

## **Pictures of Happiness**

(No. 3365)

A SERMON PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 31, 1913.

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"Happy are the people who are in such a state; happy are the people whose God is the Lord." [Psalm 144:15](#).

SOMETIMES God's people are unhappy when they ought to be happy. God observes this. Therefore He tells them when they possess the materials of happiness and gives them a description of the peace and prosperity of those who are truly happy men. Thus recollecting the choice mercies which surround them and not attaching so much importance to the little trials of the day, they may become of God's mind and feel themselves to be as happy as He declares they are. The pure in spirit are said by our Savior to be blessed. They often think themselves to be cursed and feel as if there were no blessing for them. But blessed they are, for Jesus knows whom He has blessed! And though God's people are sometimes, in their own consciences, unhappy, they are a happy people and to be congratulated on their condition notwithstanding. They have reasons for happiness. They have satisfactory grounds for happiness. They have springs of happiness. They have future prospects of happiness. If you are God's people, you cannot err in exorcising faith about this thing. You are numbered with those who are the happiest people under Heaven!

The text speaks not only of the persons, but also of the condition of God's people—a condition which I believe is, to a great extent, parallel to our own as a Christian Church. It seems to me that we have, according to the Gospel standard of interpretation, all the privileges, all the blessednesses, which, in the verse preceding the text, David ascribes to this happy people. I shall ask you, therefore, to look at these things, that each particular may be an incentive to gratitude. He declares here—

### **I. THE ELEMENTS OF HAPPINESS.**

First, David accounts those to be a happy people who are in a healthy and vigorous condition. The sons have "as plants grown up in their youth. And the daughters as cornerstones, polished after the similitude of a palace." It is a great blessing to a Church to have in her midst fruitful, earnest young men, yes! And I will say that whatever their age may be, it is no small measure of a Church's strength to have her sons about her, who, having grown up and become mature in knowledge, mental force and spiritual vigor, bear fruit unto the Glory of God!

There has been a tendency in the Christian Church to decry instrumentality. But God always has worked by instruments. So far as we know, He always will. When Christ ascended up on high and led captivity captive, the gifts which He received for men were men, Apostles,

Prophets, teachers, Evangelists, and the like. It is no small riches to a Church to have in her midst men—teachers qualified to teach and seeking to save as well, to become Evangelists—in this way and in any other way, thus aiming to promote the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Ah, unhappy is that church where her sons are all slumbering, where they are all stereotyped in their beliefs and in their several states never make any advance, feeling no throbs of sacred ambition, never caring to come to spiritual attainments, resting satisfied with the lowest possible eminence of Divine Grace, without any desire to advance to a high degree of love to God! Blessed is that Church where her sons seek to grow up and to bear fruit unto God! And not less blessed to have in her midst Sisters who are like those pillars we sometimes see in public buildings—beautifully fluted, carved, polished—the very adornment of the structure, placed at the corner, cornerstones that help to cement the entire structure and bind it together! It seems to me to be one of the peculiar gifts of the Christian Sisterhood to be the means of holding the entire fabric of the Christian Church in sacred love! And though in our belief they ought not to do this by public speech, yet by quiet conversation, active sympathy and the patient endurance and holy tenacity of affection, they may help to keep the Church well bolted together, well barred and banded, well cemented, so that the stones of the

Church shall not be detached, the one from the other. Happy is the Church that abounds in Christian matrons and younger women willing to be serviceable for Christ!

If I remind you that this is our happy case, you may, perhaps, think little of it and lightly esteem the cause for gratitude. But were you in some churches where there are not men nor women enough to take the Sabbath school—and such churches I have visited—where there are none, positively none to assist the pastor, where the whole work must be confined to a one-man ministry because the rest of the members do not seem to be alive in the sacred service—if you were members of such churches, you would deplore their lamentable poverty both day and night! God has made it otherwise with us—let us bless His name and, while thanking Him, acknowledge that we are happy to be in such a state!

