

# Righteousness

by Thomas Bradbury

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*Thomas Bradbury's sermon on righteousness emphasizes God's grace, forgiveness, and the believer's need for revival and communion with Him.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 85:13, Psalm 145:17, Isaiah 40:1, Zechariah 13:7, Romans 10:17, Ephesians 1:13, Hebrews 4:10, 1 Peter 2:21, 1 John 1:9

**Topics:** "Gods Mercy", "Christ Righteousness"

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## Description

Thomas Bradbury preaches on the righteousness that goes before God, leading His people in the way of His steps. The Psalmist's declaration in Psalms 85:13 reflects the Church's confidence in God's grace and the acknowledgment of His works in His people. The forgiveness of iniquities, the covering of sins, and the turning away of God's wrath are all manifestations of God's mercy and grace towards His chosen ones. The righteousness of Christ, seen in His obedience and sacrificial death, provides the perfect righteousness demanded by God for His people to enter His kingdom and enjoy communion with Him.

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## Transcript

"Righteousness shall go before Him; and shall set us in the way of His steps." (Psalm 85:13)

The Psalm commences with a very precious declaration of the Church's confidence in the God of all grace, and of the good things He has done for His people. This is not peculiar to the Psalmist, or to any portion of the children of God. Those who fear His name, those who hope in His mercy, those who trust in His Word, and those who are lost in His love, all acknowledge the things He has done for them and in them, by the power of the Holy Ghost. Superficial Christians and professing worldlings will question the necessity for telling God that which He knows, or of reminding God of that which He has done. Such should remember that their questioning holds good in respect to prayer of every kind. Known unto God are all my wants and necessities, cares and anxieties; yea, known unto Him are all my sins and sorrows, trials and temptations: yet He so works in me by His grace, as to draw from my exercised heart and stammering tongue the confession of these things, and He has made them in the experience of my heart so many errands to the throne of His heavenly grace. With them I have waited at His sacred footstool for manifestations of His mercy, and for further expressions of His forgiving and justifying grace.

This was the case with the Psalmist in the portion before us, and we find the same manifested in a remarkable manner in 2 Sam. 7:24. Sitting before the Lord, he opens up his mind to Him: "For Thou hast confirmed to Thyself Thy people Israel to be a people unto Thee for ever: and Thou, Lord, art become

their God. And now, O Lord God, the word that Thou hast spoken concerning Thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as Thou hast said." The ground David occupied as he sat before the Lord, in sweet fellowship and communion, was that of covenant promise, and not of his own feelings, thoughts, and experience. Look at those precious words: "And do as Thou hast said." As He said to Christ in covenant before the worlds were formed, so He graciously acts. As He has said in the exceeding great and precious promises of His most Holy Word, so He faithfully performs. As He has said by the grace and indwelling of His blessed Spirit, so He will fully accomplish. The Psalmist knew this, and in hallowed intercourse with Him reminded Him of His Word and works. "Lord," said the Psalmist, "Thou hast been favourable unto Thy land: Thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob." (Ps. 85:1) This appears to allude to the return of the Jews to their own land, city, and temple, from the Babylonish captivity. Look at the sovereign care of Jehovah over His people, as manifested here. Lord, Thou didst come to the very spot of our captivity, where we lay oppressed and crushed with the iron entering our souls, and Thou didst bring Thy captives back to the enjoyment of those spots of covenant favour designed for them in Thy predestinating love. "Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of Thy people." Marvellous forgiveness! How much iniquity, or how many iniquities has He forgiven us? As many as I have confessed? Ay, and more. It is a truth, that, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9) You must remember that these blessed "Ifs" of the New Testament are not conditional, but evidential. They give evidence to God's work of grace in the hearts of His children, and breathe a spirit of assurance to them, that they are led by the power of the Holy Ghost to make a clean breast of their sins and shortcomings to Him, He has forgiven them all their iniquities. That is a blessed declaration of new covenant blessing in Isaiah 40:1,2: where the commission of Jehovah goes forth to the heralds of Zion, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, My people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned." In the gracious purposes of the Father, iniquities past, iniquities present, and iniquities to come, are all disposed of: and as this glorious fact is brought to light by the Holy Ghost, forgiveness is blessedly experienced at the hands of the God of all grace, and the Father of all mercy.

