

## The Minstrelsy of Hope

A Sermon

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C. H. SPURGEON,

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"God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us." [Psalm 67:6](#),

7.

"GOD, even our own God." What an exceedingly sweet title! What a loveliness and liveliness of heart must have been in the man who first applied that endearing name to the God of Jacob! Though it is thousands of years ago since the sweet singer of Israel thus spoke of the Lord of Hosts, the name has a freshness and even a novelty about it to believing ears, "God, even our own God." I cannot resist touching that string again, the note is so enchanting to my soul! That word, "own," or "our own," seems always to throw an atmosphere of delicious fragrance about anything with which it is connected. If it is our country—

"Lives there a man with soul so dead,

Who never to himself has said,

"This is my own, my native land?"

Whether it is a land of brown heath and shaggy wood, or a far extended plain, all men love their own fatherland and in exile they are smitten with homesickness for their own country. It is so with regard to the house in which we were reared. That old roof tree, that ancient homestead—it may have been covered with thatch and have been one of a group of poor cottages, but still it was our own home and a thousand kindly thoughts gather around the fireside where we, in childhood, nestled beneath a parent's wing. "Our own!" Why, all our relatives are endeared to us by the fact that they are our own!

"Father" is a silver word at all times. But, "our father," "our own father"—how the name grows richer and turns to a golden word! "Our own child." "Our own brother." "Our own husband." "Our own wife"—the words are most melodious. We even feel the Bible to be all the dearer to us because we can speak of it as "our own old English Bible." As the Jew's book, coming from God in Hebrew. As a book for the Greek, coming in its latter half to the Gentile in the Greek tongue, it was a priceless treasure. But translated into our own familiar Saxon tongue, and, on the whole, translated so well, our own English Bible is doubly dear to us.

The sweetness of the words, "our own" led me to call the hymn-book from which you sing, "Our Own Hymn-Book," hoping that, perchance, the very name might help to weave

your affections round about it. But what shall I say of "our own God"? Words fail to express the depth of joy and delight which is contained within these three monosyllables, "Our own God." "Our own" by the Everlasting Covenant in which He gave Himself to us with all His attributes, with all that He is and has, to be our portion forever and ever!

"The Lord is my portion, says my soul." "Our own God," by our own choice of Him, a choice most free, but guided by His Holy Spirit so that we who should have chosen our own ruin were sweetly led to make our election of the Lord, because He had made His election of us. "Our own God"—ours to trust, ours to love, ours to fly to in every dark and troublous night—ours to commune with in every bright and balmy day, ours to be our Guide in life, our Help in death, and our Glory in immortality! "Our own God," affording us His wisdom to guide our path, His power to sustain our steps, His love to comfort our lives, His every attribute to enrich with more than royal wealth!

The man who can truthfully, out of a pure heart, look up to the Throne of the infinite Jehovah, and call Him, "My own God," has said a more eloquent thing than ever flowed from the lips of Demosthenes, or fell from the tongue of Cicero! You are favored beyond all men, you to whom this is a household word, "our own God."—

"Our God! How pleasant is the sound! How charming to repeat! Well  
may those hearts with pleasure bound, Who thus their Lord can greet!"

I think the Psalmist used this expression in this sublime ode as a kind of argument and assurance of the blessing which he foretold. "God shall bless us"—that is true, it is to be believed, but, "our own God shall bless us"—that sentence flashes conviction upon the most timorous! It wears assurance as a frontlet between his eyes! It bears upon its surface its own evidence! If the Lord has been gracious enough to make Himself our own God, He did not do this for nothing—there is a loving intention in it. If in the tenderness of His compassion He has said, "I will be their God, and they shall be My people," it must be with a design to bless us with unspeakable blessings in Christ Jesus!

Covertly, there is a powerful reason urged in the delightful title and the more we think upon it the more we shall see it. This morning I intend simply to keep to the words, "God shall bless us. God shall bless us." They have been sounding in my ears like far-off bells, ringing their way with a march of music into the deeps of my soul. May the same angelic melody charm the ears of all my Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus. "God shall bless us. God shall bless us."