Next to that the Psalmist describes plenty as a peculiar pleasure. "That our garners may be full, affording all manner of store." Bountiful provision of the Gospel! The ministry is to have all things desirable for Christians if they are to be made happy. Unhappy they who can seldom hear a sermon, or who, hearing it, might well have spared their ears the trouble of listening to the words! Thrice happy they who hear the pure Truth of Jesus Christ, even though it is spoken in a rough manner and in a style that has no enchantments for the soft lovers of rhetoric and elocution! If ever you are laid up a while upon a bed of sickness, you may heave a deep sigh for the privilege you scarcely know how fully to appreciate till you lose it, that you can go up to the House of God! I heard but the other day from one who has been unable to worship with us for months such words as these, "Oh, Ziona, Ziona, the loved of my heart, when shall the day return that I shall again rejoice with the multitude

that keep holy day and lift up my song with them, and bow my head in the midst of the great congregation?" By your regrets which you will feel when you are thus laid aside, value the privilege while you possess it—the privilege of having an open Bible expounded and of being able to join with the whole company of the faithful in the worship of the most high God! If at any time the Word has been marrow and fatness to you, then think yourselves happy, yes, rejoice tonight and give to God the gratitude of your souls!

Further, the Psalmist represents multitude as being a cause of thankfulness. "That our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets." Sheep are always a favorite type of the servants of the Lord Jesus. I cannot, nor indeed, need I, enter into the illustration—you yourselves understand it so well—but the peculiar blessing is when these sheep are multiplied by thousands and by ten thousands. Alas, for the Church when she is satisfied with an increase of one or two during a year! Ah, miserable Church that shall be content if the pool of Baptism is never stirred by those that profess their faith in Jesus or if at the sacramental Table there should be no fresh visitors at the feast of love! Ah, miserable state of religion in which the Churches shall think this to be their fit and proper condition and shall say they are comfortable while the world is perishing and none cares for souls! Oh, what a joy it is when every member of a Church becomes fruitful in leading others to Christ! I know this is much the experience of my dear Brothers and Sisters in Church fellowship here. The greater number, I believe, are striving to be missionaries for Christ. I wish I could honestly hope that all were so doing. It is to the shame of those who are not doing so that they can sit side by side with earnest Christians and not be more earnest themselves! Yet I thank God and take courage as I remember many of you who, by tears and prayers, and afterwards by earnest labors—some of them of the most self-sacrificing kind—have gone forth to bring others to Jesus, so that from a handful of men we have multiplied and shall multiply yet as the dispensation of God's Grace shall be continued to us!

Now, Brothers and Sisters, these may not seem to some selfish spirits any great things to rejoice in. But lovers of Christ, who have some of Christ's likeness in their hearts, will account it a matter for which to clap their hands and indulge in holy mirth when souls are converted! Is it not better to see a sinner saved than to see your purse full or your lands extending? Should it not give you greater joy that Christ is glorified than that anything, however desirable, should transpire for your own carnal gratification? Let Him reign if I perish! Let the crown sit well upon His head if I am trodden like mire in the street! Let Him be King of kings and Lord of lords even if His poor servant dies forgotten and unknown!

The next blessing mentioned in the Psalm is the happiness of God's people is their strength—"That our oxen may be strong to labor." I think here, by oxen, there is mystically and spiritually intended all the workers of the Church, but especially ministers of Christ. Paul expressly calls these the oxen—"You shall not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treads out the corn." It is a blessed circumstance when those that try to plow any part of God's field

are qualified for the work. Whenever I see a man driving a horse with a lead that is too much for it, I thank God it is not my task to have such work

as that! A company of people attempting a work for which they are not qualified either by gifts or Grace is an unhappy spectacle. If God makes men strong to labor so that their labor is their delight and the service of God is a very recreation to them, it ought to be and it must be a cause of thanksgiving! Perhaps some of you have been refreshed of late. I know my Sunday school teachers can bear me witness. You have had such visitation from God that teaching in the Sunday school has become a greater joy to you than it ever was! There are, I know, others of you whose service to Christ is by no means misery. You go forth to the battle not with dolorous sounds, but with music in your hearts, with a happy beaming of your eyes, with the precision of saints and with the attendant symbols of victory! Be thankful for this, for it is no small blessing when the laborers are strong for their work.

Then comes the blessing of peace—"That there be no breaking in, nor going out." No secession fomented by discord. No heresies invading the midst of the happy family and rending asunder hearts that should be as one. If it should ever be your wretched lot to be a member of a church that has been distracted by schism and discord, you will confess that, perhaps of all things in Christian experience, there is nothing that humbles the soul more, nothing that wounds the heart more and that does more mischief to the inner life than personal jealousies and the party divisions they occasion! It is an unspeakable blessing when God keeps so many hearts in holy union! We so easily divide. Our tastes are naturally so different. There are such varieties of circumstance and of temperament among us—some rich, some poor, some lively and cheerful, some gloomy and desponding—it is not likely that a company of men will all agree together year by year without some jarring, where peace rules and there are no breakings forth of the waters of strife! Everyone ought to devoutly bow his head in a gratitude which he cannot express and say, "Lord, with You there is no breaking in nor going out."

