

THE DIVINE GIVER OF GRACE AND GLORY

Preached at Oakham, Rutland, on Lord's Day Afternoon, July 9th, 1854

"For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee." Psalm 84:11, 12

What a pure language, as recorded in the Scriptures, the saints of God spoke in days of old! Would we know the true language of Canaan, it is to their words that we must listen. But in what mainly consists the purity of the language which thus fell from their lips, and is preserved by the pen of the Holy Ghost in the Word of truth? In this—that they give all the glory of their salvation to God; that they ascribe no strength, wisdom, or righteousness to the creature; but yield the whole praise to the divine Creator, that unchanging and unchangeable Benefactor, that merciful Father of lights from whom cometh every good and every perfect gift, both in providence and grace. Nor is this confined merely to the actual words of prayer and praise, declaration or assertion, uttered by the saints of old. It pervades the whole of the sacred volume; and it is mainly this ascription of the whole glory to the Lord which has impregnated the Word of truth with such inexpressible sweetness and savour. There God is exalted on high as Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end of all His works in creation, providence, and grace. His sovereignty, wisdom, and power; His majestic rule, government, and authority; His eternal righteousness, and yet infinite love, mercy and compassion, are all there set forth as ordering and arranging all human events, and subordinating every circumstance to His own glory. And as all this is seen in harmonious connection with the Person and

work of the Lord Jesus, the Redeemer's name distils from the sacred page like ointment poured forth. In reading, therefore, the Word of God, we are not offended or stumbled, nor is our mind in any way pained, as is so often the case in human writings, by declarations express or implied of the dignity of man or the worth of the creature. The value of creature attainments in piety and religion, the surpassing merit of alms deeds and benevolence, of bowings and crossings, of mumbled prayers and sprinkled water, have no place in the Book of God. His heavenly fingers have there written down the true character of man, as under every phase alike sinful and vile—a worm of earth, a child of dust, fallen, guilty, weak, and miserable. And the same heavenly pen has placed the Lord also in His right position—God over all, blessed for ever; the Giver of all good; the Ruler of all men and all events; the Source of all grace and of all glory. If we have not eyes to see, if we have not hearts to feel this pervading element of the Scriptures of truth, we do not understand them by the anointing of the Holy Ghost; and the Word of God is not to us life and spirit, but a mere dead letter, without influence, efficacy, or power.

I need not take up time, or occupy your attention this afternoon, by recapitulating what I said in the morning as to the connection of these verses with the preceding portion of the psalm. I endeavoured then, to the best of my ability, to show how the Lord God was "a sun and a shield." I will now, then, with His blessing, proceed to the remaining portion of our text, which consists of three clauses, containing as many gracious declarations.

I. That the Lord is the Giver of grace and glory.

II. That He will withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly.

III. That blessed is the man who trusteth in the Lord, and in Him alone.

I. "The Lord will give grace and glory."

i. As it is the appointed office, nay more, the peculiar glory of the sun to shine, and that out of his inexhaustible fulness, so that the more he shines the more glorious he is, so it is the glory of God to give out of the infinite fulness of His goodness and love; and the more He gives, the more is He glorified thereby. We sometimes find in man what I may perhaps call a sparkle of this divine nature; for we read that the Lord does make His people "partakers of the divine nature," that is, not those essential attributes of Deity, which are incommunicable to the creature, but that image of God "in righteousness and true holiness" after which the new man is created. There are those who had they the largest fortune, would feel greater pleasure in giving it away, than others have in spending it or adding to the accumulated heap. It is a sweet trait wherever seen, though unhappily a rare one. But I once knew a gentleman who was blessed with this disposition, and who was said to have had in his lifetime three fortunes. One he had lost in business; another he had given away; and a third he had when I knew him. But how limited, how scanty is the utmost, the most enlarged benevolence of man! Lovely as is the sight of this reflection of the divine nature, measured by the kindness of God it is but a beam in the water compared with the fulness of the sun. Exalted, then, as He is above all human praise, the Lord loves to give. As He "loveth a cheerful giver," so is He in Himself, beyond all comparison and conception, that which He loves to see in the partakers of His grace; and thus He gives to His people "every good and perfect gift" as bountifully and ungrudgingly as the sun gives light and heat.