"Here's pardon full for sin that's past,

It matters not how black the cast;

And, O my soul, wonder view,

For sins to come here's pardon too."

"Thou hast covered all their sins." Here we have one of the most wonderful metaphors to be found in the whole compass of God's Word. "Covered!" We know that when a thing is covered, it is out of sight. How is the sin of Zion covered? We will look at one or two portions of God's Word, where this word "covered" occurs. If you will consult the account given of the flood in the days of Noah, when the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened, you will see: "The waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered." (Gen. 7:19) You have it again in the mercy-seat, (Exod. 25:16-22) the lid of the ark of the covenant covering the tables of the law inside, thus hiding them out of sight.

You have it again in Noah's ark of gopher wood, which was pitched within and without with pitch; (Gen. 6:14) the wood being wholly covered and hidden from view. God, in the precious words of this Psalm, comforts His people through the living experience of each other, whose grateful hearts say to Him, "Thou

hast covered all their sin." As the highest hills and mountains could not be seen through the deluge of water which covered the earth, so all the mountains of sin, iniquity, guilt, and condemnation which were ever contracted by the children of God, are not only covered, but swept away, put out of sight altogether by atoning blood flowing from the wounds of a precious Christ.

But look: "Thou hast taken away all Thy wrath: Thou hast turned Thyself from the fierceness of Thine anger." As we look at this in the light of the new covenant, we behold grace, mercy, and peace flowing to us in those precious words of Jesus, "It is finished." When He looked up and cried, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit," there was the end of all penal wrath; of all Jehovah's anger, fury, and indignation against the sins of His people. The wrath of a sin-hating God spent all its fury upon the sacred head and sinless soul of Zion's King and Deliverer, the Surety of the everlasting covenant.

See how blessedly this is set forth in that precious prophecy contained in Zech. 13:7, "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man that is My fellow, saith the Lord of hosts; smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn Mine hand upon the little ones." There Jehovah is seen turning from the fierceness of His anger upon the Shepherd, to bestow His affections upon the little flock. With longing desires for the enjoyment of this covenant blessing, the flock of slaughter cry, "Turn us."

O what blessed reciprocity is exhibited in all God's ways of mercy, in the experiences of His people! Does He turn from the fierceness of His anger? They cry, "Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause Thine anger toward us to cease." Turn us from Sinai to Zion, from the land of far distances to that of blessed communion and intercourse with Thee. The cry of godly fear and spiritual anxiety continues: "Wilt Thou be angry with us for ever? Wilt Thou draw out Thine anger to all generations?"

God-wrought importunity earnestly inquires, "Wilt Thou not revive us again?" I like that. You all know that I have often dwelt upon that precious word "again." Why do I? Simply for my own spiritual gratification? No. You may depend upon it, my standing in Grove Chapel pulpit is not for self-gratification. I thank God that I do know something of the experience of 1 John 1:3, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."

Why, then, do I love to dwell upon that word "again?" Because I am fully conscious that God has some of the little ones of His family, some weaklings in the flock of the good shepherd, here present. Yes, here we have some who fear to presume, but who dare to doubt. Well, bless His holy name, He will never damn you for doubting; but will give you many sweet tokens of His approbation, and appreciation of you as the objects of His everlasting love, the fruit of His dear Son's sufferings, and the conquest of His blessed Spirit.

"Wilt Thou not revive us again?" This anxious, importunate, and earnest inquiry reminds me of one who sat under the gallery over yonder. He sat and listened like a soul solemnized with a sense of eternal realities. He heard the Word with gladness of heart, and drank deeply at the wellspring of eternal truth. Almost every time he came to the place he was melted under the power of the Gospel of the blessed God. He was not a murmurer, not a complainer, nor a jabberer. He dispensed his money with a liberal, but unostentatious hand. The last communication from him was an anonymous one containing a five-pound note for the support of our dear old friend and brother Page. Almost invariably, as soon as he walked outside the chapel, the devil would set upon him to take from him the enjoyment of those truths he had so sweetly received, and to send him down the Grove a bruised reed, a crushed soul, a broken spirit, yet very