The last mercy which David mentions is that of satisfaction—"that there is no complaining in our streets." And can we not appropriate this when, instead of hearing the voice of murmuring on the right hand and on the left—murmuring against the preacher, murmuring against the officers, murmuring against one another—each one is encouraging his fellow to do the work of the Lord and all are unanimous together in this sole regret, that we can't love more, can't work more, can't glorify God more? Oh, this makes a happy Church! It is evidence of a people near to God. Theirs is a happy case.

Now, Brothers and Sisters, these things may have in them little interest for strangers, but they will have, I trust, some force, though I put them thus hurriedly to you who have been with us from the beginning and whose history has proven how God has multiplied His blessings. Unworthy of the least of all His mercies we were and the Church was brought low by affliction and sorrow till it seemed as though our name would be blotted out from

His Israel and Ichabod was written on our wall—but God turned His hand in mercy upon us! That is 15 years ago. And by the space of these revolving years He has never ceased to bless. We have had no startling phenomena of revival. We have had no excitements such as have passed over different parts of the Christian world. But steadily, as though all had been regulated by an ever-progressing geometry, we have gone on to increase and to multiply—and have been led on from service to service in the name and strength of the Lord God! Not one particle of this is ascribable to human agency, only so far as God may have pleased to use it! The whole of it belongs to God! We then, at least, whatever others may say, ought to keep in the same frame of mind in which we were last Monday evening when we gathered round that Communion Table, instant in prayer, constant in fellowship, continuing to be happy in blessing and praising and magnifying the Lord!

## II. THE SOURCE OF HAPPINESS.

The latter part of the text carries us up to higher ground. Happiness, a practical outflow from the favor which God shows, is traced to its Source, the God of All Grace, and accounted for by the Covenant relations into which He has entered. "Yes, happy is that people whose God is the Lord." Now, Beloved, our God is the Lord, our God is Jehovah! Let me refresh your memories with this Truth of God in two or three of its aspects that you may remember and act in the spirit suggested by them. Our God is the Lord!

He has revealed Himself to us in that Character We knew Him not. We said, "Who is the Lord that we should obey His voice?" When we heard of Him in the preaching of His Truth, it only reached our outward ears—we felt no power in our spirits till it pleased God to reveal Himself to us. It was years ago with some of us—it was only a few months with others of you. Oh, I charge you, go back to that blessed day when those blind eyes were opened and when that dead heart began to feel the Divine Light! Oh, then it was you said, "He is my God." You did not come to Him and ask Him to be your God, but He who gave Himself to you in the Eternal Covenant before the world was, in the fullness of time, gave Himself to you by His effectual Grace, making you willing to accept Him and to kiss His silver scepter! Yes, you have been changed from an enemy into a friend! Your back is no longer toward your God—

"But now subdued by Sovereign Grace,

Your spirit longs for His embrace."

Now bless Him for that with all your heart tonight!

Moreover, He is your God because you have been brought to acknowledge Him as such. Most of you have been baptized into the name, the one glorious name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit—and by that act you declared to all men that you would be dead to all the world besides and alive only to Christ! You came forward years ago, moved by earnest zeal, and you said, "Let others do as they will, but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord." This work of Grace led you from believing with the heart to confession with

the mouth. I trust that many a time since then you have stood in the gap for God when His name has been dishonored by the ungodly and that you have avowed it in your family and business that you are the Lord's servant. While others have disregarded His Law and oppressed His Truth, my soul follows hard after Him unto shame and derision! And I will follow where my Savior leads! Now you are happy to be able to do this.