If we had a spiritual view of, and a living, actual, influential faith in this part of the character of God, how it would enlarge our narrow hearts; how we should come to His gracious footstool as to that of a free and bounteous Benefactor, saying before Him in the simplicity of a little child, "Lord, I am poor, enrich me; Lord, I am hungry, feed me; Lord, I am naked, clothe me; Lord, I am sinful, forgive me; Lord, I am helpless, take pity and compassion upon me; Lord, I am weak and wandering, ever stumbling and falling—hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe; I have nothing, and am nothing; give me what Thou seest good, and make me what Thou wouldest have me to be." In this simple, childlike, affectionate way, the saints of God prayed of old; and were we favoured with the same filial confidence, mingled with godly fear, we should draw out of the Lord's heart that which is in the Lord's heart to bestow. James gives us good counsel in this important matter: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

ii. But having thus far dwelt generally on the character of God as plenteous in mercy and goodness, let us come a little more closely to particulars, for it is in the free and bounteous bestowal of peculiar favours and mercies that His grace shines forth with such distinguished lustre. There are two things mentioned which it is said the Lord will specially give. These are "grace and glory." But let me remark, by the way, that there is to my mind something very sweet in the mode of expression here employed—"He will give." It does not say, "He doth give," or "hath given;" though both are true; but, He "will give;" as if nothing could restrain Him from giving; as if giving were so a part of Himself, such an eminent attribute of Deity, that as long as He is God He will give. When He gives, then, it is of "His royal bounty," of which that "largeness of heart as the sand on the sea-shore," given to

Solomon, was but a faint reflection. Thus, whatever favours He may have already given to those who fear His name, He will still continue to give them more and more, because He can do no other to the objects of His bounty. In all that he has already given them there has been no exhaustion; and in all that he will for the future give them there will be no deficiency. Like the sun, the emblem by which He has chosen to represent Himself, the more he gives, the more He has to give. What is the brightest feature in earthly love, that relic of Paradise? That the more it gives, the more it has to give. The very nature, the essential characteristic of love is—to be an ever gushing fountain, flowing out unceasingly towards its object; and the more love there is in the heart, the more it flows out inexhaustibly and ungrudgingly, only asking for a similar return. To show kindness to the object of its affections is no task for love. Its self-rewarding delight is to communicate of itself, and to kindle in the bosom of the person beloved the same flame that burns in its own. So God, in giving grace to the objects of His eternal love, is never weary of giving; for love flows out of Him as unceasingly as light and heat flow out of the glorious orb of day.

iii. But what are we to understand here and elsewhere by the expression "grace," which, as the fruit of His eternal love, He is here said especially to give? "Grace" means, literally, "favour;" and, as expressive of the love and mercy of God, signifies His pure, unmixed, unmerited favour. This entire absence of merit in the persons favoured is essential to the very nature of divine grace; for, as flowing from the bosom of God, it is of that pure and heavenly nature, that could you (which mercifully no man can do) but infuse into it any the least particle of merit, you would by that infusion destroy it. A few grains of arsenic would convert the most nutritious food into the most deadly poison; and there are chemical

liquids of such a nature, that were you to put a few drops of another liquid into them, it would destroy their character altogether, and make them a completely different substance. So, could you by any means infuse into divine grace any creature merit and human worthiness, the infusion of two or three drops of these earthly substances would not only pollute, I might rather say poison, grace, but would change its very nature. It is thus the apostle argues concerning grace and works—"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work." Irrespectively, then, of all human merit or worth, the Lord giveth grace. But does the expression mean that God gives grace to everybody? Why, to believe so would be opposed to the very evidence of our own senses. Of this we have daily, hourly proofs. Hundreds and thousands live and die, almost before our eyes, without grace. Without going any further than this solemn fact, which meets us at every turn, is not that a sufficient proof that God does not bestow His grace upon all? For, were His grace given to all, it would in that case necessarily follow that all would and must be saved. But leaving out the case of the profane, we may ask another question as regards the professing. Are not many of these enemies to the very doctrine of free, distinguishing grace? How, then, can those be partakers of grace who fight with such bitter and unrelenting enmity against it? It is self-evident that God does not give His grace to them; for, were they blessed with its possession and enjoyment, they would not, could not, fight against it or despise it; but would love it, delight in it, and manifest their possession of it in their life, conduct, and conversation. We have thus, in addition to the Word of truth, the evidence of our own spiritual senses that God does not bestow His grace upon all. No; He only gives it to the objects of His eternal favour and choice; and upon those He bestows it without reservation, let, or hindrance,

without stint or grudging.

iv. But we may now examine more particularly the different branches of the grace which He bestows upon them. A sense of His favour made experimentally known; a manifestation of pardon through atoning blood; a revelation of His dear Son to the soul in His glorious Person—Immanuel, God with us; in a word, all that is comprehended in that expressive sentence: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost," may be considered as included in the grace that God gives. But we shall chiefly dwell upon what are usually called the graces of the blessed Spirit.

