! If you are blessed of the Lord who made Heaven and earth, you are not a people who claim to have deserved His favor—you abhor all boasting in self and you magnify Divine mercy. Free Grace is the Shibboleth of the true saints—those who cannot speak out upon that point may well question their lineage!

If you talk of deserving, you belong to another race—you are of the seed of Hagar and belong to Sinai, in Arabia, and therefore you are under the Law and under the curse. No blessing comes to sinners by the way of the Law, but the very reverse. They only shall participate in this blessing who receive it by promise and by covenant, being the seed of Abraham by promise, even as Isaac was, who was born not after the flesh but after the Spirit. Glory, then, be to God at the very outset of our meditations, that He has been pleased to set apart unto Himself a people, elect according to His own eternal purpose in Christ Jesus! Of them and only of them has He said, "You are blessed of the Lord that made Heaven and earth." This is true doctrine according to the Scriptures and the regenerate feel the truth of it confirmed in their own experience.

Furthermore, they are a people to whom this first will of God to bless them has been certified by countless acts of indisputable love. You who trust that you are blessed of the Lord remember how God's blessing has come to you already. It waited for you before you were born—yes, it waited for you before this world was fashioned—from everlasting you were ordained to this benediction! The Covenant of Grace was made on your behalf with all its sacred stipulations and its immutable seals, and immeasurable promises of love. What says the Apostle in the first chapter of Ephesians, verses three and four?—"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world."

For you, in the fullness of time, Jesus came to tabernacle among men. Who shall doubt that you are blessed of the Lord that made Heaven and earth, since for you the Son of God laid aside His royalties to become the Son of Man? Union

with you in your nature was clear evidence that the heart of Christ was with you. Gethsemane and Calvary speak volumes concerning the reality of the blessings which God has given to His chosen, for there they were loved to the death and redeemed by blood. An Incarnate God, a Mediator covered with bloody sweat, a Redeemer wounded and slain—what do you say about this? "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift," said the Apostle, and even so say we!

Nor was the gift of Jesus Christ's dying, all, for Jesus' living is still ours! His resurrection teems with the blessings of life and immortality. We are one with Him and He is forever our Head. And in Him, by virtue of His ascension, we have received the gift of the Holy Spirit who dwells in us and will dwell in us forever. Through His indwelling we have "an unction from the Holy One," through which we "know all things," being taught of God and led into all Truth according to the office of the gracious Comforter.

Meanwhile we are also raised up together and made to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, while all things are ours and we are Christ's, and Christ is God's. But, indeed, I am not about to make a

catalog of those gifts which have already come to us—time would fail and ability would also be lacking—suffice it to hint at them to you, to remind you that if through Grace you have received Christ, you are, indeed, "blessed of the Lord that made Heaven and earth," for 10,000 times 10,000 of the choicest gifts have been the seals and testimonials of your heavenly Father's affection towards you.

But, Beloved, the peculiar people to whom this blessing comes are, after their conversion, known by their character. In due time Divine Grace works in them marks of their election—signs of the inward and spiritual Grace which the Holy Spirit has implanted. One sign is mentioned in the connection of our text—"He shall bless them that fear the Lord, both small and great." So then, if you fear the Lord, "you are blessed of the Lord that made Heaven and earth." Now, to fear Him is not merely to tremble before Him, fearful lest He should destroy you. Such a fear as that has been found in the hearts of even the vilest of men! We suppose that neither Pharaoh nor Belshazzar was a stranger to that feeling.

But this is another fear—the humble worship of God, the sincere reverence of God—the sacred awe which is found even among the angels of Heaven. This holy fear is the holy admiration which trembles at the infinite majesty of the Most High—not out of slavish dread, but out of a childlike sense of insignificance—this is the sign of inward Grace. "Blessed is the man that fears always." The fear of grieving One so loving, of doing anything that should dishonor the name of One so infinitely glorious—this is the correct fear. Have you that fear? Have you the fear that makes you confess your past sins—the fear that makes you dread going into such sin again—the fear that makes you mourn because you nailed the Savior to the tree? Do you have the fear that makes you tremble lest you should crucify the Lord afresh and put Him to an open shame?