Happy is the people who acknowledge God to be the Lord! Be happy tonight, then, and show your happiness by praising the name of the Lord in your heart. The Lord has been your God since then, inasmuch as you have believed in Him. In the day of trouble your soul has found peace by confiding in His goodness. When you have felt the weight of sin, you have got rid of that weight by coming to the pardoning God. Oh, the mere professors do not know what it is to take God as He really is! They take Him to be, what shall I say?—to be anything but their Almighty Sovereign! They take the Lord to be their lackey, to help them in some grievous hour when they can't help themselves—to be their make-weight, in an emergency to supply a few of their deficiencies. They pick and choose His commands. They will be fruitful enough in duties that bring them honor, but they are barren enough in any duties that are sacred—that only belong to God and their own soul. As to outward ceremonies, they can indulge abundantly, but to spiritual religion they are utter strangers! They have never taken God to be altogether their God. Why, that means something more than Master, more than Father, more than King! Oh, do you know what it means? Is He All-in-All to you? That is what Godhead is—All-in-All. Do you take Him to be All-in-All to you, henceforth and forever? Happy are the people that can say that in very truth! It may cause them loss. It may often make their course run contrary to flesh and blood. But if they acknowledge God to be their Lord, so as to give Him entire obedience as His Grace enables them, they are pronounced happy by the highest authority—and happy they shall be, come what may!

We have taken God to be our God, not merely to trust in Him, but, to go further, to enjoy Him. Have you not had sweet enjoyment with your God, Beloved, when He has brought you to feel that all things around you might be shadows, but that God was true? Have you never so realized God in your little chamber that you forgot there was a world of sin and sorrow, and care—and only remembered Him? Have you never felt as you have come down from that mount of fellowship, that when the atheist said there was no God, you could laugh him to scorn, for your spirit had seen Him face to face and your soul had come into contact with the soul of the Infinite God, and you had as truly communed with Him as ever man communed with his fellow, or ever heart had fellowship with heart! Yes, oh, seek this yet again! Yes, let it be your element to live in the enjoyment of communion with God, for those are the happy people who, to the highest degree by inward fellowship, take God to be their God!

And then, over and above that, having enjoyed something of the Lord, we have taken the Lord to be our God that we may serve Him. It has been our delight, when we have had opportunities, to try and spread abroad the theme of His great and glorious name. You have chosen to give Him of His substance—I trust you have not held back any of the talent which your Master has entrusted to you. In proportion as any man or woman here answers to the description we have been reviewing—in that proportion shall they be truly happy! If you have but partly trusted and partly communed, and partly served, your happiness may well be shallow. But if you have trusted with your whole heart, leaning your entire weight upon the Lord—and if you have loved with all the power of your passion and communed day by day in closest fellowship with Him—if you have served Him with your whole heart, soul and strength, then happy are you! God declares you such and in the highest degree you certainly shall be such, world without end!

The Believer who has thus taken God to be his God is happy because he has a portion with which he never can grow discontented. Men outgrow their books. Students come to look on the volumes they once valued as being worn-out things. Men outgrow their friends—those that were once their superiors, they can outstrip. Men outgrow their substance and their wealth. The comfort they once had in these things they find no longer. The most pleasant pleasures of the world are the first to expire as men advance—especially as they grow old—that which once contented them becomes vanity of vanities in their account! But no man outgrows his God! No soul ever runs at such a rate that he passes beyond the powers that God has given him! No, Beloved, but the more our capacities are enlarged and our desires expanded, the more perfectly satisfied are we with the Lord our God! He that has this portion has one that can never be taken away from him. The world did not give it and the world cannot steal it. The devil has tried full often to take away from us our God, but he shall never do that. Time may rob us of our health. The world may rob us of our wealth. Sickness may deprive us of a thousand comforts, but there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord! Our inheritance cannot be alienated—it is where neither moth nor rust can corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal!

Hence the Lord's people are a happy people because they have a portion they can die with. They have a pleasure that can make their dying pillow soft! And they have riches they can take with them through the last grim river—can pass its floods without losing a single farthing of their heritage—no, can pass the flood and land upon the other shore to enter more fully into the bliss which God has prepared for them that love Him!

I wish we were all such happy people! I wish we were, all of us, happy to the fullest degree! If you are not, you may be! If you are not, if you trust in Christ, you shall be, if you come empty-handed and simply take Christ to be your Savior! He never did reject one, yet, and never shall! He will accept you tonight and put you in the same happy case as others of His people. I know there are some here that are hard to comfort, but the Master, I trust, will do

it yet, for He releases the prisoners and delights to find out the hard cases and to deal with them! If there is a dungeon door that no key can open, He delights to come with the mighty hammer of His Word and smash the door in pieces and give the spirit liberty! May He do that tonight, and then we will sing together of His pardoning power. Amen!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: PSALM 103; 1 CORINTHIANS 1:25-31.