near and dear to his God. Not long ago he was seized with bronchitis, a short illness, yesterday morning off to glory. This causes me to sigh to be after him. But why do I speak of him now? Because he was brought to my mind by this urgent request of the Psalmist, "Wilt thou not revive us again?" Lord, Thou hast revived us within these walls again and again; but before Thy servant has descended these pulpit stairs, he has wanted reviving again. And some of you know what it is, ere you leave your seats, for your hearts to cry and sigh to your God, "Wilt Thou not revive us again?" Yes, I do love that word "again." It meets the doubts, fears, anxieties, and cares which the weaklings in Zion experience in their searchings for the presence and preciousness of their covenant God in Christ. O, to think how often we appear to be covered with the dust of this miserable world, how often we are seeking for comfort and happiness which can only last for a little time, and are forgetful of those imperishable blessings which He has bestowed upon us in the Son of His love. I love that verse which you will find toward the close of the old pilgrim's Psalm, the seventy-first "Thou, which hast showed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth." See! Are we forgetful of the sweet lessons of His mercy? As He is wont, He will teach us again. (Mark 10:1) Are we broken down, and in ruins? He will build us up again. (Jer. 31:4) "Wilt Thou not revive us again; that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?" There is no true rejoicing for a mourning Zionite apart from a rejoicing God. Then we come to the desire of the living children, "Show us Thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us Thy salvation." We now notice a gracious resolve

"I will hear what God the Lord will speak." Did any of you come here this morning to listen to a poor mortal? If so, you will be miserably disappointed. But there may be the experience of disappointment in some who come to hear what the Lord will speak to them; nevertheless, it is His voice alone which can speak peace and comfort to the hearts of His people. Mark the word "hear." "I will hear." It has to do with the spiritual apprehension and understanding of the children of God. Ofttimes when faith, hope, and love have taken flight feelingly and experimentally, a good understanding in the fear of the Lord is our strength and our stability. Turn with me to John 3:8, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof." The Lord Jesus Christ did not refer to feeling or seeing the effects of the wind, but to hearing the sound. I believe that at that time Jesus was closeted with Nicodemus, and neither of them could feel or see the effects of the wind. Jesus directs the attention of Nicodemus to the sound of the wind outside, and from this metaphor sets forth the work of the Holy Ghost, the heavenly Wind, the Conductor of the joyful sound of God's Gospel to the hearts of His eternally-loved ones. Now look at John 5:24, "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life." Now turn to Romans 10:17, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." How can that be? I cannot say. I know not how, but I know that it is so. Lazarus was dead in the grave when the Lord Jesus Christ cried to him, "Lazarus, come forth." Reason may inquire, How could the dead hear? I answer, I don't know. There was a marvellous mystery in that act of Christ, and there is a mystery of grace in the passing from death unto life of every child of God. You have the hearing brought before you again in Eph. 1:13, "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the Word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation; in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." "I will hear." There is a waiting for the sound of His voice of love, and for the words of grace which fall from no lips but His.

"He will speak peace unto His people." That is what I want. Peace based upon the everlasting covenant. Peace flowing through precious blood. Peace secured by the obedience of my God and Saviour. Peace! what is it? It is the quietness, the repose, the tranquility of God, which passeth all understanding, and which alone can keep the heart and mind of His people in the knowledge and love of Him. There may be the clash of arms, and all England may be roused to the assertion of its honour and dignity by terrible news from Zululand; but this is a very small matter with Him.

"Our lives through various scenes are drawn,  
And vexed with trifling cares;  
While Thine eternal thought moves on  
Thine undisturb'd affairs."

It is the want of the experience of this that brings a poor sinner down before a sovereign God, hoping to hear Him speaking His own sweet peace to his troubled heart. "And to His saints." His chosen ones, for whom He has designs of mercy. "But let them not turn again to folly." A gracious command, obeyed by gracious power. "Surely His salvation is nigh them that fear Him." How nigh? In their hearts. You see here God does not raise a very high standard. He does not speak of those who have strong faith or abiding confidence in Him, but "them that fear Him; that glory may dwell in our land." What land is that? If your minds run to that narrow strip of land lying between the Jordan and the Mediterranean, you will see Ichabod written upon every nook and corner thereof. The glory is departed. English chaplains may be found; but the glory of God's Gospel is wanting. What land is this with which we have to do? It is the spiritual land of Judah, the land of spiritual promise, the land of Divine revelation, the land of covenant relationship, where "Mercy and truth are met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Justice and peace are perfectly agreed in the person of Christ, and in the heaven-born experience of the children of God. "Truth shall spring out of the earth." This is the sinless humanity of our blessed Lord and Saviour, the fruit of the earth, which is excellent and comely. (Isa. 4:2) "And righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good." Good! Where is it? We may look upon earthly things which are comparatively good, but all of them must decay, perish, and pass away. No truly good thing can be found apart from a covenant God in Christ. God's good thing is Christ Himself. "And our land shall yield her increase." From the land of Judah, and from the womb of a lowly maid of Judah, the God-Man came for the good, the glory, and the eternal excellency of Zion, and "of the increase of His government there shall be no end." Now, this "Good" is evidently a person from the words of the text, "Righteousness shall go before Him;" before Him who alone is good according to God's estimate of goodness.