This is not the fear which perfect love casts out, or the fear which has torment, but a sweet fear, as we have said before, which may be felt, even in Heaven itself where they sing, "Who would not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name?" It was to such as these that a voice came out of the excellent Glory, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants, and you that fear Him, both small and great" (Rev. 19:5). "Blessed is the man that fears the Lord, that delights greatly in His Commandments." And it is very sweet to notice that this benediction is common to all God-fearing persons— "both small and great"—and the small are put first lest they should think they are forgotten.

I see many little children here this evening. Oh, if you fear God, if you pray to God, if you trust in Jesus and if your young hearts have been taught to love God, small as you are, you are the blessed of the Lord that made Heaven and earth! Jesus loves to receive children to His bosom as much, now, as ever He did when He lived upon earth! Come to Him by faith and He will bless you! There are here many young enquirers who have only just begun to pray and who are between hope and fear like new-born children whose lives tremble in the balances. To them it must be cheering to observe that the Lord blesses the "small" as well as the "great." The Lord regards the contrite in spirit and He hears the groans of broken hearts—His delight is to bless the lowly in mind. Though Grace is small in you, yet He will not quench the smoking flax. "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

And you poor in this world, you humble, you illiterate, you obscure, you sickly ones—you with little talent and slender opportunity for serving God—I pray you rejoice in the assurance of the text, for you are the blessed of the Lord if you walk before Him in holy fear! The eye that looks to God and trusts Him even when it cannot see Him, is a blessed eye. The heart that pines after God even when it cannot rejoice in Him is a blessed heart. And the hand that stretches itself out after God, saying, "Oh that I knew where I might find Him," is still a blessed hand, even though for the

moment it cannot lay hold upon the Word of promise. If you sigh and cry after God with a true heart, looking to Him in His own way, through Christ His Son, you are numbered with those that fear the Lord, who are blessed of Him whether they are small or great!

Now, all this is very sweet to those who fear God. To them it is peculiarly precious to know that they are blessed of the Lord because they know they deserve to have been cursed. A sense of wrath due to sin imparts a rare sweetness to the Divine favor. Did you ever hear the roar of Sinai's thunder in your ears? If so, you will never forget it to your dying day! And even in eternity it will impart an additional melody to the music of the Cross. I would to God that some Christians were plowed a little more before they were sown, for I notice that the flimsiness and superficiality of the religion which is common now-a-days arises mainly from the lack of deep self-knowledge and solemn personal conviction that they were themselves utterly lost and ruined.

I fear many have made but poor students in the University of Theology because they were never well-grounded in the School of Repentance. I am astonished that we should live to hear from a Nonconformist pulpit that the Fall of man was a fiction! I boldly say that the religion of the man who could utter such a speech is a fiction beyond all question! What does he know about the things of God when he does not even know the things of man? Let him get back to his God in penitence and ask to be taught aright—for he who knows not the Fall of man does not know the uplifting by free Grace. If he knows not the disease, he is a wretched physician and is sure to mistake the remedy. He who has once known the curse, and smarted under it, loves the wine and oil of the blessing for by it his bleeding wounds were staunched.

The blessing of the Lord is as dew to the mown grass and as showers to the parched soil. It is life itself and the essence of Heaven. Moreover, the child of God knows the sweetness of the blessing because the effect of the curse is, in a measure, still upon him—not the judicial curse, for that was laid upon Christ and has gone forever—but the plague of his own heart. The remains of sin within often make him feel that it is a dreadful thing to have been a sinner, even though he is now pardoned and "accepted in the Beloved." Oh, the Amalekites and Canaanites that still dwell in the land, what a nuisance they are! What "thorns in our eyes," as Joshua calls them!

