

A Precious Drop Of Honey

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 31, 1863, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON, AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"Behold, I have inscribed you upon the palms of My hands." [Isaiah 49:16](#).

GOD'S promises are not exhausted by one fulfillment. They are manifold mercies, so that after you have opened one fold and found out one signification, you may unfurl them still more and find another which shall be equally true, and then another, and another, and another, almost without end. Like the cherubim, God's promises have a face for every quarter of the earth, and like the wheels, they are full of eyes for every trial of the chosen people. The Lord knows how to speak many-handed promises. His words, like the trees of the New Jerusalem, bear twelve manner of fruits, and yield their fruit every month.

No doubt the text and the preceding promises all refer to the seed of Abraham. God will not cast them away. He does no more forget them than does a woman forget her sucking child. They shall return to their own land and accept Messiah, the Prince whom they have so long despised. But the seed of Abraham is the grand type of the Church. And therefore we believe that every word here, in its widest and most extensive sense, belongs to the elect of God—those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life, and for whom Jesus shed His blood. We feel persuaded that the favor which is shelved to the whole body is given to each member, and therefore any true Believer who is, through faith, one of the spiritual seed of Abraham, may take the promises to himself and say, "Thus says the Lord unto my soul.

Thus and thus speaks He comfortably concerning me."

I believe, I say, that the text before us belongs primarily to the seed of Israel. Next, to the whole Church as a body. And then to every individual member. Understand it so, and may each one of you, even though you are numbered among the little in Israel, have Divine Grace to draw forth marrow and fatness out of the inexpressibly rich text which today the Spirit of God presents to us.

I intend, first of all, to consider our text verbally, pulling it to pieces word by word. Then next, to consider it as a whole. And then, to incite you by it as a whole, to consider what is the conduct demanded of you by a Truth of God so sweet.

I. First of all, then, my text is one of those remarkable sentences in which EVERY SINGLE WORD DESERVES TO BE EMPHASIZED. We will begin with the first word, "Behold." "Behold, I have inscribed you upon the palms of My hands." "Behold," is a word of wonder. It is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient signboard, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritan books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation.

Here, indeed, we have a theme for marveling. Heaven and earth may well be astonished that God should ever inscribe upon His hands the names of sinners. That rebels should attain so great a nearness to His heart as to be written upon the palms of His hands! Well might the angels wonder, and those bright spirits be lost in amazement, for unto which of the angels said He at any time, "I have inscribed you upon the palms of My hands"? What cherub ever attained this dignity, or to what seraph was this honor awarded? But to man, who is but a worm. To the son of man who is but dust and ashes. To man who has rebelled, who has lost all claim upon God's favor, and deserves His hottest wrath—to man is this consolation given, "I have inscribed you upon the palms of My hands."

Speak of the seven wonders of the world! Why this is a wonder in the seventh heavens! No doubt a part of the wonder which is concentrated in the word "Behold," is excited by the unbelieving lamentation of the preceding sentence. Zion said, "The Lord has forsaken me, and my God has forgotten me." How amazed the Divine mind seems to be at this wicked unbelief of man! What can be more astounding than the unfounded doubts and fears of God's favored people? He seems to say, "How can I have forgotten you, when I have inscribed you upon the palms of My hands? How can it be? How dare you doubt My constant remembrance, when the memorial is set upon My very flesh?"

Unbelief, how strange a marvel you are! I know not which most to wonder at, the faithfulness of God or the unbelief of His people! He keeps His promise a thousand times, and yet the next trial makes us doubt Him. He never fails. He is never a dry well. He is never as a setting sun, a passing meteor, or a melting vapor—and yet we are as continually vexed with anxieties, molested with suspicions, and disturbed with fears—as if our God were fickle and untrue. Here follows the great marvel—that God should be faithful to such a faithless people! And that when He is provoked with their doubts, He nevertheless abides true.

Behold! Behold! I say and am ashamed and confounded for all your cruel doubts of your indulgent Lord. I remarked that the "Behold" in our text is intended to attract particular attention. There is something here worthy of being studied. If you should spend a month over such a text as this, you should only begin to understand it. It is a gold mine. There are nuggets upon the surface, but there is richer gold for the man who can dig deep. I can only indicate the veins of gold—it is for you afterwards in your meditations to follow them out.

I pray you, be very careful with the text—lose not a drop of the wine of consolation contained in its precious crystal—be prayerful and anxious to grind forth from this wheat every atom of its fine flour. Leave no meal to grow stale in this barrel. Drain all the oil from this cruse, for where God sets a "Behold," depend upon it, there is a something that is not to be trifled with, nor to be passed over in indifference.