1. The first grace, in this sense, which He gives, is grace to *believe*. Faith, according to His own inspired declaration, is "the gift of God." And this thoroughly coincides with the experience of all the living family. We cannot believe in the Lord Jesus Christ to any purpose, to any help or hope, salvation or deliverance, comfort or consolation, except as God Himself, by His blessed Spirit, raises up faith in our hearts. But you say, perhaps, that you do believe in Jesus Christ. Well, if you do believe in Jesus Christ, happy are you. It is only by grace, I am sure you are thoroughly convinced, that anyone can savingly believe in His Person, blood, and righteousness. But remember this—that to believe in Jesus Christ is not a mere notion floating in the head, but a solid reality experienced in the soul; and that there are certain fruits which ever attend upon a living faith in the Son of God. If you believe in Jesus Christ, you have peace with God; and your heart is purified from the love of the world. If you believe in Jesus Christ, you have power with God, and have answers to prayer; if you believe in Jesus Christ, the burden of sin and guilt is taken off your conscience, and the love of God flows into your soul. A notional, nominal faith in Jesus is

in the power of anybody; but to believe in Him to the saving of the soul, to present deliverance and future bliss, is no act of the creature, but is produced solely by the power of God; and it is the fruit of grace and grace alone.

2. *Hope*, again, is another fruit of the grace which the Lord gives; for we cannot hope in His mercy, to any real comfort and encouragement, except through grace. It is, therefore, called in the Word of God, "a good hope through grace," grace being its only original fountain, and grace its only continuing stream. Many will tell you that they have a hope in the mercy of God; but, examined by the Word of truth, and the experience of the saints, what sort of a hope would this, for the most part, be found to be? Will it stand the trying hour? Will it endure when heart and flesh fail? Will it ride out the storms of indignation, which will burst upon the head of the impenitent and unbelieving, or face the inflexible justice of an angry God? A good hope through grace will stand every storm, and live at last; but that good hope through grace is the gift of God. It is therefore called by the apostle "an anchor of the soul both sure and stedfast, and entering into that within the veil;" and he says of it that "it maketh not ashamed," the reason being that it flows out of "the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 5:5).

3. *To love the Lord*, His ways, people, cause, and truth, especially Himself, so as to feel the flowings forth of affection towards the Person of Immanuel, and to cleave to Him with purpose of heart, is also a gift of God's grace. If we know anything of ourselves, and of our natural helplessness to any good word or work, we shall surely feel that it is only by the communications of His love to us that we can love Jesus, or the people of Jesus, or the way, Word, cause, and honour of Jesus. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He

loved us." There is the source. "We love Him because He first loved us." There is the stream.

It is grace, then, and grace alone, that produces these divine affections in the soul; for "love is of God," He being its eternal fountain; for "God is love," and "he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."

4. *Repentance* also unto life, that godly sorrow for sin "which worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of," is a special gift of God; for no man ever truly repented of his sins except by grace. Satan may persuade men that they can repent whenever they please; but spiritual repentance, as the apostle declares, is the express gift of an exalted Jesus—"Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31). A hard heart can never melt itself into contrition and godly sorrow for sin. A frozen heart can never dissolve itself into that meek penitence of spirit, that intense self-loathing and self-abhorrence, that holy mourning over a suffering Man of sorrows, that thorough forsaking of all evil, that godly tenderness of conscience, that thirsting after pardon and the blood of sprinkling, without which repentance is but a notion and a name. To produce this divine repentance, we are thoroughly helpless and powerless; nay, even when we have backslidden from the Lord, we cannot bring a sense of guilt upon the conscience; nor can we create in our souls any such spiritual views of a bleeding Jesus as shall melt us into holy sympathy and godly mourning with Him in the garden and on the cross.