A strong expression indeed! They are worse than a thorn in the flesh. Sin is a thorn in the eye to the Believer. But to know that though I fight daily with corruptions and have to mourn an evil heart of unbelief, yet I am blessed of the Lord that made Heaven and earth, for all that—is not that bliss? Oh, the sweetness of that word to a heart which has been sorely tempted! Besides, the child of God, in addition to what he feels within, is often called to suffer the curses of the world and the curses of Satan. If you are of the world, the world will love its own—but if you are not of the world, the world will hate you. And though at times, under misrepresentations, slanders and cruel accusations you will feel that you are shamefully entreated, this Truth of God will gloriously sustain you—"You are blessed of the Lord that made Heaven and earth."

The bitterness of persecution is gone when this is realized. Your faithful soul learns to say, "Let them curse on if they will, let Balak go from mountain to mountain and kill his bullocks and his rams, and call upon Balaam to curse the people of God—yet surely there is no enchantment against Jacob nor divination against Israel. They may cast their spells and invoke the demons as they will, but if the Lord has blessed the people, blessed they are!" Blessed be God, if we have once received this benediction from our Great Father's hand, all the maledictions of the Pope or the devil, or all the wicked men on earth shall not frighten our spirit! God's blessing shall silence all!

Thus have I spoken upon the peculiar people chosen by Sovereign Grace receiving perpetual tokens of love; known by their character; all of them receiving the blessing, whether great or small, and all of them finding that blessing inexpressibly sweet.

II. Now, secondly, this is A BLESSING FROM A PECULIAR QUARTER. "You are blessed of the Lord which made Heaven and earth." This is a blessing from one peculiarly related to us and therefore it is the more to be prized. We are glad to get a father's blessing—let no man think little of it. A father's curse might wither a man. If in any case it has been justly earned, I pity the poor wretch who wears it like the mark of Cain upon his soul—for him the sun has no smiling beams and the clouds no silver linings—the past no comfortable memories, the future no joyful prospects.

A mother's blessing—how like the breath of cloudless morn—foretelling a day of peace! A brother's blessing—how bright with sacred dew like that which gemmed old Hermon's woods. The blessing of saintly men and holy women—who shall set a price upon it? Its merchandise is far above silver. In the olden times paternal benedictions were more thought

of than they are now, and the change is not the fruit of greater wisdom. Verily, the blessing of a child of God I reckon to be a portion of my true wealth and I love you, Brothers and Sisters, for wishing me God-speed. Happy is the man whom good men love to bless!

But, ah, Beloved, if you are blessed of the Lord you have a more Divine benediction—you have the blessing which makes rich, indeed, true and lasting, potent and effectual—the blessing of your Father who is in Heaven! All other blessings are only blessings in proportion as they contain the essence of this blessing. God's blessing is the sea and others are but drops. His is the sun and others are but sparks. The blessing spoken of comes not from an idol God. The Psalm leads us to make that observation. The gods of the heathen had mouths, but they spoke not. They had ears, but they heard not—any benediction from them would be a mockery! But the children of God are not blessed of Baal or Ashteroth, but of Jehovah, the self-existent Lord of All!

They receive no benediction from the priest who ministers at the shrine of a dumb god of silver, or a dead god of flour and water. Compared with the benediction of the Lord who made Heaven and earth, what a paltry thing is the blessing of a priest! Indeed, he is utterly impotent to bless. If he has any power, it lies in the opposite direction. He can curse the victims of his false teaching but he cannot benefit them! His pax vobiscum is not worth the time spent in the speaking it! His "plenary indulgence" defiles the paper it is written on. A priest's blessing and a cockatrice's egg are of equal value.