We pass on now to the next word, "Behold, I have inscribed you upon the palms of My hands." The Divine Artist, who has been pleased to engrave His people for a memorial, is

none other than God Himself. Here we learn the lesson which Christ afterwards taught His disciples—"You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." No one can write upon the hands of God, but God Himself. Neither our merits, prayers, repentance, nor faith can write our names there, for these in their goodness extend not unto God so as to write upon His hands.

Nor did blind chance or mere necessity of fate inscribe our names. But the living hand of a living Father, unprompted by anything except the spontaneous and Omnipotent love of His own heart, wrote the names of His people upon His own hands. How dependent are we upon God! If my name is in the Lamb's Book of Life, how ought I to adore the sovereignty of the Divine Grace which placed it there! Had it not been there, I could not have inscribed it. Had it not been found in the list, no archangel could, by any possibility, have inserted it—

"What if my name should be left out When You for them shall call?"

It is a black thought to any of us, but when I know that it is not left out, but is written there among the bright spirits chosen of God, and precious, how this should make me leap for joy! "I have inscribed you." Then, again, if the Lord has done it, there is no mistake about it. If some human hand had cut the memorial, the hieroglyphs might be at fault. But since perfect Wisdom has combined with perfect Love to make a memorial of the saints, no error by any possibility can have occurred. There can be no erasures, no crossing out of what God has written, no blotting out of what the Eternal has decreed. Fixed, and fixed forever must be the inscription which is of Divine Authorship.

The powers of darkness cannot erase those everlasting lines. "I have inscribed you upon the palms of My hands." Soul, this is enough to overwhelm you with humble adoration that God should so much as take notice of you. When you receive the daily tokens of Divine care, ought you not to exclaim with David—"When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?" But how is it, Lord, that You can go farther than this, and You Yourself write the names of these insignificant mortals upon Your own hands?

"I have inscribed you." It is wonderful to see how God comes into immediate contact with His saints, and appears in Person in all His acts of Grace towards them. In other works it is His far-reaching voice, but in the wonders of His Grace it is His present hand. In the making of worlds, He stands at a distance, and speaks His will. But when He creates saints, and redeems His people, He comes out of His chambers—He rends the heavens and comes down—He reveals Himself as a God near at hand. He stands over His work as the potter over the clay upon the wheel.

It is written that when He made the heavens and the earth, "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." But I never hear that God sang. There is

nothing in the merely material universe to stir the Infinite heart. The work is not dear enough to Him, nor so full of satisfaction as the grand work of redeeming love. When He saved His people—when He created Israel for Himself, I hear it said—"He shall rest in His love. He shall rejoice over you with singing." Oh, matchless verse, in which the Eternal Trinity burst forth into sacred song! Do you not catch the strain even now. "I have done it. I have come forth Myself out of the secret of My tabernacle wherein I have concealed Myself from the gaze of men, and 'I have inscribed you upon the palms of My hands.' "

Take the next word. We have many wells here out of which we may draw water. "Behold, I have inscribed you." Not, "I will," you see. Nor yet, "I am doing it." It is a thing of the past, and how far back in the past! Oh, the antiquity of this inscription! They take us to the British Museum and show us most reverend writings which are the memorials of those hoary ages—which were the first born of the years beyond the flood. But here is an inscription older than them all. Compared with it, Assyrian antiquities and Egyptian records are things of yesterday. Before the young earth had burst her swaddling bands of mist, yes, before the globe had been begotten, or yonder sun had darted his infant arrows, or yonder stars had opened their eyes, the Eternal had fixed His eyes of love upon His favorites.

Fly back as far as you will, until this present world and all the worlds within the universe sleep in the mind of God, like unborn forests in an acorn cup, and even then you have not reached the time. Before all time when it was first said—"I have inscribed you upon the palms of My hands." "From everlasting to everlasting You are God." From everlasting to everlasting You are the same, and Your people's names are written on Your hands!

Yet, methinks there may be a prophetic reference here to a later writing of the names, when Jesus Christ submitted His outstretched palms to those cruel engraving tools, the nails. Then was it surely, when the executioner with the hammer smote the tender hands of the loving Jesus, that He engraved our names upon the palms of His hands. And today when He points to those wounds, when by faith He permits us to put our fingers into the prints of the nails, He may still say to us—

"Deep on the palms of both My hands I have engraved Your name."