5. *Resignation*, also, to the will of God; submission to His righteous dealings in providence and grace, a yielding up of body and soul, family and substance, to do with them and us as it seemeth to Him good, is His own gift, and springs wholly of His grace. We may talk of being resigned to God's

will, and of submitting to all His righteous dispensations. Such talk, and it is often but talk, is easy enough for those who know nothing of the waywardness and rebellion of the heart of man; and such talk will do very well when God's will and ours are not opposed, and all things about us and within us smile like the sun upon the summer sea. But how is it with us when the Lord crosses our inclinations in our nearest and dearest interests; when His knife cuts into our flesh sharp and deep? Can we then humble ourselves into the dust, and say, with meek, holy resignation, "Thy will be done?" We may perhaps attempt to use the words from the mere impulse of conscience, or as a Christian duty; but the feeling of quiet resignation, the humble lying before the throne, so as to kiss the rod—can we produce this? Whenever produced, it is the pure gift of God's grace.

6. *Humility*, again, that comely robe with which the Lord clothes His people, is not this also a gift of God's grace; and a most blessed gift, for it throws beauty over all the others?

7. Had I time to enter into them, I might dwell upon other gifts of God's grace, as *simplicity* and godly sincerity, *tenderness* of conscience, *filial fear*, a *desire* to please Him, and a dread to offend Him, and all those outward fruits and good works which are such sweet evidences of grace, and only grow on the gospel tree. What do we not owe to grace? Without grace, we are and have nothing; with grace, we are and have everything worth being and having. Without grace, we are wretches in the worst sense of the word, clothed with filthy garments as Joshua the High Priest when he stood before the angel. With grace, we possess all things, and are clothed with the perfect robe of Christ's righteousness. O the difference between him who possesses grace and him who possesses it not! In the eyes of most they may seem now to differ but little; but O! with what different eyes God views

them! The partaker of grace may be very poor in outward circumstances, very tried in mind, cast down in soul, burdened in conscience; often writing bitter things against himself; but O! how highly favoured, though he live in a garret or die in a ditch. No language framed by the mind, or uttered by the lips of man, can describe a thousandth part of the real blessedness of those to whom the Lord has given grace. And all that they have received is but a pledge of more; for He who has given them what they already have, will surely go on to give them still; for we read, "He giveth more grace." All their sins, sorrows, infirmities, hardness of heart, darkness of mind, misgivings, doubts, fears, trials, exercises, and temptations, will and can no more hinder the incoming of God's grace, than the darkness of the night hinders the rising of the sun. His grace will subdue their sins, deliver them out of every temptation, and preserve them to His heavenly kingdom, where grace is swallowed up in glory.

v. And this leads us to the point that He not only gives "grace," but "glory."

These two are necessarily connected with and flow out of each other; for wherever the Lord gives grace, He in and with that grace gives glory. We therefore read, "Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified." Thus He has already made them, even while on earth, partakers of His glory; and this by making them partakers of His grace; for as in the bud is the bloom, and in the bloom the fruit, so in budding grace is blooming glory—grace being but glory begun, and glory being but grace finished.

But what is "glory?" Viewed as future—it is full consummation, it is to be with Jesus in realms of eternal

bliss, where tears are wiped off all faces; it is to see Him as He is; to be conformed to His glorious likeness; to be delivered from all sin and sorrow; to be perfectly free from all temptations, trials, burdens, and exercises, to dwell for ever in that happy land, "the inhabitants of which shall not say, I am sick:" where a weary body, a burdened conscience, a troubled heart, a faint and weary mind, are utterly and for ever unknown. In a word, it is to have a glorified body reunited to a glorified soul, and for both to be as full of happiness and holiness, bliss and blessedness, as an immortal spirit can hold and an immortal frame can endure, drinking in to the full, with unutterable satisfaction but without satiety, the pleasures that are at God's right hand for evermore. But no human heart can conceive nor human tongue unfold in what the nature and fulness of this glory consist; for "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor. 2:9). Yet all this glory will the Lord give to those upon whom He has already bestowed His grace. He gives them grace now, to bring them through this wilderness world, this vale of tears, this scene of temptation, sin, and sorrow; and when He lands them on that happy shore, He gives them there the fulness of His glory. Then will be fully accomplished the Redeemer's prayer and will—"Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me; for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24). Their right and title to the enjoyment of this predestinated inheritance are securely lodged in the hands of their covenant Head; and He living at God's right hand to save them to the uttermost, all their temptations, enemies, sins, and sorrows can never hinder them from reaching the shore on which God has decreed they shall safely land. Satan may spread a thousand snares to entangle their feet; not a day or scarcely an hour may