But to be blessed of Jehovah is a reality, as says the Psalmist, "Blessed is everyone that fears the Lord, that walks in His ways, for you shall eat the labor of your hands. Happy shall you be and it shall be well with you." The benediction mentioned in our text comes from the Omnipotent Creator "who made Heaven and earth." This intimates that the blessing is almighty in power. Have I the blessing of Him who said, "Let there be light," and there was light? Then He can speak into my darkness and cheer the gloom of my despair! Does the blessing of Him who brought order out of chaos rest upon me? Then He can speak to the confusion of my circumstances and the turmoil of my desponding mind and charm all things into harmony! The blessing of Him who clothed the earth with beauty, piled the hills and dug the channels of the sea must have in it a fullness unrivalled!

A blessing from Him—how large it must be—how potent for all the purposes of Grace! A blessing from Him with whom there is no obstacle or difficulty—who shall be able to delay it or deprive me of it? The

Lord who made Heaven and earth spoke, and it was done—He commanded and it stood fast! There was darkness but it fled before Him! There was confusion but it vanished at a glance of His eyes! And if God has blessed you, Christian, whatever stands in your way shall disappear before the benediction of your God. If He blesses, poverty cannot starve you, sickness cannot kill you, toil cannot wear you out, sorrow cannot consume you, life cannot allure you, death cannot slay you, Hell cannot enclose you!

If He blesses, "neither things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature," can have power to harm you! If all the legions of Hell were armed and stood in your way and all were furious to destroy, yet in the name of God you could defy them, for His benediction would be both shield and spear to you! Because you have made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, your habitation there shall no evil befall you, neither shall any plague come near your dwelling. It is a blessing from the All-Wise One "who made Heaven and earth."

Do not forget that the making of Heaven and earth is not merely a display of power, but of infinite wisdom! Think of all the skill which has guided the stars in their courses and of the wonderful wisdom which has created all things that are and has sustained them in their various spheres. Now, the Lord who blesses you, O heir of Heaven, is the infinitely Wise One! He knows the intricacies of your course and He will steer you through them. Though the channel of the river of your life flows close to yonder sandbar and then by the rock upon the other side; and though no earthly pilot can thread the mazes of that dangerous stream, yet He who knows all things has blessed you and with His hand upon the helm of your vessel He will bring you safe into the haven.

Therefore do not fear. You are not blessed of an erring creature, nor of a man like yourself—you are blessed of the Lord that made Heaven and earth! Is there any searching of His understanding? Has He not balanced the clouds in judgment? Has He not in wisdom laid the cornerstone of the universe? Why then, do you say, "My circumstances have been overlooked by Him and the problem of my case will be too difficult for Him to solve"? Oh, rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him, for you are blessed of the Lord that made Heaven and earth, whose Infallible counsels shall

conduct your affairs to a blessed issue! Let this console you—you are blessed of Him who made you, and therefore knows how to anoint every wheel of your inner workmanship with the sacred oil of His Grace.

Take that thought into your spirit, too—He made Heaven and earth and therefore you are never out of His domain. We read of Him that He has a desire to the work of His own hands. He has made you and He will not leave you. Do you leave your children? Do you forget your offspring? Have you not heard that a woman may forget and may fail to have compassion upon the suckling of her own breast but God cannot and will not forget you? He will be mindful of you, for as man and especially as regenerated man, you are one of the noblest works of His hands. I know not how to speak upon so great a text as this, but I know how to drink its sweetness down into my very soul and to feel that, being blessed of God, all other things matter not!

Sick and sorry, or well and rejoicing—there is not a pin to choose so long as we are blessed of the Lord that made Heaven and earth! Rich or poor, famous or despised, a throne or a martyr's stake, a palace or a dungeon—truly, there is not the turn of a hair between them if we are blessed of the Lord that made Heaven and earth! If this sweet blessing could fall upon a soul in Hell it would be a Heaven to it, and could the blessing of the Lord that made Heaven and earth be taken away from the saints in Heaven, Heaven would be a Hell to them! Our heart can sing with the Psalmist—

"Let the ungodly race advance,

And boast of all their store.

The Lord is my inheritance,

My soul can wish no more." The blessing of the Lord that made Heaven and earth is all in all.

