

# Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

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TWELVE COVENANT MERCIES.

## A Sermon

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, JULY 9TH, 1893,

DELIVERED BY

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“Incline your ear, and come unto me : hear, and your soul shall live : and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.”—Isaiah lv. 3.

I GOT so far this morning\* as to plead with men to come to God to hear what he had to say, to give diligent and earnest heed to his teaching about their souls and about salvation ; and while I pleaded, I can truly say, with all the strength I had, I made this one of the master arguments that, in hearing, their soul would live, and in coming to God, they would find him ready to enter into covenant with them, “an everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David.”

That seemed to me to be one of the most astonishing truths that was ever given to man to preach, that God would be a high contracting party with poor insignificant and guilty man, that he would make a covenant with man ; yes, with you and with me ; that he would bind himself by a solemn promise, give his sacred pledge, and enter into a holy contract of mercy with the guilty sons of Adam. I thought that, if men were in their right minds, and God had taught their reason to be reasonable, they would be drawn to the Lord by such a wonderful promise as this, “I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.”

Remember that there was a covenant of old, which men broke ; the covenant of works, “This do, and thou shalt live.” Keep such and such commands, and thou shalt be rewarded. That covenant failed because man did not keep God's commands, and so did not earn the promised reward. We broke the terms of that contract, and it is no longer valid, except that we come under penalty for the breach of it ; and that penalty is, that we are to be cast away from God's presence, and to perish without hope, so far as that broken covenant is concerned.

Now, rolling up that old covenant as a useless thing out of which no salvation can ever come, God comes to us in another way, and he says, “I will make a new covenant with you, not like the old one at all.” It is a covenant of grace : a covenant made, not with the worthy,

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\* See *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, No. 2,092, “God's Own Gospel Call.” No. 2,316.

but with the unworthy; a covenant not made upon conditions, but unconditionally, every supposed condition having been fulfilled by our great Representative and Surety, the Lord Jesus Christ; a covenant without an "if" or a "but" in it; "ordered in all things, and sure;" a covenant of shalls and wills, in which God says, "I will, and thou shalt;" a covenant just suited to our broken-down and helpless condition; a covenant which will land every one who is interested in it in heaven. No other covenant will ever do this. I tried to expatiate upon that covenant this morning; and I thought that I would close the day by showing to any who desire to be in this covenant of grace what the blessings are that God promises to give to guilty men when they come to him, when they accept his love and his mercy. What are these blessings?

I have little else to do to-night but to refer you again, as I did this morning, to God's Word. Beloved, if you had met together, after the death of some wealthy relative, and his will was about to be read to you, you would not require an eloquent lawyer, you would all be very attentive, and some of you who are a little deaf would recover your hearing. An important question would be, "What has he left?" A still more important enquiry would be, "What has he left to me?" Well, I want you to feel to-night that you do not want an eloquent preacher; I am only going to read God's will to you, his covenant, which is virtually the testament or will of Christ, and all that you have to do is to listen, and say, "What has he left? What has he bequeathed to me? What does he covenant to give to me?" And remember that, whoever you may be, if you are willing to be saved by grace, you may be saved by grace. If you give up all hope of being saved anyhow else, you may be saved by the free mercy and love of God. "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land." If you come and take Christ to be your Saviour, then all the promises of God, which in him are yea, and in him Amen, are made to you. If you take him, you take all that is in the covenant, for he is the covenant. Embodied in himself is the whole covenant of grace, and he who hath Christ hath all it contains.

I am going to point you to some of the passages in which we have this covenant written out at length. I shall not say much upon any item; but I shall refer you to twelve wonderful mercies of the covenant of grace. Will you kindly look in your Bibles at the prophecy of Jeremiah, chapter thirty-one, verse thirty-four? There is no music more sweet to me than the rustle of your Bibles. I sometimes preach, nay, I frequently preach when I may read what I like, and nobody follows me to see if I quote correctly. I have been inclined to buy you wheelbarrows, so that you may bring your Bibles to chapel in them, since many of you do not seem to have any here. What is the best way of hearing the Word? Is it not to search and see whether what the preacher says is really according to the Word of God?

I. One of the first mercies of the covenant is SAVING KNOWLEDGE. Turn to Jeremiah thirty-one, and let us begin to read at verse thirty-one: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took

them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord." There is one of the first blessings of the covenant of grace, saving knowledge.