pass that they are not burdened with indwelling sin; a myriad of lusts may start up in arms from the depths of their carnal mind; and many a pang of guilt and thrill of despair may seem at times wholly to cut them off from eternal life. But yet, where the Lord has given grace He will give glory; for when He gives grace with the left hand, He gives glory with the right; yea, we may say that with both hands He gives at once both grace and glory; for as grace and glory flow out of the same loving heart, and are given by the same loving God, they may be said to be given by both hands at one and the same time. A portion or foretaste of this glory is given on earth in every discovery of the glory of Christ; as the Lord speaks, "And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them"—already given them; and this He did when "He manifested His glory, and His disciples believed on Him."

II. But we advance to still further discoveries of the Lord's goodness. It is therefore added, "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." There may be some here, as there are many in God's suffering Church below, who seem unable to rise to the full experience and enjoyment of what we have been endeavouring to unfold. They can believe that for others there is grace in present possession, and glory in future enjoyment; but they cannot believe for themselves that they now partake of the one, or shall hereafter enjoy the other. They are well persuaded that the Lord will give grace and glory to those who are His; but when they look at themselves, and at what is continually felt or feared in their own bosom—when they feel how cold and lifeless they are from day to day, how barren, worthless, unfruitful, and unprofitable—they are often tempted to cry out, "Can ever God dwell here? Can there be any grace, even a spark, in a heart like mine?" It would almost seem, then, as if the Lord, speaking by His servant David, here casts upon them a loving look, and penned these words for their

special comfort: "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." There are those who walk uprightly, very uprightly, in the fear of God, and yet have little comfortable or abiding evidence that they are at present partakers of God's grace, or will be hereafter sharers of Christ's glory. But this one evidence they certainly do possess, though they can take no present comfort from it, that they walk uprightly before God and man. Let no one, however deeply experienced or highly favoured, despise this evidence of grace in others; and you who walk uprightly from a living principle of godly fear have here a marked testimony from the Lord Himself that He has a special regard for you.

i. But what is it "to walk uprightly?" O, here is the grand difficulty in religion. We may talk, we may preach, we may hear, we may seem to believe; but it is when we come to act, to walk, and to carry out into daily and hourly practice what we profess, that the main difficulty is felt and found. "The soul of religion," says Bunyan, "is the practical part;" and it is when we come to this "practical part" that the daily, hourly cross commences. The walk, the conversation, the daily, hourly conduct is, after all, the main difficulty, as it is the all-important fruit of a Christian profession. To walk day after day, under all circumstances, and amidst all the varied temptations that beset us, uprightly, tenderly, and sincerely in the fear of God; to feel continually that heart, lip, and life are all open before His all-penetrating eye; to do the things which He approves, and to flee from the things which He abhors—O, this in religion is the steep hill which it is such a struggle to climb. We can talk fast enough, but O, to walk in the strait and narrow path; to be a Christian outwardly as well as inwardly, before God and man, before the church and the world; and in all points to speak and act with undeviating consistency with our profession, this is what nature never has done, and what nature never can do. In thus acting, as

much as in believing, do we need God's power and grace to work in and be made manifest in us.

ii. But let us look a little more closely at what it is "to walk uprightly."

1. Viewed as to our relation with God, one part of upright walking is to confess our sins before Him; to tell Him all our slips, wanderings, backslidings, and departings; in a word, whatever we feel condemned for and guilty of in the court of conscience, to make a clean breast of it. Upright walking before God is not to make the best of ourselves, but to make the worst of ourselves; yea, to make ourselves out as black as we feel in the worst of times, under the keenest feelings and most dismal sensations. To confess our sins with all their aggravations is to make straight paths for our feet; and without it there is no walking uprightly.