Well, Christian, do not these deep things comfort you? Have you no consolation in the ancient things of the everlasting mountains? Does not eternal love delight you? God is no stranger to you. He has known you long before you knew yourself—yes, long before you were curiously worked in the lowest parts of the earth—in His book all your members were written, which in continuance were fashioned when as yet there was none of them. Known unto God from the foundation of the earth were you. He was always thinking of you. There was never a period when you were not in His mind and on His heart. "I have inscribed you upon the palms of My hands."

But the next word is "inscribed." My dear friend, The Rev. John Anderson, of Helensburgh, whom I am glad to welcome here today, told me this morning that while traveling

in the east he has frequently seen persons with portraits of their friends upon their hands, so that wherever they went, as one in this country would carry the portrait of a friend in a brooch or a watch, they carry these likenesses printed on their palms.

I said to him, "Surely they would wash out." They might by degrees, he said, but they frequently had them pricked in with strong indelible ink, so that there, while the palm lasts, there lasts the memorial of the friend. Surely this is what the text refers to. I have inscribed you in. I have not merely printed you, stamped you on the surface, but I have permanently cut you into my hand with marks which never can be removed. That word "inscribed" sets forth the perpetuity of the inscription. Not on the hand of man but on the hand of God is it engraved.

Oh, mysterious thought! On that hand immortal and eternal is it dug, engraved in. Our engravers press upon their tools. They tell us how stern the labor when they cut the hard metal to mark each line, and God has thus engraved—with the whole strength of Omnipotence He has leaned upon the tool to cut our names into His flesh! Was there not such an engraving at Calvary? Is it not written, "It pleased the Father to bruise Him. He has put Him to grief"? It is as if eternal strength, I say, leaned upon that engraving tool to write the memorial of His chosen people in the hands of Jesus. "I have inscribed you upon the palms of My hands."

We need not indulge the dark foreboding that we shall be lost, but we may sing with Hammond—

"If Jesus is ours we have a true Friend, Whose goodness endures the same to the end. Our comforts may vary, our frames may decline,

We cannot miscarry. Our aid is Divine. The hills may depart and mountains remove,
But faithful You are O fountain of love! The Father has inscribed our names on Your hands,
Our record, in Heaven, eternally stands."

Shall we stop to take that next word? Scarcely may I preach from it, but you should meditate upon it constantly. "I have inscribed you upon the palms of My hands." My Lord, do You mean me? Yes, even me, if I, by faith, cling to Your Cross. I am not shut out from Your heart of love, if by faith I have entered into Your happy family. I know that You remember me or You would never have helped me to remember You. Glory be to You, O my gracious Lord."

But I want you, my beloved Brothers and Sisters, to notice that the word runs, "I have inscribed you." It does not say, "Your name." The name is there, but that is not all—"I have inscribed you." See the fullness of this! I have inscribed your person, your image, your case, your circumstances, your sins, your temptations, your weaknesses, your wants, your works. I have inscribed you—everything about you—all that concerns you. I have put you altogether there. It is not an outline sketch, you see. It is a full picture, as though the man himself were there. What? Do you dare dream that God forgets you? Will you ever say again that your

God has forsaken you when He has engraved you—not your name, I say, but everything that concerns you—upon His own palms?

"Oh," says one, "but I am in such a plight this morning." Well, He has inscribed that there. "Ah," says another, "I am so weak and so feeble!" That, too, is engraved there. "I have inscribed you." The Omniscient God knows you better than you know yourself—and whereas you are conscious of some sin and some imperfection—He knows that you have an infinitude of sin and a vastness of infirmity. He has put it all there—"I have engraved you." I say, again, this is a thing too great to be talked of, but more fit to be read, marked, learned, and digested in the silence of your closet.

You have never inscribed yourselves so well upon the tablets of your own knowledge as God has inscribed you upon those blessed tablets—the palms of His hands. Yes, I dare to say it—our indulgent God as much thinks of one saint as if there were no other saint—and no other created thing in all the world. Our Covenant God so recollects and cares for His child, that if the whole universe were dissolved and had departed like a shadow, and our Lord had but one man to fix all His Divine Grace upon, He would not watch him more, nor more carefully and lovingly see after his best interests, than He now cares for each one of His people. "I have inscribed you upon the palms of My hands."