Three personified passions I shall introduce into the pulpit this morning, and we shall discourse with them a little, or let them speak with us.

I. The first is FEAR. Pale-faced Fear will be found everywhere. She meddles with every matter, intruding into the bedchamber of Faith, and disturbing the banquets of Hope. Fear

lodges with some as an abiding guest and is entertained as though she were a dear, familiar friend. What does Fear say to us, this morning, in reply to our cheering text?

Fear enquires, "Will God, indeed, bless us—for of late He has withheld His hand? There have been many hopeful signs, but they have disappointed us. We have expected the blessing for a long time. We have thought we have seen the signs of it, but it has not come. We have heard of revivals and rumors of revivals—men have risen up who have preached the Word with power, and in some districts there have been many conversions, but still, to a great extent, we have not received the blessing. God has not visited us as of old. We have seen the early cloud and expected rain. We have watched the morning dew and hoped for moisture, but all these have vanished and we are still left without the blessing. A thousand past disappointments lead us to fear that the blessing may not come."

Listen, O Fear, and be comforted! What if you, too hasty and rash, have misjudged the will of the Lord? Is this any reason why He should forget His promise and refuse to hear the voice of prayer? Clouds have passed over the sky every day these many weeks and we have said full often, "Surely it must rain, and the thirsty fields must be refreshed," but not a drop as yet has fallen. Yet rain it must before long!

Even so is it with God's mercy. It may not come today, and tomorrow we may not see it, but still God is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness. He has His own appointed time and He will be punctual, for while He never is before it, He never is behind it! In due season—in answer to the entreaties of His people—He will give them a shower of liberality. All manner of gracious blessings shall descend from His right hand! He will rend the heavens and in majesty come down—for, "God shall bless us."

"Yes," says Fear, "But we have seen so many counterfeits of the blessing. We have seen revivals in which intense excitement has seemed, for a season, to produce great results. But the excitement has subsided and the results have disappeared. Have we not, again and again, heard the sound of trumpets, and the loud boastings of men, but glory was not the sum of it?" This is most sorrowfully true. There is no doubt that much of revivalism has been a sham—that there has been a windbag-filling—a bladder-blowing in the Christian Church which has been terribly mischievous. The very name, "revival," has been made to stink in some places by reason of the mischiefs associated with it!

But this is no reason why there should not yet come a glorious and real revival from the Presence of the Lord! And such, my Brethren, I earnestly hope for and vehemently pray for! Remember the revival which passed over New England in the days of Jonathan Edwards? No one could call that spurious—it was as true and real as any work of God on the face of the earth could be! Nor could anyone describe the work of Whitfield, and of Wesley, as a mere spasm or a thing of transient existence—it was God's right hand made bare and put to the work of Divine Grace in a marvelous manner! And it was a work done which exists in England to this day and shall remain even to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ!

We may expect, then, since it has been already given at other times, that God will bless His people with real and substantial advances—and will yet come to the front and make His enemies see that there is an irresistible power in the Gospel of Jesus Christ! O Fear, remember, if you will, the delusions of the past and be counseled by them—do not recall them as reasons for being dispirited and cast down, for God, even our own God, shall bless us!

But Fear replies, "See how much there is in the present which is unlike a blessing, and which, instead of prophesying good, pretends evil! How few there are," says Fear, "who are proclaiming the Gospel boldly and simply! And how many, on the other hand, oppose the Gospel with their philosophies or with their superstitions." But listen, O Fear, "God shall bless us," few though we are, for He saves not by many nor by few! Remember His servant, Gideon, and how he went up to fight against the Midianites, not with the thousands, for they were too many for the Lord of Hosts, but with the few hundred men that lapped! And with these—with no other weapons than their broken pitchers, and uncovered lamps, and sounding trumpets—with these did he put to rout the multitudes of Midian!