III. Let us turn to the third word, which is this—IT IS A BENEDICTION WITH A PECULIAR DATE for it is in the present tense. The preceding verses spoke of the past and the future. "The Lord has been mindful of us, He will bless us. He will bless the house of Israel. He will bless the house of Aaron." These are blessed "wills." "He will bless them that fear Him, both small and great. The Lord shall increase you more and more, both you and your children." These are all in the future but you know the Proverb says a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush!

Now, those future blessings, those birds in the bush—I know not what they are worth, for they are boundless in preciousness. But here is a bird in the hand, "You are blessed of the Lord." Oh, the value of that! You are at this moment blessed of the Lord that made Heaven and earth. This verb is in the present tense, and, indeed, it may be said to be in all the tenses put together—in a tense that is not a tense, a time that has no time but lasts on forevermore—till time shall be no more. This blessing embraces all circumstances! You are laid low and pining away with consumption but, "You are blessed of the Lord which made Heaven and earth."

You are smitten down in the very heyday of your usefulness and laid aside but, "You are blessed of the Lord which made Heaven and earth." You had your oxen and your cattle seized and now you are, like Job, a penniless beggar, fit to sit on a dunghill, but, "You are blessed of the Lord." Your enemy has set his foot upon your neck and he swears that he will make a speedy end of you, but, "You are blessed of the Lord." Like Jeremiah, you are shut up in the dark dungeon and you sink in the mire, and there seems to be no helper but, "You are blessed of the Lord." Who shall say that John Bunyan in Bedford Jail was not "blessed of the Lord"? Who shall say that Rowland Taylor, when he went to be burnt on Hadleigh Heath, was not "blessed of the Lord" when his very face shone with sacred joy?

Ah, let me tell you that the worst places on earth bear the best evidence of the goodness of God to His people. God's birds sing best in cages and like nightingales they sing best in the dark. And often, according to the old fable, their note is sweetest when the thorn pierces their breast. They are independent of outward circumstances except that the worse the circumstances, often the greater their joy! Glory be to God for this! They are "blessed of the Lord" that made Heaven and earth, let them be where they may and as they may. Though they seem cast out from God's Presence and all His waves and billows go over them, yet if they fear the Lord they are "blessed of the Lord," even then! Oh, that your faith may lay hold of this when you are very sorely exercised, for happy is the man whom God corrects, and blessed is the man whom You chasten, O Lord!

Observe that our text reaches to all time and beyond all time, because it runs thus—"You are blessed of the Lord that made Heaven and earth." While I am on earth, this shall console me—"I am blessed of the Lord that made the earth" and He Himself has said of His servants, "Blessed shall you be in the city and blessed shall you be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of your body and the fruit of your ground, and the fruit of your cattle, the increase of your

cattle and the flocks of your sheep. Blessed shall be your basket and your store. Blessed shall you be when you come in and blessed shall you be when you go out."

When I have to go out of this earth into another world, this shall console me—"I am blessed of the Lord that made Heaven." I shall still dwell in a place which my Father made. I am not going into a foreign country when I leave the warm precincts of this house of clay. I shall emigrate to the country where flowers never fade and winter never chills. This poor earth is little better than a penal settlement! It is a fair and beautiful and lovely earth to those who have eyes and taste with which to appreciate its scenery, but to a spiritual man it is just a smoke-dried tent of Kedar—a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, a casual ward for wayfarers, or very little better—a great morgue. "Woe's me that I in Mesech am a sojourner so long." We long to be away to our own fair country and see our Well-Beloved face to face!

Yet, for all that, God made this world though man has spoilt it as much as ever he can. And the God who made this world has blessed us so that wherever we go about in the world we should feel that we have a blessing that is suitable for every position in it—suitable for that lowly cot on the moor, suitable for that scant room in the dark alley—suitable for the couch of ease and suitable for the hard bed where pain racks every bone. The Lord that made earth, and who has a hand in it still, has blessed us!