We have up to now taken every word, but we must now take the next two or three. Remember we are inscribed, where? Upon His hands, not upon the works of His hands. They shall perish—yes, they shall all wax old as does a garment. But His hands shall endure forever and ever. We are not inscribed upon a seal, for a seal might be slipped from the finger and laid aside. The hand itself can never be separated from the living God. It is not inscribed or engraved on a huge rock, for a convulsion of nature might rend the rock by an earthquake, or the fretting tooth of time might eat the inscription out. Our record is on His hands, where it must last, world without end. Not upon the back of His hands where it might be supposed that in days of strife and warfare the inscription might suffer damage, but there upon the palms of His hands where it shall be well protected, so that even—

"When God's right arm is bared for war, And thunder clouds His stormy cry," even then, when He smites with His fist, His people shall be well protected within the palms of His hands.

The most tender part shall be made the place of the inscription, that to which He is most likely to look. That which His fingers of wisdom enclose, that by which He works His mighty wonders shall be the unceasing remembrance, pledging Him never to forget His chosen. Do notice, it does not say, "I have inscribed you upon the palm of one hand," but "I have inscribed you upon the palms of My hands." There are two memorials. His saints shall never be forgotten, for the inscription is put there upon the palm of this hand, the right hand of blessing, and upon the palm of that hand, the left hand of justice. I see Him with His right hand beckon me—"Come you blessed," and He sees me in His hand.

And on that side He says, "Depart you cursed," but not to me, for He sees me in His hand, and cannot curse me. Oh, my Soul, how charming this is, to know that His left hand is under your head, while His right hand does embrace you. Both hands are marked with the memorial—this left hand, which is the hand of cursing, cannot curse me, for it is under my head. It cannot smite, for it has become my strength and my stay, my pillow and my rest. While His right hand does embrace me, to keep me safe from death, and Hell—and to preserve me and bring me to His eternal kingdom in Glory.

Now I am conscious that I cannot work out the beauty of this passage. I am equally conscious that you cannot either, unless you have much longer time for meditation than such a short service as this can afford you. Take it home and look at it again and again, especially laying an emphasis on the word "you." And oh, if you can render it—"He has inscribed me, me, me, upon the palms of His hands." If your soul can know that God has you daily in remembrance, and neither can, nor will, forget you, then you will dance before the Ark of the Lord. And if Michal mocks, you may answer her as David did—"The God that chose me, made me to dance." Eternal Election and Indissoluble Union are truths which make Believers rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. "Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous, and shout for joy all you that are upright in heart."

II. Now let us proceed to the second part of the subject, which is to CONSIDER THE TEXT AS A WHOLE. "I have inscribed you upon the palms of My hands." This seems to show us, first of all, that God's remembrance of His people is constant. The hands, of course, are constantly in union with the body. In Solomon's Song we read, "Set me as a seal upon Your hands." Now this is a very close form of remembrance, for the seal is very seldom laid aside by the Eastern, who not being possessed with skill in the art of writing his name, requires his seal in order to affix his signature to a document. Therefore the seal is almost always worn, and in some cases is never laid aside.

A seal, however, might be laid aside, but the hands never could be. It has been a custom, in the olden days especially, when men wished to remember a thing, to tie a cord about the hand, or a thread around the finger by which memory would be assisted. But then the cord might be snapped or taken away, and so the matter forgotten. But the hand and that which is printed into it must be constant and perpetual. O Christian, remember that by night and by day God is always thinking of you. From the beginning of the year even to the end of the year, the Lord's eyes are upon you, according to His precious Word—"I, the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment, lest any hurt it. I will keep it night and day."

Your remembrance of God is intermittent. You thought of Him this morning when you rose from your beds. You are trying to think of Him now, and this evening, again, your thoughts will go up to Him. These are only times and seasons of remembrance, but God never ceases to recollect you. The finite mind of man cannot constantly be occupied, if it is to engage in other pursuits, with any one thought. But the gigantic mind of God can think

of a million trains of thought at once. He is not confined to thinking of one thing, or working out one problem at a time. He is the great many-handed, many-eyed God. He does all things, and meditates upon all things, and works all things at the same time—therefore He never is called away by any urgent business so that He can forget you.

No second person ever comes in to become a rival in His affection towards you. You are fast united to your great Husband, Christ, and no other lover can steal His heart. But Jesus, having chosen you, does never allow a rival to come. You are His beloved, His spouse, the darling of His heart, and He has Himself said, "My eyes and my heart are toward you continually." Every moment of every day, every day of every month, and every month of every year, is the Lord continually thinking upon you, if you are one of His.