Say not that Omnipotence can be short of instruments! He could quicken the very sand by the seashore into preachers of the Gospel if He pleased! And if He wanted tongues to tell of His love, He could make each stone a preacher, or each twinkling leaf upon the trees a witness for Jesus! It is not instrumentality that is necessary first and foremost—we need most the power which moves the instrumentality, which makes the weakest strong—and without which even the strongest are but weak!

We heard it said, the other day, that the religion of Jesus Christ could not be expected to prosper in some places unless it had a fair start. Did that remark come from an infidel, or from a bishop? If I were asked and knew not, I know what my answer would be! A fair start, indeed! Put the religion of Jesus Christ into any arena and it asks but liberty to use its weapons—and even where that is denied it, it triumphs still! It only needs its own innate strength to be developed, and to be let alone by the kings and princes of this world, and it will work its own way. To be let alone, I said—let them oppose it if they like—yet still our faith will overcome the regal opposition! Only let them withdraw their patronage—that deadly thing which paralyzes all spiritual life—and the unshackled Truth of God will most surely prevail!

We do not tremble, then! We must not, because the servants of God may be poor, or may not be gifted, or may be but few. God shall, even our own God, shall bless us! And if we are as few as the 12 fishermen, and as unlettered as they, yet as the 12 fishermen made old Rome's empire shake from end to end, and laid colossal systems of idolatry even with the ground—even so will the Christianity of today! If God does but return in power unto her, in the midst of her weakness she will wax valiant in fight and turn to flight the armies of the aliens!

But Fear always finds room for murmuring, and therefore she says, "The future, the black and gloomy future! What have we to expect from this wicked generation, this perverse people, but that we shall be given up, once more, to be devoured by the jaws of Antichrist, or to be lost in the mists of infidelity? Our prospects are, indeed, appalling," so Fear says, though I confess, not using her telescope I discern no such signs of the times. Yet Fear says so, and there may be reason in it. Yet whatever that reason may be, it is counterbalanced in our mind by the belief that God, even our own God, will bless us!

Why should He change? He has helped His Church before, why not now? Is she undeserving? She was always so! Does she backslide? She has done so oftentimes before, yet has He visited her, and restored her—and why not now? Instead of forebodings and fears, there seems to me cause for the brightest expectations if we can only fall back upon the Divine promise and believe that God, even our own God, shall yet, in this very age, bless us as He did in days of old!

Remember the ship tossed with tempest on the Galilean lake? There was, indeed, a dreary outlook for the steersman of the boat! She must, before long, be driven on the rocky headland and she and her cargo must sink beneath the waves. Not so, not so, for can't you see, walking upon the billows which congeal to glass beneath His feet, the Man who loves the company within the vessel and will not let them die? It is Jesus walking on the waves of the sea! He comes into the vessel and immediately the calm is as profound as if waves had not lifted their head, nor wind had blown!

So in the darkest times of His Church's history Jesus has always, in due time, appeared walking upon the waves of her troubles—and then her rest has been glorious! Let us not, therefore, be afraid—but casting fear away let us rejoice with glad expectation! What can there be to fear? "God is with us." Is not that the battle cry before which devils fly, and all the hosts of evil turn their backs? "Immanuel, God with us!"

Who dares to stand against that? Who will defy the Lion of the tribe of Judah? Ah, bring your might and come to push or pike, you mighty ones, but if God is for us, who can be against us, or if against us, who can stand? God is our own God—will He let His own Church be trampled in the mire? Shall the bride of Christ be led into captivity? Shall His Beloved, whom He bought with His blood, be delivered into the hands of her enemies? God forbid! Because He is God. Because He is for us. Because He is our own God, therefore we set up our banners and each man among us cheerily sings—

"For yet I know I shall Him praise,  
Who graciously to me  
The health is of my countenance,  
Yes, my own God is He."

II. We shall change the strain altogether when we introduce a second character, namely, DESIRE. Quick of step, bright of eye, warm of heart, Desire says, "Ah, God shall bless us, but O that we had the blessing! We hunger and we thirst after it. We are covetous for it as the miser after gold." Therefore Desire says, "But what blessing will come, and after what fashion shall our own God bless us?" The reply to Desire is this—when God comes to bless His people, He brings all Grace with Him, for in the treasures of the Covenant there are not some things, but all things—not a few supplies for some of the Church's necessities—but a redundant store from which all her needs shall be replenished!