And then it is the Lord that "made Heaven." Why, these two words are meant to encompass all creation! They are intended to take in the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills, the east and the west, the north and the south, the rising and the setting sun, the sea and the dry land, the heights and the depths—they are meant to encompass all. Here we have the true way of making the best of both worlds. God's blessing here and hereafter makes existence bliss! Oh be joyful! In whatever condition you are cast, you are blessed by God in that condition! And into whatever place you may come, you are blessed by God with mercies necessary for the place.

The heathens used to be afraid that though they might have the blessing of the god of the hills, if they went into the valleys they would not have his blessing there, for their god might not be the god of the valleys. But our God is the God of every place, and every scene, and every circumstance—and we are blessed of Him—glory be to His holy name!

IV. Now, fourthly and briefly, this is A BLESSING WITH A PECULIAR CERTAINTY. Scripture does not lie, or

utter perhapses, and ifs, and buts. "You are blessed of the Lord which made Heaven and earth." Oh you that fear God, this is a matter of fact—you daily and continually abide under a true and real blessing. Some blessings are vain words—the person who utters them is a hypocrite. Other blessings are sincere, but the person pronouncing them has no power to fulfill them. Such blessings are wells without water or barren fig trees bearing leaves but no fruit.

The Lord blesses not in word only, but in deed. His blessings are not futile wishes but Omnipotent acts. We may fail to obtain the benedictions which our friends invoke upon us, but God's blessings are sure to all the seed. Failure and miscarriage never occur to the Lord our God. Many are the slips between cups and lips at this world's banquet, but the chalice of Divine blessing shall surely reach the lip of the elect soul—

"This is Your will, that in Your love

We ever should abide
And lo, we earth and Hell defy
To make Your counsel void.
Not one of all the chosen race
But shall to Heaven attain;
Partake on earth the purposed Grace,
And then with Jesus reign."

Now, Beloved, let us make sure of this blessing which is so sure. And how can we do so but by faith? We believe that God has blessed all those to whom He has given His dear Son—and He has given His dear Son to me if I believe in Jesus! As surely as I believe in Him, the blessing is mine. Grip it, Brothers and Sisters! Make sure of it. Let no man deceive you with vain words. In these times it is hard to find anybody who believes anything. Even the common history we learned at school is now suspected to be a myth. I do not think that you could, according to the modes of reasoning adopted in these skeptical days, be able to prove that you had either a father or a mother.

Nothing is certain now-a-days—nothing at all. The floods of doubt have carried all away. We are taught from the pulpit to doubt. The old Gospel was, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved." The new Gospel is, "He that doubts and is sprinkled shall be saved." A sorry comedown for both the words. But, Beloved, we have not so learned the

Gospel we have learned to believe and hope, still, to live by faith. Our beliefs are grounded too firmly to be shaken by fashionable quibbling. Do get a fast hold, my Brothers and Sisters! You say, "How can I?" Why, you can do it by believing the veracity of your God—believing that surely He who speaks can fulfill what He has said! And you can get your faith strengthened by experience.

Try your God—I mean, when He is trying you, trust Him and test His promise. Prove Him and see if He does not bless you. Fair-weather Christianity is all very well, but it is stormy-weather Christianity that proves a man to be truly a man of God. Can you trust God when the cupboard is bare? Can you rejoice in God when every nerve of your body is made to throb with pain? Can you stand beneath a burden that might have made Atlas bow down to the earth and feel that Divine strength is equal to all that and 10,000 times more? Could you fling yourself, like a Samson, unarmed, upon a thousand foes and strike them because the Lord was in you? If you can, you will have no trouble about this skepticism and these questions and doubts.