Still further, the text as a whole seems to show us that this recollection on God's part is practical. We are engraved upon His heart—this is to show His love. We are put upon His shoulders—this is to show that His strength is engaged for us. And also upon His hands, to show that the activity of our Lord will not be separated from us. He will work and show Himself strong for His people. He brings His Omnipotent hands to effect our redemption. What would be the use of having a friend who would think of us, and then let his love end in thought? The faithfulness we want is that of one who will act in our defense. We need one who so cares for us that against every arrow of the adversary He will lift up the shield. And for every want will find a supply. We want an active sympathy from God. Surely this is the intention of the text. "I have inscribed you upon the palms of My hands."

He has done all He has done as if everything that He touched left a memorial of His people on it—as if every work He did, He did it with the same hands that carved the remembrance of His people. Do you see the drift of it? If He molds a world between His palms and then sends it wheeling in its orbit—it is between those palms which are stamped with the likeness of His sons and daughters—and so that new work shall minister to their good. If He divides a nation, it is always with the hand that bears the remembrance of Zion. Scripture itself tells us this, "When He divided the nations, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel."

The great wheel of Providence, when God makes it revolve, works for the good of the people whom He has called according to His purpose. There are many strings, but they are all in one hand, and they all pull one way—to draw a weight of glory to the chosen. There are many wheels and innumerable cogs, and as you and I look about us, we cannot understand the machinery. We cry, "O wheels, what do you work?" But the end, the end, if you stood there and saw the end of everything, you would see that God has stamped all the wheels with the memory of His children, so that the result is always good and only good to those whom He has inscribed on the palms of His hands. It is, then, a practical as well as a constant sympathy.

Next, dear Friends, and to the children of God this will be a delightful thought, this is an eternal remembrance. You cannot suppose it possible that any person can erase what is written on God's hands. The Scriptures tell us that we are in the hands of Christ, and that none shall pluck us out. Some Arminians say we can slip out. But how can we slip out if we are engraved there? We may well defy all the devils in Hell, with all their craft, even to forge a plan by which they can get at the palms of God's hands. I cannot think of a thing that should seem more impossible, more tremendously impossible, than that any creature—whether it be life or death, things present or things to come—should ever be able to reach the palms of God's hands, so as to erase our names. Our hymn is not wrong when it says—

"Once in Christ, in Christ forever,
Nothing from His love can sever." And Toplady made no mistake when he said—
"My name from the palms of His hands
Eternity will not erase.
Impressed on His heart it remains
In marks of indelible Grace—
Yes, I to the end shall endure,
As sure as the earnest is given.
More happy, but not more secure,
The glorified spirits in Heaven."

"I have inscribed you upon the palms of My hands."

Still I have not drained my text dry. Let the treader of the winepress tread the grapes once more, and more holy wine shall flow there from this memorial—how tender! How tender, I say, because it is inscribed on the hands. We have heard of one, an eastern queen, who so loved her husband that she thought even to build a mausoleum to his memory was not enough. She had a strange way of proving her affection, for when her husband's bones were burned she took the ashes and drank them day by day, that, as she said, her body might be her husband's living sepulcher.

It was a strange way of showing love and there was a marvelous degree of strange, fanatical fondness in it. But what shall I say of this Divine, celestial, unobjectionable, sympathetic mode of showing remembrance by cutting it into the palms? Words fail to express our intense content with this most admirable sign of tenderness and fond affection. It appears to me as though the King had said, "Shall I carve my people upon precious stones? Shall I choose the ruby, the emerald, the topaz? No. For these all must melt in the last general conflagration. What then? Shall I write on tablets of gold or silver? No, for all these may canker and corrupt, and thieves may break through and steal.

"Shall I cut the memorial deep on brass? No, for time would fret it, and the letters would not long be legible. I will write on Myself, on My own hands, and then My people will know

how tender I am, that I would sooner cut into My own flesh than forget them. I will have my Son branded in the hands with the names of His people, that they may be sure He cannot forsake them. Hard by the memorial of His wounds shall be the memorial of His love to them, for, indeed, His wounds are an everlasting remembrance." How loving, then, how full of superlative, super-excellent affection is God toward you, and toward me in so recording our names.

Weary not when I yet further remark, that this memorial is most surprising. Scripture, which is full of wonders, yet allows a "Behold" to be put before this verse—"Behold!" If the things I have been saying are enough to make you wonder—the deep sea of the text, without bottom and without shore—would much more cause you to hold up your hands in astonishment. Child of God, let your cheerful eyes, and your joyful heart testify how great a wonder it is that you, once so vile, so hard of heart, so far estranged from God, are this day written on the palms of His hands. And then I close this point by saying it is also most consolatory. When God would meet Zion's great doubt—"God has forgotten me," He cheers her with this—"I have inscribed you upon the palms of My hands."