2. Another branch of walking uprightly before God, as He bade Abraham, when He said to him, "I am the Almighty God: walk before Me, and be thou perfect (marg., "upright")—is to be continually looking to the Lord Jesus. This is to do as the wise man urges, "Let thine eyes look right on, and thy eyelids straight before." And as the apostle speaks, "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus." He that looks unto Jesus so far walks uprightly, as he is not fixing his eyes on his own righteousness, but turns them away from self to look unto Him that sitteth at the right hand of God. In a similar way that soul may truly be said to walk uprightly who walks onward boldly and firmly, without even turning to the right hand or the left, in the strait and narrow path, hanging upon the strength of Christ, and of Him alone.

3. He, too, may be said to walk uprightly before God who labours to be conformed in heart, lip, and life, to the

precepts of the gospel; to take them for his rule and guide; to seek to do those things which the precept enforces, and flee from those things which the precept forbids.

4. But there is also a walking uprightly before men; and he who is upright and honest in all his dealings; who is perfectly square in all his daily transactions in business; who would not, for any consideration, break his word or do anything unbecoming the profession that he makes, and this not from legality and self-righteousness, or mere natural integrity, but from a principle of godly fear, is one who walks uprightly.

5. To this we may add, that he who walks before the church with tenderness of conscience, with simplicity and godly sincerity, speaking only as his own of the things which God has done for his soul—is one who walks uprightly.

Now, many can come in with this description of a partaker of grace who cannot and do not rise to the sweet enjoyment of manifested mercy, or to a deliverance from guilt and bondage. Promises applied with power, and the consolations of God in the soul, are things which they seem to fall short of. These sure testimonies are too high for them to reach unto. They desire them most earnestly, for they feel their deep need of them, and know, in some measure, how sweet they are from what little they have tasted of them themselves, and what they observe of their savour and effects in others, and as described in the Word of God. But through doubt and fear, the unbelief and abounding evils of their heart, they are kept on short commons, and as yet are not admitted to feed in the green pastures and lie down beside the still waters of manifested love. Yet they walk uprightly, most uprightly; nay, they often, by their godly walk and conversation, put to shame those who have a deeper experience, and can speak more fully and clearly of

the delivering mercy of God. There are some who are thought and called "weaklings" in the professing church, who, by their self-denying, consistent life, by their manifest tenderness of conscience, strictness of walk, and watchful attention to their words and ways, put to shame, or at least ought to do so, those who have a clearer experience both of law and gospel.

iii. Upon those, then, that thus walk uprightly, the Lord looks down with pleasure and approbation; for so to walk is as much of His grace as if they were favoured with great manifestations. Let not, then, those who have had great manifestations despise those who have not been so highly favoured, if they see them walk uprightly; but let them rather admire their Christian walk and conversation, the fear of God so evidently dwelling in their heart, their tender conscience, humble lips, and circumspect lives. But, on the other hand, let those who walk uprightly place no dependence upon their good conduct and upright walk; nor let them shoot their arrows against those who are blessed with a deeper experience, because, perhaps, they do not walk so circumspectly as they. Let not the weak judge the strong, nor the strong despise the weak. They are both redeemed by the same precious blood, taught by the same Spirit, sanctified by the same grace, children of the same God, and heirs of the same glory. You who are blessed with a deeper experience, if you should be left to slip and stumble, may have reason to envy those who walk uprightly. And you who walk uprightly need not envy those who have been more blest than yourself, if you see in them the want of that circumspection with which God has blest you, for most certainly, next to being saved and being blessed with a knowledge of it, the greatest mercy which God can bestow upon a child of His is to enable him to walk uprightly.

iv. But look at the fulness of the promise given to such: "*No good thing* will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." How much is contained in the expression, "No good thing!" In the very way in which the promise is couched, there is, to my mind, something very sweet. You may be tempted sometimes to say, "The Lord withholds from me everything which seems to me to be good; the sweet shinings in of His countenance; the manifestations of His favour: the sealing application of His blood and love, all are withheld; and for want of these blessings, I seem to be and have nothing." To meet this desponding feeling, the Lord says, "I will withhold no good thing from you that walk uprightly." Now, consider and weigh over what you think are good things, and such good things as the Lord only can bestow. "O," say you, "I should call it a good thing to be perfectly sure of my interest in Christ." Well, the Lord will not withhold that good thing from you. "I should call it a good thing to have a sweet promise applied to my soul by the Lord's own mouth." Well, if you walk uprightly, the Lord will not withhold that good thing from you. "I should call it a good thing to have my conscience sprinkled with atoning blood." The Lord will not withhold that good thing from you, if you walk uprightly. "I should count it," say you, "a good thing to have a sweet manifestation of the Saviour to my soul, and be favoured with a blessed sense of His presence and dying love." The Lord will not withhold that good thing from you who by His grace walk uprightly. And so I might travel through all the good things God has to give, and all that the heart of man can receive, and then I should keep within the limits of the promise in my text, and fall short, very short, of exhausting its fulness. For the positive declaration of God is, "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." Nor let us forget that this promise includes favours in providence as well as in grace. No good thing, then, in providence, as well as no good thing in grace, shall you ever want; everything