When the Lord shall bless His Church, He will give to all her members the Divine Grace of revival! They will begin to live after a higher, nobler, happier sort than they have done before. To bestir the Church and make it active is one of the highest gifts of the Holy Spirit, and this is greatly needed. I believe it is needed among us. Some of the most earnest Christians out of Heaven are members of this Church—but some are a very long way off from that and need to be brought into a sounder spiritual state.

What is true of this one Church is true of all the Churches of Jesus Christ. They are too much like the virgins who slept because the bridegroom came not—too much apathy, too little love to God, too little consecration to His cause, too little pining and panting after the souls of men. When the Lord shall visit His Church, the first effect will be the quickening of the life of His own Beloved. Then will the blessing come in the next shape, namely, conversions in her borders, and additions to her membership. I hope that we shall never think that God is blessing us unless we see sinners saved. It is a very solemn delusion when ministers think they are prospering and yet do not hear of conversions.

We, I trust, will be most uneasy if conversions should slacken in number among us. If God returns to us, and to all His Churches, the cry will be heard on the right hand and on the left, "What must we do to be saved?" The astonished Church will see such a multitude of children born to her that she will cry in amazement, "Who has begotten these? Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?" When these two blessings come—a quickened Church and souls converted—then will the Word of the Lord be fulfilled, "The Lord will give strength unto His people, the Lord will bless His people with peace."

Then the Church will be strong. She will have wherewithal to refute her adversaries by pointing to her converts. She will become bold because she sees the result of her work. She will cease to doubt, for faith will be replenished with evidences. Then peace will reign. The young converts shall bring in a flood of new joy. Their fresh blood shall make the old blood of the Church to leap in its veins, and old and young, rejoicing together, shall rejoice in the abundance of peace! Brethren, I would if I had time this morning, paint you a picture of a Church blessed of God! But we must not—you know what it is—many of you have been members of such a Church. May the blessing continue. May it be increased—and may all

the Churches throughout Christendom receive the benediction from the God of Israel such as shall make them rejoice with joy unspeakable!

But Desire says, "I see what the blessing is, but in what degree will God give it, and in what measure may we expect it?" We say to Desire, "O you large-hearted one, God will give you according to the measure of your confidence in Him." We are all too soon satisfied when the blessing begins to drop from above. We stop, like the king of old, when we have shot but one or two arrows, and deserve to be rebuked in the language of the Prophet, "You should have smitten five or six times, then had you smitten Syria till you had consumed it." We are content with drops when we might have the cup full to the brim! We are childishly satisfied with a mere trace of water when we might have flagons, barrels, rivers, oceans if we had but faith enough to receive them!

If there should be half-a-dozen persons converted today in this house, we should all be jubilant with thanksgiving— but ought we not to be sorry if there are not half-a-dozen hundred? Who are we that, by our narrow expectations, we limit the Holy One of Israel? Can we draw a line around Omnipotence and say, "To here shall You go, but no further"? Were it not wiser to extend our desires, and expand our hopes since we have to deal with One who knows neither limit nor boundary? Why not look for years of plenty, eclipsing the famous seven of Egypt? Why not expect clusters excelling those of Eshcol? Why are we so mean, so dwarfed, so straitened in our expectancies? Let us grasp at greater things—for it is reasonable, with the Lord to trust in—to look for greater things!

I reckon upon days in which every sermon shall shake the house with its power, in which the hearers shall be converted to God by thousands as in the day of Pentecost! Was that to be the greatest trophy of God's power, the Pentecost? Is the first sheaf to be greater than the harvest? How can it be? We believe that if God will again visit His Church, and I trust He is going to do so, we shall see nations born in a day, and the Gospel of Jesus, which has painfully limped like a wounded hind, will suddenly take to itself wings as of a mighty angel and fly throughout the midst of Heaven, proclaiming Jesus Christ both Lord and God!

Why not? Who can justify the absence of the liveliest hope, since He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above what we ask or even think? I hear Desire say, "Yes, I understand what the blessing is, and that it can be had in any measure, but how is it to be obtained and when will it come?" Follow me in a very brief review of the Psalm before us, because that will help us to answer the question. When is it that, "God, even our own God, shall bless us?" The Psalm begins with "God be merciful unto us." That is the voice of a penitent people confessing their past misdeeds. God will bless His Church when she acknowledges her faults and humbles herself. When, with an evangelical repentance, she stands before the Mercy Seat, and cries, "God be merciful unto us!"

We must never expect that the Lord will bless a proud and conceited Church—a hard-hearted and indifferent Church. When humbled and laid in the dust under a sense of her

own shortcomings, then shall God be pleased to look upon her in mercy. I gather from the tenor of the first verse that God blesses His people when they begin to pray as well as when they confess their sins. The prayer is urgent, humble and believing, and therefore it must speed. "God be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us." These agonizing desires are a part of the wailing of a Church conscious of having somewhat lost the blessing, and ill at ease until it is restored.

We are sure to receive the benediction from God when the entire Church is instant and constant in intercession. Prayer is the best resort of an earnest people. Are we not witnesses of it? We have had Prayer Meetings in this house in which we have all been stirred as the trees of the woods are moved in the wind—and then we have always had the Presence of God afterwards in the conversion of souls. Our best praying times have always been followed by joyful harvest homes. The Churches everywhere must be prayerful—intensely so—or else they cannot expect that the sound of abundance of rain should be heard throughout their land.

Awake to confess sin, O Zion, awake to soul-travail for the souls of men and then shall God, your Lord, visit you from on high! Come, Holy Spirit, and arouse Your slumbering people! Bestir Your sluggard host, for when Your power is felt, then has the bright day of triumph dawned upon us! As the Psalm runs, it speaks not so much of prayer as of praise, "Let the people praise You, O God. Let all the people praise You. Then shall the earth yield her increase." The Church of God needs to get into a better state with regard to her praising her God. When mercy is received, if we accept it silently and without gratitude, we cannot expect to have more. But when every drop of favor makes us bless the Lord who gives to such undeserving ones, we shall soon have more, and yet more, and more!

The praise ought to be universal. "Let all the people praise You." It ought to be joyful and hearty, each man rejoicing in the exercise and casting all his strength into it. When shall we all wake up to this? When shall all the Lord's elect magnify His glorious name as they should? When shall we sing at our work, sing in our households, sing everywhere the praises of God? If prayer and praise are sacredly blended and the Church becomes thoroughly anxious for the Divine blessing, then God, even our God, will bless us!

If I were asked, now, to give some indications as to when a blessing may be expected, I should have to run somewhat in the same vein as we did last Thursday evening, and that I cannot avoid. I believe that when a great visitation of mercy is coming upon the Church there are certain signs which are given to the more spiritual, which assure them that it is coming. Elijah could hear "a sound of abundance of rain" before a single drop had fallen—and many a saint of God has had the conviction that a time of refreshing is coming long before it has come. Some souls are especially sensitive to Divine workings, just as some men's bodies are peculiarly sensitive to changes of weather before they arrive.

As Columbus was sure that he was coming to land because he saw strange land birds and floating pieces of seaweed and broken wood, so oftentimes the Christian minister feels sure that he is drawing near to a time of amazing blessing. He can scarcely tell another why he feels so sure, and yet the indications to him are sure. There are doves that come flying into our hands that tell us that the waters of indifference and worldliness are receding. They bring us olive branches of hopeful Graces flourishing among our people which let us know that the time to favor Zion is surely coming.

Have you ever seen the ancient seer arise, take his harp down from the wall and begin to tune it? He puts every string in order. He lays his fingers among the unaccustomed strings and commences to sweep the strings with unusual energy of delight. Have you not enquired of him, "Gray Harper, minstrel consecrated to the Lord, why do you strike your song so full of cheer?" He replies, "Because I see afar the silken banners of a triumphant host returning victorious from the fray. It is the Church, made more than conqueror through Him who loved her! I hear the moving of the wings of angels. They are rejoicing over penitents and the Church is glad, for her glory returns seeing that her sons are many."