Where are you this morning, Mourner—where are you? Ah, you may well hide your head for shame. You said yesterday, when trial after trial came —

"My God has quite forgotten me; My Lord will be gracious no more." Here is God's answer to you this morning—"It cannot be. I cannot forget you, for I have inscribed you upon the palms of My hands."—

"Forget you, I will not, I cannot, your name Engraved on My heart does forever remain; The palms of My hands while I look on, I see The wounds I received when suffering for you." There is no sorrow to which our text is not an antidote. If you are a child of God, though your troubles have been as innumerable as the waves of the sea, this text, like the channels of the ocean, can contain them all. I care not this morning though you have lost everything, though you came here a penniless bankrupt beggar—so long as you have this text you are rich beyond a miser's dream!

You may have forgotten your own mercy. Your own experience may seem a dream to you. The devil may tell you that you never knew the Lord. Your own sins may bear evidence in the same way—but if you have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Covenant made with David's Lord must not, and cannot, be broken. "I have inscribed you upon the palms of My hands." Come, drooping Saint, lift up your head! You dreary, downcast Brother, be of good cheer! If Christ remembers you, what more can you want? The dying thief's extremity could not suggest a prayer larger than, "Lord, remember me!"—and your greatest sorrow cannot ask for a more complete assuagement than this—"Lord, show me that You have inscribed me upon the palms of Your hands."

III. And now we come to the last point, upon which only a hint. I said the last point would be to EXCITE YOU TO THE DUTY WHICH SUCH A TEXT SUGGESTS.

Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ, if you are partakers of this inestimably precious text, let me say, first of all, is it not your duty to leave your cares behind you today? We do not want any valuables left behind in the Chapel, but these cares can be swept out tomorrow morning when the women clear away the rubbish—and I am sure the dustbin never contained viler stuff. Leave them here today. What are you fretting about? Is not a Christian inconsistent when he is full of carking care? Should not the fact that God always graciously and tenderly remembers you, compel you once and for all to leave your burden with Him who cares for you?—

"The Lord our Leader goes before,
Sufficient He and none besides.
And were the dangers many more,
We need not fear with such a Guide.
Through snares, through dangers and through foes
He leads, whose arm almighty is—
What, then, if earth and Hell oppose?
We need not fear if we are His."

Then, if you must not have cares, I think you should not have those deep sorrows and despairs. Lift up your head! Jehovah remembers you, Man! The billows cannot drown him whom the Lord of Hosts ordains to bring to shore. Be glad in your God, and His perfect love. Do you not think that joy becomes a man to whom such a text as this belongs? Wipe your brow. It is true, the sweat stands on it, but your greatest labor is done—Christ has finished it for you. There need, at least, be no sweat of trepidation and alarm upon your face. He cannot forget you. You have what angels envy. You have what poor mourning souls would give their eyes to win—what troubled consciences would give their blood to buy.

Be glad! Why should the children of such a King go mourning any one of their days? Now lift up your heads and bathe them in the sunlight of God. Take the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. I am certain that the man who wears such a gold chain about his neck need not bear the rags of penury. The man who wears such a diamond coronet as this upon his brow ought not to behave like a poor beggar in the streets. Go not clothed in rags of mourning, but put on the scarlet and fine linen of thanksgiving—since God gives you this consolation—"I have inscribed you upon the palms of My hands."

One thing more and that is, if this text is not yours, how your mouths ought to water after it. It is wrong to covet, but not to covet such a thing as this. "Covet earnestly the best gifts." Is there a soul here who says, "O that I had a part and lot in this matter! Would God that I were saved, that I were written in the palms of Jesus' hands"? Poor Soul, if you desire Christ, He desires you. If you have a spark of love to Him, His soul is like a fiery furnace of love toward you—and you may have His pardoning love shed abroad this morning.

"How?" you ask. "Whoever believes on Him shall never perish." To believe is to trust, and if you trust confidently, simply—just as a child trusts to its mother's arms—you shall find that He will never fail your trust nor prove untrue to your confidence. May God bring you to know yourself, and to know the sweetness of this blessed, blessed text, which overwhelms and destroys all power of speech in me, and makes me feel the poverty of my thoughts and language.

God bless you, for Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen.