

"Marvelous Loving Kindness"

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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,

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"Show Your marvelous loving kindness." [Psalm 17:7](#).

THE Lord's people, in the time of their trouble, know where to go for comfort and relief. Being taught of God, they do not hew out for themselves broken cisterns which can hold no water, but they turn to the ever-flowing Fountain, they go to the Wellhead—even to God Himself—and there they cast themselves down and drink to the full. David, when he wrote this Psalm, was evidently in very great distress and, therefore, he says, "I have called upon You, for You will hear me, O God: incline Your ear unto me, and hear my speech." What he needed was his God, as Dr. Watts expresses it—

"In darkest shades if He appears,

My dawning is begun.

He is my soul's sweet morning star,

And He my rising sun."

Believers draw comfort both from God's ordinary and extraordinary dealings with them, for they regard God's loving kindness as being both an ordinary and an extraordinary thing. I have heard of a good Sister who, when a friend narrated to her some very gracious dealing of God, was asked the question, "Is it not very wonderful?" and she replied, "No, it is not wonderful, for it is just like Him." Begging her pardon and admitting the great Truth of God that she meant to convey, I think it is still more wonderful that it should be "just like Him." The wonder of extraordinary love is that God should make it such an ordinary thing, that He should give to us "marvelous loving kindness," and yet should give it so often that it becomes a daily blessing, and still remains marvelous! The marvels of men, after you have seen them a few times, cease to excite any wonder. I suppose there is scarcely a building, however costly its materials, and however rare its architecture, as to which, sooner or later, you will not feel that you have seen enough of it. But God's wonderful works never pall upon you. You could gaze upon Mont Blanc, or you could stand and watch Niagara Falls, yet never feel that you had exhausted all its marvels. And everyone knows how the ocean is never twice alike. They who live close to it and look upon it every hour of the day, still see God's wonders in the deep!

That God should bless us every day is a theme for our comfort. God's ordinary ways charm us. The verse before our text says, "'I have called upon You, for You will hear me, O God.' I know You will, for the blessing that I am about to ask from You is a thing that I have

been accustomed to receive from You. I know You will hear me, for You have heard me in the past; it is a habit of Yours to listen to my supplications, and to grant my requests." I hope we can argue in a similar fashion, yet, at the same time, God's people draw equal comfort from the extraordinary character of the mercies He bestows upon them. They appeal to Him to show them His "marvelous loving kindness," to let them see the wonderful side of it as well as the common side of it. To let them behold His miracles of mercy, His extravagances of love, His superfluities of kindness—I scarcely know what words to use when talking of what the Apostle Paul calls "the riches of His Grace, wherein He has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence," "the exceeding riches of His Grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

I want, on this occasion, to dwell upon the extraordinary side of God's loving kindness and, using our text as a prayer, to say to the Lord in the language of David, "Show Your marvelous loving kindness." Sometimes a man is

brought into such a condition that he feels that if God does not do something quite out of the common order of things, he will assuredly perish. He has now come to such a pass, that if some extraordinary Grace is not displayed towards him, all is over with him. Well, now, such a Brother may think that God will not give this extraordinary Grace to him. He may be troubled at the idea that some marvelous thing is needed. It is to meet that suggestion of unbelief that I am going to address you now.

I. And my first remark is that ALL THE LOVING KINDNESS OF GOD IS MARVELOUS.

The least mercy from God is a miracle. That God does not crush our sinful race is a surprising mercy. That you and I should have been spared to live—even though it were only to exist in direst poverty, or in sorest sickness—that we should have been spared at all, after what we have been and after what we have done, is a very marvelous thing. The explanation of the marvel is given in the Book of Malachi—"I am the Lord, I change not; therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed." If God had possessed such a short temper as men often have, He would have made short work with us all. But He is gracious and long-suffering and, therefore, he is very patient with us. The very least mercy that we ever receive from God is a very wonderful thing, but when we think of all that is meant by this blessed word, "loving kindness"—which is a compound of all sorts of sweetness, a mixture of fragrances to make up one absolutely perfect perfume—when we take that word, "loving kindness," and think over its meaning, we shall see that it is a marvelous thing, indeed, that it describes!

For, first, it is marvelous for its antiquity. To think that God should have had loving kindness towards men before the earth was, that there should have been a Covenant of Election—a plan of Redemption—a scheme of Atonement—that there should have been eternal thoughts of love in the mind of God towards such a strange being as man, is, indeed, marvelous! "What is man, that you are mindful of him? And the son of man, that you visit

him?" Read these words with tears in your eyes—"I have loved you with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you." And when you know that this passage refers to you, tell me if it is not "marvelous loving kindness." God's mind is occupied with thoughts concerning things that are infinitely greater than the destiny of anyone of us, or of all of us put together! Yet He was pleased to think of us in love from all eternity and to write our names upon His hands and upon His heart, and to keep the remembrance of us perpetually before Him, for His "delights were with the sons of men." This antiquity makes it to be, indeed, "marvelous loving kindness."

Next, think of its discriminating character, that God's loving kindness should have come to the poorest, to the most illiterate, the most obscure and often to the most guilty of our race. Remember what Paul wrote about this matter—"not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not manly noble, are called: but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, has God chosen, yes, and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are, that no flesh should glory in His Presence." Dr. Watts expresses the same thought in his verses—

"When the Eternal bows the skies To visit earthly things, With scorn Divine He turns His eyes From towers of haughty kings. He bids His awful chariot roll Far downward from the skies, To visit every humble soul, With pleasure in His eyes."

God's choice is marvelous! I know of no better word to apply to His loving kindness to His chosen than that which is applied in the text—"Your marvelous loving kindness"—

"What was there in you that could merit esteem,

Or give the Creator delight?

"Twas even so, Father, 'you ever must sing,

'Because it seemed good in Your sight. There is no other explanation of this wondrous mercy, this "marvelous loving kindness," than the poet gives—

"His love, from eternity fixed upon you,

Broke forth and discovered its flame,

When each with the cords of His kindness He drew,

And brought you to love His great name."

So, Beloved, think over the antiquity of God's loving kindness and then of the discriminating character of it—and surely you will be full of adoring wonder!

After that, think also of the self-sacrificing nature of His loving kindness—that, when God had set His heart on man, and had chosen His people before the foundation of the world, then He should give—what? Himself. Yes, nothing short of that—that He should not only give us this world, His Providence, all its blessings, the world to come and all its glories, but that, in order to our possession of these things, He should give His own Son to die for us! Well might the Apostle John write, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He

loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." It was not that Christ died for us when we were righteous, "for scarcely for a righteous man will one die," "but God commends His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." Isaiah had long before explained the mystery—"It pleased the Lord to bruise Him: He has put Him to grief." You who love your children, to lose one of whom would be worse than to die—you can realize a little of what must have been the Father's love to you in giving up His only-begotten Son that you might live through Him. Dwell on this great Truth of God, dear Friends. Meditate on it and ask the Holy Spirit to lead you into its heights, depths, length, and breadths, for these lips cannot fully speak of its wonders! As you think over the Lord's ancient loving kindnesses which has always been, His distinguishing love towards His redeemed and His self-sacrificing love in giving up His Only-Begotten, you will be obliged to say, "It is marvelous loving kindness! It is marvelous loving kindness, indeed!"

Then go on to think of the marvelous constancy of it That one should begin to love another is not so very wonderful—but that love, after it has been despised and ill-requested, should still continue—that the sweet love of Christ should not long ago have curdled into jealousy, and from jealousy have soured into indignation, is an extraordinary thing! He loved us, Brothers and Sisters, when we did not even know Him and yet hated the Unknown—when we did not even dimly understand His love to us and, perhaps, even ridiculed it, or at least neglected it! Yet He kept on loving us until He loved us into loving Him! But even since then, what has been our character? Are you satisfied with what you have been towards the Well-Beloved? Are you content with your conduct towards the Bridegroom of your souls? I know that you are not, and yet, notwithstanding your lukewarmness, your backsliding, your dishonoring of His name, your unbelief, your pride, your love of others, He still loves you, and even now, if you are not enjoying fellowship with Him, He has not gone away from you, for His Word still is, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock."

He loves, He loves on and He still loves. Many waters cannot quench His love, neither can the floods drown it. It is, indeed, "marvelous loving kindness." Can you think of a better adjective than that? I cannot, yet I am conscious that even it does not fully express the miraculous character of this all-enduring love which will not take our, "No," for an answer, but still says, "Yes—yes, I will betroth you unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth you unto me in faithfulness, and you shall know the Lord." Oh, this wonderful, this matchless, this unparalleled, this inconceivable, this infinite love! No human language can adequately describe it, so let us sit still and marvel at that which we cannot even understand.

There is much in God's loving kindness to be marveled at in its strange ingenuity. I might keep on with this topic forever, applying one word and another to it, yet I should never have shown you even a tenth of its wonders, for it is an altogether inexhaustible theme!

But it is wonderful how God deals with us with such a sacred ingenuity of tenderness. He seems to be always thinking of something for our good, while we, on our part, appear to be always testing His love in one way or another. Some fresh need is discovered only to receive a new supply of Grace. Some fresh sin breaks out only to be blotted out with the ever-pardoning blood of Jesus. We get into fresh difficulties only to receive fresh aid. The further I go on my way to Heaven, the more I admire the road as well as wonder at the goal to which that road shall bring me. "O world of wonders!" said John Bunyan, "I can say no less."

They tell us, nowadays, that the world is worn-out and that there is no joy in life, and nothing fresh to afford delight. Ah, me, they talk of the attractions of fiction and of the playwright's art, and I know not what besides. They must travel all round the world to get a new sensation and many a man, today, is like the Emperor Tiberius who offered large

sums of money to anyone who could invent a new pleasure, meaning, alas, too often, a new vice, or a new way of practicing it. But staying at home with Christ has more wonders in it than gadding abroad with all the wisest of the world! There is more to marvel at in half an inch of the way to Heaven than there is in a thousand leagues of the ordinary pathway of unbelieving men. They call their joys by the name of, "life," and say that they must "see life." But the Apostle John tells us that "he that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life." That is to say, he is dead. Death has its varieties of worms and rottenness. There are charnel-houses and charnel-houses, various processes and methods of corruption and, no doubt, there is a science that men may learn in the cemetery and call it life, if they like. But, oh, if they did but once see Christ upon the Cross, they would learn that they had been blind till then! If they did but know His loving kindness, they would rejoice in it in the sick-chamber, in the long weary night watches when every bone prevented sleep. They would even recognize it in the arrows of death that smote wife, and child, and brother. They would see it, not only in the table loaded for the supply of hunger, and in the garments furnished against the cold, and in every common blessing of Providence, but they would also see it in every despondency, in every deficiency, in every cross and every loss—and, seeing it, they would keep on saying, "It is all for the best. It is far better than the best could have been if it had been left to me. It is marvelous! It is marvelous loving kindness."

I believe that when we get to Heaven, one of the wonders of the Glory-land will be to look back upon the road over which we have traveled. It will be marvelous to note the way in which God has led us and we shall, as our hymn puts it—

"Sing with rapture and surprise, His loving kindness in the skies!" I must now leave this part of my subject with you, only again urging you to think over the Truth of which I have been speaking, that all God's loving kindness to His people is marvelous.

II. Now, secondly, WE SHOULD DESIRE TO SEE THIS LOVING KINDNESS. The Psalmist says, "Show Your marvelous loving kindness." And we ought to ask God to let us see it—and that, I think, in four ways.

First, let me see it with my intellect, that I may adore. Help me, O blessed Spirit, to see and understand what is the loving kindness of God to my soul! I know that it is written of some that "they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord." Let me be among the number of those truly wise ones. O Lord, make me wise to see the end and design of Your Providence as well as the Providence itself! Make me wise to perceive how You have prepared Your Grace to meet my depravity, how You adapt Your holding me up to the slipperiness of the way and to the feebleness of my feet. Often shed a ray of light upon some passage in my life which otherwise I could not comprehend—and let the light stay there till I begin to see and to know why You did this and why You did that. "Show Your marvelous loving kindness."

I am sure, dear Friends, that the lessons of a man's own life are too often neglected, but there is in the life of any ordinary child of God—let me pick you out wherever you may be—John, Mary, Thomas—enough to fill you with wonder and admiration of the loving kindness of the Lord if your mind is but sufficiently illuminated to perceive the hand of God in it, and to see what God purposed by it. He sometimes uses strange means for producing blessed results. With His sharp axe, He will cut down all our choice trees. As by a whirlwind or a tornado, He will devastate our gardens and make our fields a desolation. And He will do it all in order that He may drive us away from the City of Destruction and make us go on pilgrimage to the Celestial City, where the axe can never come, and the leaves will never fade. In His mysterious dealings with us, the Lord often seems to push us backward that we may go forward, and to deluge us with sorrow that He may immerse us in blessings! That is His way of wondrously working and if we did but understand it, according to the prayer of the text, "Show Your marvelous loving kindness," we would be full of adoring wonder.

The next meaning I would give to this prayer would be, Lord, show Your loving kindness to my heart, that I may give You thanks. Lord, I know that You have been very good to me, but I pray You to show my heart how good You have been, by letting me see how unworthy I have been of this, Your kindness. It is very profitable, sometimes, to sit down and rehearse the loving kindness of God, mingling with it penitential reflections upon your own shortcoming. If you do this, you will at last break out with some such cry as this, "Why is all this mercy shown to me?" I know a dear Brother in Christ, a clergyman, whose name is Curme—he divides it into two syllables, "Curme," so as to make it mean, "Why me? Why is all this goodness given to me, Lord?" And that is a question which I, too, would ask, "Why me,

Lord?"—

"Why was I made to hear Your voice, And enter while there's room,
When thousands make a wretched choice, And rather starve than come?"

Is this kindness, and this, and this, all meant for me? Can it really be intended for me? Such reflections as these will make me realize more than ever, how "marvelous" is God's "loving kindness" to me, and will fill my soul with adoring gratitude and thanksgiving.

Then, next, we ought to pray the Lord to show His "marvelous loving kindness" to our faith, that we may again confide in Him. If He will cause the eyes of our faith to see that He has this "marvelous loving kindness" toward us, we shall be the more ready to rely upon Him in all the straits into which we may yet be brought. Do you believe it, my dear Friend? Brother in Christ, do you believe that God loves you? You know how sweet it is to be sure that your child loves you. Though it may well do so, because of its many obligations to you, yet is it sweet for its warm cheek to touch yours and to hear it say, "Father, I love you." But, oh, it is far sweeter for God to say, "I love you." Read the Song of Solomon through and be not afraid to appropriate the message of that sweet and matchless Canticle! Hear in it the voice of Jesus saying to you, "You are all fair, My love; there is no spot in you." "You have ravished My heart, My sister, My spouse; you have ravished My heart with one of your eyes, with one chain of your neck." Such words as those may be sensuous to those who are sensuous, but they are deeply spiritual to those who are spiritual and, oh, the bliss of having such words as those to come from the Christ of God to us! Why, sometimes, when our Lord thus speaks to us, we hardly know how to bear our excess of joy! I would not ask for a better holiday than to have one hour alone with Jesus—to be undisturbed by any earthly care and to think of nothing else but the love of God—the love of God to me! Oh, that it were now shed abroad, in all its fullness, in this poor heart of mine! O Divine Love, what is there that can ever match Your inexpressible sweetness? Truly it is "marvelous loving kindness." Again I ask you—Do you believe this? Are you sure you do? Pray God to show it to your faith, distinctly and clearly, so that you shall be absolutely sure of it and practically depend upon it whenever you need it.

One other meaning of the text may be show Your "marvelous loving kindness" to me, now, in my experience, that I may rest in You. Let me, now, at this present moment, O my God, experience something of that loving kindness in my soul, in whatever condition I may happen to be, that I may be so flooded with the consciousness of it that I may do nothing else but sit in solemn silence before You and adore You while beholding the blazing splendor of Your love! I cannot say anymore about this part of my theme, but must leave you to fill up the gaps in the sermon. This is not a topic upon which one should venture to speak if he wants to say all that should or could be said upon it.

III. So, thirdly, dear Friends, I remark that IT SHOULD BE OUR DESIRE—and there are times when it should especially be our desire—TO SEE THIS "MARVELOUS LOVING KINDNESS" OF GOD DISPLAYED TO US IN ITS

MARVELOUSNESS.

I will make plain to you what I mean directly and, first, we would see it as pardoning great sin. I expect we have here, in this assembly, at least one whose sin lies very heavy on his conscience. We do not find many such people come out to week-evening services, but yet I thank God that they do come. Your sin is very great, dear Friend. I cannot exaggerate it because your own sense of its greatness far surpasses any descriptions I could give. You feel that if God were to pardon you, it would be a marvelous thing. If He were, in one moment, to take all your guilt away and to send you home completely forgiven, it would be a marvelous thing! Yes, it would. And I beg you to pray this prayer, "Lord, show forth Your marvelous loving kindness in me." God is constantly doing wonders. Then, glorify His name by believing that He can work this miracle of mercy for you. Do not be afraid to sing—

"Great God of wonders! All Your ways
Are matchless, God-like, and Divine.
But the fair glories of Your Grace
More God-like and unrivalled shine!
Who is a pardoning God like Thee?

Or who has Grace so rich and free?" Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved, and saved immediately! Trust Him, now, and marvelous though it will be to you—I have shown you that God's loving kindness is all marvelous, that the extraordinary is ordinary with Him, and that the marvelous is but an everyday thing with Him—pray for this "marvelous loving kindness" to be manifested to you and you shall have it! One said, "If God ever saves me, He shall never hear the end of it." You may

say the same and resolve that, henceforth, having had much forgiven, you will love much—having been saved from great sin, you will tell it on earth, and tell it in Heaven and, if you could, you would even wish to make Hell itself resound with the wondrous story—

"Tell it unto sinners tell, I am, I am out of Hell"—

"and what is more, I am on the road to Heaven, for God's 'marvelous loving kindness' has been shown to me!"

So God's loving kindness may be seen as pardoning great sin. And next, it may be seen as delivering from deep trouble. I may be addressing some poor child of God who is sorely perplexed. These are very trying times and we constantly meet with godly people who have a sincere desire to provide things honest in the sight of all men, but who do not find it easy to do. Some very gracious people have got into serious straits and how they will get out, they cannot imagine. If this is your case, dear Friend, I expect you feel very much as John Fawcett's hymn puts it—

"My soul, with various tempests tested,
Her hopes overturned, her projects crossed,
Sees every day new straits attend,

And wonders where the scene will end." Well, now, if you are ever brought through all your troubles, it will be "marvelous loving kindness" to you, will it not? Then go to God with the prayer, "Show me Your marvelous loving kindness," and He will do it. He will bring you up, and out, and through—not, perhaps, in the way you would like to come—but He will bring you out in the best way. "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed. Delight yourself also in the Lord; and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your ways unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass." Always expect the unexpected when you are dealing with God! Look to see, in God, and from God, what you never saw before, for the very things which will seem to unbelief—to be utterly impossible—will be those which are most likely to happen when you are dealing with Him whose arm is Omnipotent, and whose heart is faithful and true. God grant you Grace, dear Friend, thus to use the prayer of our text as the means of delivering you from deep trouble!

Here is another way to use it. I think you may pray it thus—at any event, I mean to do so, whether you will or not—"Lord, reveal Your marvelous loving kindness to me, so as to give me high joys and ecstasies of delight" I sometimes envy those good people who never go up and never go down, always keeping at one level—theirs must be a very pleasant experience, indeed. Still, if ever I do get on the high horse, then I go up far beyond anything I can describe. If ever I do ride upon the clouds, then I do not envy the people who stay along the smooth road. Oh, what deep depressions some of us have had! We have gone down to the very bottoms of the mountains and the earth, and her bars have seemed to be about us forever. But, after just one glimpse of God's everlasting love, we have been up there where the young lightning flashes, resting and trusting among the tempests, near to God's right hand! I think, no, I am sure we may pray for this experience! Should not the preacher of the Word wish to know the fullness of Divine Love? Should not the teacher of the young long to learn all that he can concerning God's Infinite Love? Though this is the love that passes knowledge, should not every Christian wish to know all that is knowable of this great love of God? Then let us pray, "Show Your marvelous loving kindness."

It was truly said, "You cannot see God's face and live." But I have been inclined to say, "Then let me see God's face, and die." John Welsh said, when God was flooding his soul with a sense of His wondrous love, "Stop, Lord, stop! I am but an earthen vessel and You will break me." If I had been there and I could have borne no more, I would have said, "Do not stop, Lord! Break the poor earthen vessel—smash it to pieces—but let Your love be revealed in me!" Oh, that I might even die of this pleasurable pain of knowing too much of God, too much of the ineffable delight of fellowship with Him! Let us be very venturesome, Beloved, and pray, "Show Your marvelous loving kindness."

And, when we have done that, I think we may put up this prayer for ourselves, as to our own usefulness. You want to do good, dear Brother—dear sister. Well, then, pray to God,

"Show me Your marvelous loving kindness, O Lord! Use even such a feeble creature as I am. Let Heaven, and earth, and Hell, itself, see that You can save souls by poor ignorant men as well as by inspired Apostles and learned doctors! Lord, in my Chapel, show Your marvelous loving kindness. Crowd it with people and bring many of them to Christ. In my class, Lord, show Your marvelous loving kindness. If there never was a Sunday school class in which all were saved, Lord, let it be done in mine. Make it a marvelous thing." A

dear Brother, who prayed at the Prayer Meeting before this service, kept on pleading that God would bless me again as He had done before. I liked that prayer—it was as if my friend meant to say to the Lord, "Whatever You did in years gone by, do the same over again. If ever it was a marvelous thing to see how the people thronged to hear the Word, Lord, make it still more marvelous."

I remember when some people called our early success "a nine days' wonder." Well, well, well—it has been a good long nine days! But, oh, that we might have another nine days like it—just such another nine days! May God be pleased to send us as many conversions as we had at the first—yes, and I shall add, and ten times as many! And if ever there have been revivals in the Church of God that have been really marvelous, Brothers and Sisters, let us take up the cry, "Lord, show Your marvelous loving kindness again! Send us another Whitefield, and another Wesley, if such will be the kind of men that will bless the world. Send us another Luther, another Calvin, another Zwingli, if such are the men that will bless the world. Lord, send us another Augustine, or another Jerome, if such are the men by whom You will bless the world. But, in some way or other, Lord, show us Your marvelous loving kindness."

"Oh, but," some would say, "we do not need any excitement. That is an awful thing, you know—anything like excitement." And, then, perhaps, they add, "We have heard so much of what has been done in previous revivals. It has all ended in smoke and, therefore, we really dread the repetition of such an experience." Well, then, Brother, you go home and pray, "Lord, show me Your moderatelothing kindness." When you are on your knees, tonight, pray, "Lord, save half-a-dozen souls here, and there—

"We are a garden walled around,
Chosen and made peculiar ground.
A little spot, enclosed by Grace,

Out of the world's wide wilderness.'— "Lord, make it yet smaller, screw us up still tighter, to the glory of Your blessed name!"