Men enlightened with the light of Heaven feel the shadow of the coming mercy and hear the far-off wheels of the chariot of mercy! These tokens, of course, will only be appreciable by the few, but there are others, tokens which are instructive to the many. It is a very certain sign that the Lord will bless His people when they feel in themselves an unusual and insatiable craving for the Divine visitation—when they feel as if the Church could not go on longer as she now is doing—when they begin to fret, and pant, and sigh, and hunger and thirst after something better.

I would to God that all the members of this Church were gloriously dissatisfied without more conversions! And when this dissatisfaction arises in the Christian mind, it is pretty generally a sure indication that God is enlarging the hearts of His people that they may receive a larger blessing! Then there will come into prepared minds a sacred heaving of intense excitement and throes of awful purpose—mysterious longings to which they were strangers before! These will gravitate into impulses which they will be unable to resist! Men who had been dumb before will suddenly find a tongue! Others will become mighty in prayer who never were known as master suppliants up to that moment! There will be tears in eyes long dry before! We shall find professors talking to sinners and winning converts who kept in the rear in days now past and were never zealous until now!

These stirrings of God's hand—these sacred and mysterious motions of His ever blessed Spirit—are signs that He intends to bless His Church and that to a large degree. And, Brothers and Sisters, when every man begins to search himself, to see whether there is any obstacle in him to the blessing—when every single member of the Church exposes his heart to the search of God and cries, "Take away from me everything that hinders Your work! Fit me for greater usefulness! Put me where You will win glory by me, for I am consecrated to

You," then we shall hear the sound as of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, as David of old!

Then shall we see the flowers spring up and we shall know that the time of the singing of birds is drawing near, and that spring and summer are close at hand! May God send us more and more of these gracious signs! I think I see them even now. Perhaps my wish is father to my thought, but I think I see comfortable signs that God intends to visit His Zion even now! And if we will but believe it, will but accept it and work in accordance with such expectation, unitedly praying and praising, and laboring and striving—rest assured this year, 1868, will not come to its close without such a display of the Divine power as shall make it an *annus mirabilis*, a year of our Lord, a year of Divine Grace, a year whose days shall be as the days of Heaven upon the earth!

III. Lastly, I introduce to you a far fairer being than either of the other two—the sweet bright-eyed maiden HOPE. Have you ever heard the story of her matchless song? She learned in her youth a song which she sings evermore to the accompaniment of a well-tuned harp. Here are the words of her enchanting lay: "God will bless us. God will bless us." She has often been heard singing this in the night, and, lo! stars have suddenly shone out of the black sky. "God will bless us." She has been known to sing this in the midst of tempests and calms have followed the soothing song.

Once upon a time certain strong laborers were sent forth by the great king to level a primeval forest—to plow it, to sow it—and to bring the harvest to him. They were stout-hearted and strong, and willing enough for labor, and well they needed all their strength and more. One stalwart laborer was named Industry—consecrated work was his! His brother Patience, with muscles of steel, went with him and tired not in the longest days, under the heaviest labors. To help them they had Zeal, clothed with ardent and indomitable energy. Side by side, there stood his kinsman Self-Denial, and his friend, Importunity.

These went forth to their labor and they took with them, to cheer their toils, their well-beloved sister, Hope—and well it was they did, for the forest trees were huge and needed many sturdy blows of the axe before they would fall prone upon the ground. One by one they yielded, but the labor was immense and incessant. At night when they went to their rest, the day's work always seemed so light, for as they crossed the threshold, Patience, wiping the sweat from his brow, would be encouraged and Self-denial would be strengthened, for they heard a sweet voice within sing, "God will bless us. God, even our own God, will bless us."