Looking at mankind in the light of Divine inspiration, we may well ask the question, Where does goodness dwell? or Where is it to be found? One of our hymn writers says:

"No good in creatures can be found,  
But may be found in Thee."

We see this from Psalm 53:1-3, "Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: there is none that doeth good. God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God. Every one of them is gone back; they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." That which is good is not to be found among the fallen sons or daughters of Adam. Look at them in their persons. "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores." (Isa. 1:5,6) Look at them in their thoughts! Every imagination of the thoughts of their heart is only evil continually." (Gen. 6:5) Look at them in whatever light we will, nothing good can possibly meet our view. But as I have said, comparative goodness can be found. We frequently admire and wonder at the exhibition of human goodness; but when we behold it in the light of infinite purity and Divine

excellency, we are forced to the question, "Where is goodness to be found?" Our selfishness, even in Divine things, is sufficient to sink our souls to the depths of never-ending despair, if that blessed One who is goodness had not interposed on our behalf. Truth sprang out of the earth, the Lord gave that which was good, our land yielded its increase when Christ appeared upon earth. Now, no truth can spring from the earthly part of man, neither can good be produced in the ordinary course of generation. When truth sprang from the earth, it was according to the angel's testimony to Mary, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that Holy Thing" here we have that which is good "which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Luke 1:35) Good was Jesus all His journey through. He was good in Himself, for in Him was no sin. (1 John 3:5) He was good in His acts, for He did no sin. (1 Pet. 2:22) He was good in His associations, for He was separate from sinners. (Heb. 7:26) He was holy, harmless, undefiled. That which is good is seen alone in the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Righteousness shall go before Him." Not a son or daughter of Adam can stand before God with acceptance on the ground of personal worth; therefore the Lord Jesus Christ came into this world perfectly good to present to His Father a righteousness perfectly good, in which His people should with confidence enter into the kingdom of God, and enjoy the blessedness of communion with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The Scriptures of truth form a glorious revelation of Christ as the righteousness of God, and the righteousness of His people. Patriarchs, priests, and prophets went before Him in Old Testament times proclaiming His approach. Types, sacrifices, and prophecies witnessed to the perfection of the righteousness of the coming One. Righteousness in the decrees of the Father, in His sovereign appointments, went before Him, proclaiming that a righteousness for God and for elect sinners would be found in His doing and dying. Yes, blessed be God, every step of His earthly pilgrimage, every sorrow of His heart, every pain of His body, every wound He received from friends and foes, all the agony and bloody sweat endured in Gethsemane, with all the darkness and desertion experienced by His sorrowing spirit amid the wild isolations of Calvary, contributed to bring forth that righteousness which had gone before Him in predestinating decree and prophetic declaration. But still further

Righteousness went before Him in the person of the Holy Ghost. You see this in the portion I have before quoted. (Luke 1:35) The Spirit of the living God was the grand Operator in the production of the sacred and sinless humanity of our Lord. He went before Him to make a way for the bringing of a Clean Thing out of an unclean. Paul says, "Now that He ascended what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?" (Eph. 4:9) Where is that? My mind runs at once to that chaste, yet sublime, declaration in England's Te Deum, "When Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man, Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb." From the womb of a sinful woman a sinless man was brought forth. But the going before of the Holy Ghost He was so conceived that He could contact no defilement, receive no polluting taint, nor see corruption. From Him the righteousness of God and of God's elect was demanded. God's righteous law, His inexorable justice, His unsullied holiness, and unvarying truth, exact from all the election of grace an obedience without flaw, a righteousness without failure. Where is it to be found? In Christ. In a perfect, immaculate, impeccable body, which was not susceptible of any error or mistake. He had "a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting," in which, from the crib at Bethlehem to the cross on Calvary, He wrought out a glorious righteousness for His people. At the close of His life He could look up with confidence into His Father's face, and say, "I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the word which Thou gavest me to do." (John 17:4) In glorifying His Father upon earth, and finishing His work of righteousness, the people of His choice were saved in Himself with an everlasting salvation.

Righteousness! What is it? It is right doing and right ceasing to do. It is working and ceasing from work at the right time. This was what Jesus the Surety ever did. Righteousness is set before us in God's blessed Word under a variety of forms. Sometimes it is called "The righteousness of God." Why? Because God the Father demanded and designed it, God the Son accomplished it in the perfect obedience He rendered to the Father's law, and God the Holy Ghost reveals, communicates, and applies it to the hearts of all interested therein. It is called "The righteousness of our God and Saviour," (2 Pet. 1:1) because in His perfect conformity to His Father's will this righteousness is fully displayed. It is called "The righteousness of the law," (Rom. 8:4) because the law demands it from every son and daughter of Adam, and will not be put off without it. It is called "The righteousness of faith," (Rom. 4:13) because faith apprehends it, faith enjoys it, faith delights in it, and stands before the presence of God completely wrapped and enveloped in it. But let us here inquire. Whose faith is this? Yours and mine? Yes; but not that which flows from our wretched fleshly free-will. It is ours, because communicated to us from our great and glorious Head. I love to dwell upon this revelation of precious faith to me, and I will tell you why. I do not wish to be egotistical, but when God shuts me up to a fact, I am compelled to notice and acknowledge it. Well, I must confess to seeing and hearing very little of a true exposition of what saving faith is in the experiences of God's children. Thousands are contending that righteousness and salvation are wholly in God's hands, but faith is wholly in the hands of the creature; and that God has bestowed His salvation upon us unconditionally, but our enjoyment and comfort depend upon our management and exercise of faith. Such an arrangement would secure the eternal damnation of all Adam's posterity. My anxious spirit yearns to apprehend the faith of a covenant God in Christ, and the faith of a precious Christ in God. This is the faith of the living Head which animates all the living members. It matters not how remote in feeling the member may be from the Head, "like precious faith" will be sure to reach it. This is the confidence of the heavenly Bridegroom inspiring His bride. When I am brought into the experimental possession of this faith, I glory in the fact that the Author of my faith is the Father of my righteousness, and that He is God, the All in All of my salvation. This is blessedly revealed to us throughout the Word of God. Turn with me to Romans 3:22, "Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe." Is righteousness ours? Christ wrought it out. Is faith ours? Christ wrought it in. The whole election of grace must have both the one and the other.

"Since 'tis Thy work alone.

And that Divinely free,

Lord, send the Spirit of Thy Son

To work this faith in me."

What is the fruit and effect of this righteousness? Look at it as you have it recorded in Isa. 32:17,18: "And the work of righteousness shall be peace." Mark! It is not "the work of righteousness shall be for peace," but "the work of righteousness" itself "shall be peace." This is the righteousness of Christ wrought for me and wrought in me. "And the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance for ever." This is the peace of God which passeth all understanding, keeping the heart and mind of His covenant people in the knowledge and love of Him. "And My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation." Where can you find a peaceable habitation? Not one hair's breadth short of God Himself. God in Christ is the habitation of His people, and a child of God in Christ is the habitation of His God. As I am brought to enjoy my shelter and security in God, I glory in the fact that there is no fury in Him for Me. Sometimes you find that expression, "Fury is not in Me," (Isa. 27:4) quoted to prove that there is no fury in God toward His people; but I think

that is a mistake, for I believe it proves there is fury in Him which will devour all the adversaries of His people. Read it like this, without the italics, "Fury not in me?" That is a question. "Who would set the briers and thorns against Me in battle? I would go through them: I would burn them together." He will recompense fury to all the enemies of Zion; but no fury, wrath, indignation, or displeasure to His eternally-loved ones. "And My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." When? "When it shall hail, coming down on the forest, and the city shall be low in a low place." This is, when the judgments of the Lord are coming down upon this wretched earth of ours.

"Righteousness shall go before Him." Did you ever notice that verse in the Book of Revelation? Certainly you have, for you cannot go into a graveyard without its meeting your gaze. See Rev. 14:13, "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." Now it is a question in my mind whether that portion refers to persons who have passed through the throes of dissolution or not.

I will give you my reason for this question arising. It is because I believe very much of the Book of Revelation, which is looked upon as respecting the future, refers to present experiences in God's living children. Many portions are quoted as referring to the glorified state of the redeemed, which I believe have reference to present-tense blessings and spiritual privileges here. Look at this Scripture: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." Mark you! It is not, "who have died in the Lord," but "which die in the Lord."

When dissolution takes place, there is an end of all death and dying to a child of the living God. Look at the death and dying, recorded throughout the New Testament Scriptures, of those who are dead in Christ to the law, (Rom. 7:4) to the world, (Gal. 6:14) and to sin. (Rom. 6:11) These are seen in the experience of the apostle Paul especially. He said, "I die daily," (1 Cor. 15:31) "always delivered unto death," (2 Cor. 4:10,12) "in deaths oft." (2 Cor. 11:23) He carried about with him in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus.

So does every living child of God. Why is this? "Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours." "For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from Him." (Heb. 4:10) See! "And their works do follow them." It is a marvellous mercy they do. Look at the difference existing between the living child of God and the dead professor. The latter goes from house to house, and from street to street, hawking his piety, exhibiting his religion, parading his good works, and has the impudence to declare it is all for the Lord.

The fleshly free-will cries, "Working for the Lord," "Doing for Jesus," are heard on every hand. My soul is sick in listening to these fulsome effusions, and cries out, Go home and keep your doing to yourself. But mark! As the children of the living God are led by His blessed Spirit, "their works do follow them." Where? Up to the throne of God, and to the heights of glory. Look at the words of the Master as He speaks to the righteous before the throne of His glory: "For I was hungered, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me.

Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying: Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered, and fed Thee? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink? When saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee? Or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them: Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." (Matt. 25:35-40) O what a marvellous mercy it is when self is lost sight of, and

the poor child of God sees nothing to admire in the very acts he performs for the glory of God, and the good of his brethren in Christ.

"Righteousness shall go before Him." His righteousness went before Him, and found for Him a place at God's right hand, which he possesses for all God's people. And now He makes the heart of His people His abode, and with them He journeys through all the intricacies of the wilderness to His own sweet home above. His righteousness goes before him, ay, before them, before all those who are the called of God in Him.

"And shall set us in the way of His steps." This means the steps of Christ's righteousness are a way in which His people shall walk. "For even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps." (1 Pet. 2:21) We can find no true example but that of Christ. Here we will look at this in the light of God's righteous dealings with His creatures. His righteous decrees have gone before Him in all His acts of grace. "The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works." (Ps. 145:17) Righteous when He gives to one and withholds from another; yea, and righteous, too, when He takes from one that which He has so lovingly and liberally bestowed. He is righteous when, with a clean sweep in the twinkling of an eye, He takes away hundreds and thousands from the face of the earth, some to bask in His glory, and others to wither beneath His frown. He is righteous when He gives pledges and tokens of fond affection in the treasures of our hearts, whom He gathers around our knees, and also when He takes them home to Himself to be free from sin, and care, and sorrow. He was righteous yesterday when He called to see our friend and brother Marsden, gave him a glimpse of His glory, freed him from a body of sin and suffering, and conveyed his ransomed spirit to the home of the glorified. There he is "lost in Godhead, love, and blood," experiences the fullness of joy in the presence of his God, and shall bask in bliss and blessedness, without intermission, throughout the never-ending ages of eternity.

May the Lord add His blessing for His name's sake. Amen.

"How safe the state of God's elect!

Taught, by Jehovah to expect

The glory He prepares;

In Christ they live, in Him they die,

And harps, and crowns, and bliss on high,

Shall be for ever theirs.

This is their long-expected end,

The king of terrors is their friend,

For Christ remov'd his sting.

Deliver'd from the vale of tears,

Rais'd up where Christ Himself appears,

They shall in glory sing.  
The Church laments a brother gone,  
While he appears before the throne,  
Made white by precious blood:  
No more by sin and sorrow pain'd,  
All he expected here is gain'd  
In glory with his God.  
By faith we would has mansion view,  
And still our heaven-bound course pursue,  
In spite of earth and hell:  
Expecting to be welcom'd home,  
Where sins and foes can never come,  
And there in glory dwell."

Joseph Irons

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/thomas-bradbury/righteousness/>

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