I don't think any of you can pray that prayer! You shall, if you like, but for my part, I mean to pray, and I hope many of you will join me in it, and may God hear us—"Show us Your marvelous loving kindness!" Oh, for some new miracle of mercy to be worked in the earth! Oh, for some great thing to be done, such as was done of old! Shall it be so, or not? On this promise it shall depend—"Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it." But if our mouths

are not open, we cannot expect to get the blessing. "According to your faith be it unto you." The Lord grant that our faith may expect to see His "marvelous loving kindness" displayed yet more and more! Amen and Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: PSALM 17.

Verse 1. Hear the right, O LORD, attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer, that goes not out of deceitful lips. Good men are often slandered and misunderstood and, at such times, the first verse of this Psalm will well fit their lips. "Hear the right, O Lord." And, at all times, it is a great blessing when a supplicant can say to God, "Give ear unto my prayer, that goes not out of deceitful lips." It must be a dreadful thing to pray with lips that do not speak the truth! When men's thoughts are far away from their prayers, and they are muttering pious words but their heart is absent, what a mockery it must be in the sight of God! A dead prayer—who will claim it? Beware of dead prayers. You may dress them up as finely as you like, but, if there is no life in them, what good are they?

2. Let my sentence come forth from Your Presence; let Your eyes behold the things that are equal. It is the appeal of a slandered man to the highest court. He takes his case into the Court of King's Bench, and asks God, Himself, to give the verdict concerning what he had done. It is a good case that will bear to be so investigated.

3. You have proved my heart; You have visited me in the night; You have tried me, and shall find nothing; I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress. Happy is the man who is not afraid for God to come to him suddenly in the night, or to pounce upon him, as it were, at any hour of the day, for, whenever He comes, He will find His servant so acting that he will not mind who examines his conduct. He is keeping his lips, purposing that they shall not transgress God's Law, and he is ruling his whole body in like manner. Only the Grace of God can enable us to do this.

4. Concerning the works of men, by the word of Your lips I have kept from the paths of the destroyer Notice that verse, young man! There is much-needed teaching there for you. There are many "paths of the destroyer" in this wicked

city of London, and all over the world—and it is only by taking heed to our ways, according to God's Word, that we can hope to escape from them. How pleasant those "paths of the destroyer" often appear to be! How smooth and how alluring they are! All sorts of supposed delicacies and beauties will tempt you to go that way, and the foolish heart readily inclines to these indulgences, but happy is the man whose judgment is enlightened by God's Word so that he avoids it, and passes by "the paths of the destroyer."

5. Hold up my goings in Your paths, that my footsteps slip not "I know that I am in Your way, but, O Lord, hold me up! I am like a horse that needs a careful driver, else I shall trip and fall, in rough places or in smooth, 'Hold up my goings in Your paths,' for I may fall even there. There are the sins of my holy things, so 'hold up my goings in Your paths, that my footsteps slip not.'"

6-12. I have called upon You, for You will hear me, O God: incline Your ear unto me, and hear my speech. Show Your marvelous loving kindness, O You that saves by Your right hand them who put their trust in You from those that rise up against them. Keep me as the apple of Your eye, hide me under the shadow of Your wings, from the wicked that oppress me, from my deadly enemies who compass me about They are enclosed in their own fat—with their mouth they speak proudly. They have now compassed us in our steps—they have set their eyes bowing down to the earth like as a lion that is greedy of his prey, and as it were a young lion lurking in secret places. Many godly men have such cruel enemies as David had, so they will do well to pray as he did!

13-15. Arise, O LORD, disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, which is Your sword: from men which are Your hand, O LORD, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly You fill with Your hidden treasure: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes. As for me—"What do I possess? What is my portion? Am I full of substance, like the men of the world, or have I little of this world's wealth? It is of small consequence, for, 'as for me'" —

15. I will behold Your face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Your likeness. That is our portion! God grant that we may prize it more and more! Amen.