They felled the giant trees to the music of that strain! They cleared the acres one by one. They tore from their sockets the huge roots. They leveled the soil. They sowed the corn and waited for the harvest—often much discouraged, but still in silver chains and golden fetters by the sweet sound of the voice which chanted so constantly—"God, even our own God, will bless us." They never could refrain from service for she never could refrain from song!

They were ashamed to be discouraged! They were shocked to be despairing, for still the voice rang clearly out at morn and eventide, "God will bless us. God, even our own God, will bless us."

You know the parable, you recognize the voice—may you hear it in your souls today! God will bless us! We are few, too few for this great work, but God will bless us and therefore we are enough! We are feeble and little taught—with little experience and slender wisdom—but God will bless us, and we shall be wise enough and strong enough! We are undeserving, full of sin, fickle and frail—but God will bless us and our undeservingness shall be a foil in which to set the precious diamond of His mercy! God will bless us—there are glorious promises which guarantee the blessing! They must be kept, for they are yes and amen in Christ Jesus!

The nations must bow down before Messiah! Ethiopia must stretch out her arms to receive her King. God will bless us! He has blessed His people. Let Egypt tell how God overthrew His Israel's enemies. Let Canaan witness how He slew kings and overthrew mighty kings, and gave their land for a heritage, even a heritage unto His people. God will bless us! He has given us His Son—how shall He not, with Him, also freely give us all things? He has given us His Holy Spirit to abide with us forever! How can He deny us any necessary aid or requisite benediction? Here is a song for each Christian man and woman engaged in holy work!

Here is a song for your Sunday school classes this afternoon, you diligent teachers of our youth! If you have seen no good come of your work and you grow somewhat dispirited, here is a Psalm to raise your sinking spirits, "God will bless us." Go on and teach the Gospel to the youngsters with redoubled zeal! Here is a sweet note for the minister who has been plowing a thankless soil and seen no harvest. "God will bless us." Cease not from your energetic labors! Go back to your work, for you have such a blessing yet to come that you may well rejoice even in the prospect of its coming! Let each worker go forth to that form of Christian service which his Master has appointed him, hearing this bird of paradise warbling in his ears, "God will bless us."

Like David's minstrelsy before Saul, it charms away despair! Like the silver trumpets of the priests, it proclaims a jubilee! O that like the rams' horns of Israel it may level Jericho! Why, if just once this morning I could address with the eloquence of Peter the Hermit, when preaching the Crusade—when he made his hearers shout aloud, "Deus vult!" I, too, would stir your blood with the war-note of my text! I think this, "God will bless us," might just as much stir you, and move you, and make you dash along like a mighty host of warriors as did the, "God wills it," of the Hermit! God is with us! He will bless us!

Why do you hesitate? Why do you grow weary? Why do you look to a human arm for strength? Why do you fear your enemies? Why do you seek slothful ease? Why do you get to your beds of rest? God will bless us! Up, you men-at-arms, and snatch the victory! Grasp

your sickles, you farmers, and gather in the harvest! Hoist your sails, you mariners, for the favoring winds are coming! "God will bless us!" O for fire from off the altar to touch our lips! And what can be a better instrument with which to carry the flaming coal than the golden tongs of the text, "God will bless us"?

One word of warning and we have done. Suppose the Lord should bless "us" in the plural, and not "you," dear Hearer, in the singular! What if there should be showers of mercy and they should not drop on you? What if He should bestow a token for good upon His people but you should be left out? It may be so, for it has been so—and if such is the dreary fact, it will make you worse instead of better—for none is so dry as the fleece which remains dry when the floor is wet! None is so lost as those who are lost where others are saved. Tremble lest that should be your case!

Yet it need not be so! Oh, blessed be God, I hope I can say it shall not be so! "Seek you the Lord while He may be found! Call upon Him while He is near." He has abundant pardons to bestow and He will give them freely to all who ask! All He asks of you is that you trust His Son and this faith His Holy Spirit gives. Do trust Him! Rest upon the merit of His precious blood and you will not be left out when He dispenses His favors, but you shall sing as cheerfully as all the rest, "God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us."