This Psalm is a song of exulting thanksgiving, of overflowing joy and praise! Let each one of us read it as speaking for himself. Let it, here and now, be our own personal tribute of peculiar mercy received by each of us!

Verse 1. Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name. If things without are not joyous, let all that is within wake itself up to praise my God! He will hear me, even though I speak not. If I keep the praise within myself, He will hear the music of my soul. "Bless His holy name."

2. Bless the LORD, O my soul Do it again. If you have blest Him once, bless Him again. Does He not multiply to bless you? Bless Him repeatedly, continually! Then never weary of the work. Repeat yourself in grateful praise.

2. And forget not all His benefits. Your poor memory has often been the grave of His mercy, but now call for a resurrection and let His mercies rise before your eyes, and let your praises rise with them. "Forget not all His benefits."

3. Who forgives all your iniquities—Yes, that is done. Tonight you are a forgiven sinner. "All your iniquities," and they were very many, have gone from you once and for all! Will you not sing about that?

3. Who heals all your disease You are raised up from the bed of pain. What is still better, the Lord is at work with your sinful nature, purging and cleansing you of your corruption—healing you of your pride, your sloth, your unbelief. Will you not praise Him for this? "Who heals"—goes on to heal—continues to heal—"all your diseases."

4. Who redeems your life from destruction. Who has redeemed you with His own precious blood and given you a life above all life—the life of God within you—a redeemed life! Oh, by the precious blood that bought you, will you be silent? Will you not sing about Redemption? Is it not the sweetest theme to sing about that ever can be imagined?

4. Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies. Treats you like a king! As a king gives to a king, so gives He His mercies to you—crowns you! What? Shall a crowned head refuse to praise Him who crowned it? No! "Bless the lord, O my Soul!"

5. Who satisfies your mouth with good things. He might have left you to pine in spiritual hunger, but instead He has fed you—made you to know what is good, to love what is good, to feed upon that which is good—and to rejoice in that which is good! Will you not praise Him for this?

5. So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. Oh, you are strengthened! You grow young again, your faith is revived, your hope is brightened, your love has been stirred up



and the smoldering flame begins to burn anew with vigor! Will you not bless Him who restores you after this fashion? Surely, you cannot refuse to praise.

6. The LORD executes righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. Let the poor of the earth praise Him for this! Let the despised—those who are trampled on—exult in the fact that God is the executioner of the proud and the executor of the poor. "He executes righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed."

7. He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel. He is a God who makes Himself known! He might have hidden Himself behind His works, instead of which He has given us a Revelation—a Revelation in the Old Testament which made David sing! But you and I have a Revelation in the New Testament—not made to Moses this time, but to great David's greater son! Shall we not praise Him for making known His ways and His acts to us in the Person of His Son, in a bright and lustrous manner unknown before? "My Soul, bless you the Lord."

8. The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. And should not this make us plenteous in song? So good a God to such great sinners! Merciful—full of mercy and gracious! Full of Grace, love and kindness! So slow to anger and so quick to forgive! O my Soul, be you slow to murmur! Be you quick to praise!

9. He will not always chide. So that even you, who feel His chidings tonight, ought to bless Him because they last such a little while. Such are our faults that if He were always chiding, we could not find any fault with Him. But He will not always chide. He will sometimes. He makes us know the folly of our hearts when we wander from Him, but, "He will not always chide."

9. Neither will He keep His anger forever. It is very short-lived towards His people. In fact, it is not anger of that sort which He lets loose against rebels, for He has said, "I will not be angry with you, nor rebuke you."

10. He has not dealt with us after our sins: nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. Come, will you not praise Him for this? If He had dealt with us according to our sins, we certainly would not have been in the House of Prayer. We would have been now in the house of punishment! We would have been driven from His Presence instead of being invited to seek His face! "He has not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities."

11. For as the Heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him. Sing loud, then, and praise Him greatly, for His mercy is so great!—

"Loud as His thunders shout His praise,

And sound it lofty at His Throne!" What music can be equal to such mercy as this?—"As high as the Heaven is above the earth." Surely, the best music our lips can give, and better than that, should be offered to Him!

12. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. Oh, what a mercy this is! In the third verse, you see, He gave us the note upon which here, in the 12th verse, He enlarges—"Who forgives all your iniquities." How does He forgive them? Why, "as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us." They were ours! We could not deny them, but He has removed them—taken them right away from us and laid them on a Scapegoat. That Scapegoat has carried them away—they will never be found again. "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us." Now comes in the next note. The third verse was, "Who heals all your diseases." This is what He says of it—

13. Like as a father pities his children, so the LORD pities them that fear Him. While they are sick in body and while He looks at them with great tenderness, feeling for them, suffering with them—

14. For He knows our frame. He remembers that we are dust He knows that our sickness is but a premonition of that death which will dissolve this mortal frame, which is only kept together by a continuous miracle. It is strange that such a heap of dust as our body is does not dissolve much sooner. That it should return to the dust from where it came is no wonder. The wonder is that it returns not at once—and it would, were it not for that next mercy mentioned in the fourth verse, "Who redeems your life from destruction." He is singing about that now. "He knows our frame. He remembers that we are dust."

15, 16. As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. For the wind passes over it, and it is gone: and the place thereof shall know it no more. Shall we sorrow about this? No, for we remember that we have another note yet in the fourth verse, "Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies." So He chants that again in the 17th verse.

17, 18. But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children. To such as keep His Covenant, and to those that remember His commandments to do them. Mercy for ourselves! Mercy for our children! What a blessing this is—that our father's Friend is our Friend, and is the Friend of our children, too! As David loved Mephibosheth for Jonathan's sake, so does God still look upon the children of His children and keeps His Covenant with them!

19. The LORD has prepared His Throne in the heavens. Blessed be His name, He crowns us and we are glad that He should be crowned, too! "Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies." And here we see Him—who it is that crowns us. "The Lord has prepared His Throne in the heavens."

19, 20. And His Kingdom rules over all Bless the LORD, you His angels—As if David could not do it well enough, himself, and so he called in the angels to help him! You bright spirits that behold Him day and night and circle His Throne, rejoicing with your never-ceasing symphonies, lend me your harps and tongues! "Bless the Lord, you His angels."

20, 21. That excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto this voice of His word. Bless you the LORD, all you His hosts. Sun, moon, and stars, the hosts of Heaven, and all creatures that dwell in this lower sphere of whatever form you are, burst forth into song and extol Him! And oh, men—the bests that should be the hosts of God—when you are made willing in the day of His power, go forth to praise Him! "Bless the Lord, all you His hosts."

21. You ministers of His, that do His pleasure. You servants of His, whether you are wind, and rain, and snow, or whether you are intelligent agents, so long as you are doing His pleasure, praise Him as you do it!

22. Bless the LORD, all His works in all places of His dominion: bless the LORD, O my Soul In the spirit of that, I think, we must always sing our hymns of praise unto God. No, more, our whole life should be a Psalm of joyous thanksgiving and thanks-living!

1 CORINTHIANS 1:25-31.

In this Chapter the Apostle magnifies the Cross of His Lord as God's greatest gift to the world and as the highest glory of God's self-revelation to men! He praises God that the Corinthian Christians have experienced the saving Grace that comes by faith in the sinner's sacrifice on Calvary. He rejoices, too, that that same Grace has taught them to look forward to the Savior's return in Glory. But he is compelled to reprove them for some divisions and rivalries that sprang from their glorying in gifts rather than graces. This leads him to remind them how God had disparaged mere worldly wisdom by saving mankind by the death of Jesus. And he brings all to a very practical application in the verses that we now ponder.

25. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. And yet you will perceive that the Church is always looking after wise men after the flesh. If it can find these, it immediately cringes before them, and asks these learned doctors to teach it something more than the simplicities of Christ. This is the old disease of the Church! May God yet cure her.

26. For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. There are a few such. Remember how the Countess of Huntingdon used to say that she was very thankful for that letter "m," for it does not say "not anynoble," but "not manynoble are called."

27, 28. 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 seem scarcely to have an existence, not worth notice, not put down in the list of existences.

28, 29. To bring to nothing things that are. That no flesh should glory in His Presence. This is what flesh always likes to do. Proud flesh we speak of, and all flesh is such. Flesh has a great tendency to swell, to corrupt—it is easily puffed up—but God will not have it so.

What is flesh to God? Did not He make all things? Shall the thing formed boast itself against the Former?

30. But of Him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. In fact, we have everything in Christ! We have in His Prophetic office, wisdom. In His priestly office, righteousness and sanctification. And in His royal office, in which He paid the price of our salvation, we have redemption!

31. That, according as it is written, He that glories, let him glory in the Lord. Here is room for glorifying and it is our duty to glory in God. Let us do so more and more!

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307

PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.