You will know the Lord's Truth, for you have seen it. You will know His love, for you rejoice in it. You will know His faithfulness, for it is the pillow of your weary head. You will know His Immutability, for it is the anchor of your poor tempest-tossed boat. You will know that you are blessed of God that made Heaven and earth! May God grant us to know it by the witness of His Holy Spirit—to know it more and more by living more and more by faith, for only so shall we know it—to know it by despising everything else in comparison with it and relishing it and prizing it above all the delicacies that can be put upon the tables of worldlings. "Blessed of the Lord that made Heaven and earth"—may we be as assured of this as we are of our existence! Then shall we be "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might."

V. The fifth point is THIS BLESSING INVOLVES A PECULIAR DUTY for, if God has blessed us, the succeeding duty is that we should bless Him. Note the 18th verse—"We will bless the Lord from this time forth and forevermore." Come, then, Beloved, if God has blessed us let us bless Him! Let us answer to His benediction as the Alpine echo to the horn. I am afraid we are not very abundant in blessing and glorifying God.

What were you doing before you came here? What was your last word at home? Grumbling? Complaining? Very likely. Is this becoming in one whom God has blessed? What were your thoughts before you came here? Were you fully expecting something terrible to happen by-and-by? Mourning you know not why! Was that it? If so, is this a fit state of mind for one on whom the Divine benediction rests like a halo? What were your words on the road here? Let me guess again. Some silly chat? Some idle tale? Some frivolous joke? Is this worthy of your destiny? Is this worthy of an employment suitable for your rank?

Brothers and Sisters, we have had enough of all this! If your murmuring in times past has not sufficed, I am greatly in error. If you have not frightened yourself enough about things that have never happened, I am indeed mistaken. And if you have not wasted enough breath in idle talk, I am bereft of judgment. Now, from this day forth let us see if we cannot bless the Lord continually! Speak to one another, you children of God—speak well of His dear name who has so richly endowed you. Let us tell one another what God has done for us, saying, "Come and hear, all you that fear God, and I will tell you what He has done for my soul."

"I don't know what I can say," says somebody. Did God ever do anything for you? Then begin to pray for His blessing at once, for without it you are a miserable creature. But if He has been favorable to you, tell your fainting Brethren how He has restored you! Tell your sinking friend how you felt a solid bottom beneath your feet when you went through deeper rivers than those which he is passing through. Tell others what you have tasted and handled—not what you do not know—for borrowed experience is poor stuff and savors of imposition. The Psalm says, "Praise Him from this time forth." If the past has been marred by any other talk, now, "from this time," bless the Lord! Wash your mouth of all complaining! Take the cup of gratitude to sweeten your soul and bless His name from this time forth.

What? Dumb till now? An heir of Heaven speechless? May a sight of God's blessing open your mouth! From this time forth begin to bless Him. 'Tis a good time in which to begin blessing God. This moment is a fair season for repentance. When was there a time that was unsuitable for adoring gratitude? And when was there an hour when it was not well to bless God? I beseech you, join me in praising Him!

Then the Psalmist resolves to praise the Lord "forevermore." Our adoration of God is never to cease. As long as there is breath in our body let us praise Him who gives it to us. "Dum spiro spero," said the heathen, "While I breathe, I

hope." But the Christian says, "Dum expiro spero"—"When I die, I will still hope in God." While we exist we will adore—

"My God, I'll praise You while I live, And praise You when I die! And praise You when I rise again, And to eternity!"

Repeat the joyous strain! Cease not day nor night! Nothing of worldly business deserves so much attention as to warrant our ceasing to bless and magnify the Lord in our hearts!

Now, I pray God that some here who have never received the Divine blessing after the tenor of the text, may be led to seek it—and you know His word—"Seek you the Lord while He may be found: call you upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him turn unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon."

Oh, that gracious word, "abundantly pardon!" How it meets our abundant sin! Oh, for His attracting love to operate upon sinners' hearts! May He draw you to Himself for Christ's sake and bless you, even you who up to now have slighted His mercy! He delights to be gracious! He loves to call them Beloved, that were not beloved, and to make them a people that were not a people. Hear that word, you humble and contrite, and never rest till the Lord Himself smiles upon you. Amen.

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