that is really good for you, measured, however, by God's wisdom, and not by your lusts, whatever the Lord sees thus good in providence will He bestow upon you. It is not in His heart to withhold any good thing from them that walk uprightly, whose conscience is tender, in whose heart the fear of God is, and whose life is circumspect according to the precepts of His gospel.

Do we not see this promise continually fulfilled in the experience of God's family? Many have gone through life downcast and troubled, scarcely able to say anything for themselves, and hardly daring to indulge themselves with a hope of getting to heaven at last; yet they have walked uprightly, most uprightly, and when they have come to die the Lord has withheld no good thing from them. He has then blessed their souls, even to overflowing, with a sense of His mercy and love, and they can then say, what perhaps they could never say fully before, that no good thing has He withheld from them, for they have now the sweet enjoyment of them all.

III. The Psalmist then closes the whole of this expressive and beautiful Psalm with a burst of praise: "O Lord of hosts," he cries, as if his heart was so full that he could only give vent to it by pouring it forth in admiring, adoring words, "O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee." It is as though he looked up into heaven, and saw the Lord surrounded by myriads of glorified spirits made perfect, hosts of redeemed saints, more than the stars of the sky for multitude. And viewing how all these had safely reached that glorified shore, he felt the blessedness of their having trusted in the Lord, and in the Lord alone. "O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee."

1. But what is it to trust in God? This, too, is wholly of His

grace. Before we can trust in God, we must know Him. You cautious tradesmen, who are so very careful not to lose a shilling of your money, do you trust people whom you do not know? You must have confidence in a man before you can trust him. You want to know his character before you can give him credit in your books. So, how can anyone trust in God until he has some confidence in Him, till he has some acquaintance with His character?

2. Trust in God also implies total self-renunciation. The moment that I trust in myself, I cease to trust in God. The moment I take any portion of my confidence away from the Lord and put a grain of it in myself, that moment I take away all my trust in God. My trust in God must be all, or nothing. It must be unreserved and complete, or else it is false and delusive. Is not the Lord worthy to be trusted? And if He is worthy to be trusted at all, is He not worthy to be trusted with all? What real confidence could a man have in the wife of his bosom if he could trust her with one key, but not with all? Is that full confidence? So, if we can trust God for one thing and not for all, it shows that we have no real trust in Him. A man has no real trust in his wife who cannot give her all the keys. A man has no real trust in God who cannot give Him all his heart, and put everything into His hand—family, property, body, and soul. The province and work of true faith is to put everything into the hands of God, keeping back no part of the price. It is this secret reserve that God hates; there is hypocrisy on the very face of it. Trust in God for nothing, or trust in Him for all. God will not take a divided heart. Give Him all, or none. And is He not worthy of it? Has He ever disappointed you whenever you have really put your trust in Him? Does He not say, "Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness? wherefore say My people, We are lords; we will come no more unto Thee?" (Jer. 2:32).

But David saw how few there were that with all their hearts did trust in God. This feeling seems to have made him say, "Blessed is *the man*," that peculiar man, that rare individual, "that trusteth in Thee!" The blessing of God rests upon that happy, that highly-favoured man. He is blessed for time and for eternity. He has the blessing of God even now in his soul. O! how rare it is for us to be in that sweet, blessed frame when we can put our trust wholly in God; trust Him for life and death; trust Him for all things, past, present, and to come. Yet, without a measure of this faith, there is no solid peace, no real and abiding rest. And to this you must sooner or later come; for you cannot carry your own burdens without their breaking your back. But when you can cast your burden on the Lord, then you will surely find sweet relief.

May we not, then, join heart and voice with David, "O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee?" Such a one will never be disappointed. The Lord will hear his prayer, the Lord will bless his soul, will be with him in life, support him in death, and take him to be with Him in eternity.