Man by nature knows not God. He does not want to know God; and when he is aroused to think of God at all, God seems a great mystery, a being invisible, unreachable; and the man says, "Who shall make me to know God?" He reads his Bible, it may be; and even that he does not understand. He hears the preacher; but the Lord's servant seems to talk a jargon which the unconverted man cannot comprehend. Brethren, there is no knowing God except through God. The man's neighbour cannot teach him, even though he may attempt it. Though he may say, "Know the Lord," yet he cannot give knowledge of God. By nature, our eyes are blinded; we cannot see. You may hold even the electric light to a blind man's sightless orbs, but it will not give him sight. Blind Bartimæus saw no light till Jesus spoke to him. Saul of Tarsus was blind enough, by his bigotry and self-righteousness, until God gave him a glorious light to shine into his soul.

Now, here is a covenant that God will give the knowledge of himself to the lost, and the guilty, and the ruined, to those who have provoked him, and gone astray from him. Where are those to whom this covenant shall be fulfilled to-night? I cannot tell you, save by marks and tokens; and this is one of the marks. Do you know that you are blind? Do you know that you cannot see apart from divine grace? Do you long to see? He is not totally blind, in a spiritual sense, who knows that he is so. He is not in the dark who feels that he is in the dark; there is already some degree of light that makes him perceive the darkness visible. O soul, if thou desirest to know God, here is the covenant, "They shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them"! All God's chosen shall know him; they shall not abide in ignorance; they shall not die in ignorance; they shall come to know the Lord; and they shall grow in the grace and in the knowledge of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Oh, what a privilege this is! "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God." If any man is ignorant of his God, let him hear the Word of the Lord, and let him seek the Lord, and God will give him instruction concerning himself, and make him to know the great Jehovah, the Father of our spirits, who passeth by iniquity, transgression, and sin.

II. But I must not linger on any one blessing. The first covenant mercy is saving knowledge; the next is, GOD'S LAW WRITTEN IN THE HEART. Let me read you verse thirty-three again: "After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people." You know that the Law of Moses was written on two tablets of stone.

Wonderfully precious those two slabs of marble must have been when the divine finger had traced the solemn lines. Moses had a great charge to keep when he had those two divinely-written tablets; but he broke them because the people had in spirit broken them; it could not be that such divine writing should ever be handled or looked at by such an unholy people. Now, brethren, it was of no use writing the Law on tablets of stone except for the condemnation of the people; but when God comes in the covenant of grace, he does not merely give us the Law in a Book, the Law written in legible characters; but he comes and writes on the fleshy tablets of our heart. Then the man knows the Law by heart. What is better, he loves the Law. That Law accuses him; but he would not have it altered; he bows and confesses the truthfulness of the accusation. He cries, "Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep thy Law." And this is the covenant blessing. God makes men to love his commandments, and to delight themselves in truth, and righteousness, and holiness.

A very wonderful thing is this writing in our heart; nobody but God can write in human hearts. We can write certain thoughts upon your minds as we appeal to your ears; but to get at the heart is another thing. He that hath the keys of heaven, he that hath the keys of the heart, he that shuts and no man opens, or opens and no man shuts, can really get at the human heart; but he does so get at it that he writes there his commandments; and this he does to men who formerly hated those commandments; he makes them love them. Men who despised his commandments, he makes to honour them. As for men who forgot his commandments, he writes them in their hearts, so that they cannot get away from them. As for men who would have changed the commandments, he changes their hearts instead; and then their hearts and the commandments agree together.

This is a second covenant blessing. Do any of you want these blessings? Would you like to know the Lord? Do you wish to have the Law written on your hearts? Be it unto you according to your faith. Believe that God can do this for you, trust in Christ that it may be done unto you, and even so shall it be.

III. The third covenant mercy (we cannot dwell on any item long) is, **FREE PARDON**. You will find this at the end of the thirty-fourth verse: "For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Oh, this is a great blessing of the covenant. You people who have never sinned, or who think that you have not, you who believe yourselves to have been always good, or at least as good as you could be, and far above the average of mankind, you exceedingly excellent people, who have never done anything that you need to repent of very greatly, well, I have nothing for you here. Only remember what Mary sang, "He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich" (that is you) "he hath sent empty away." But if there be a soul here that feels the burden of its guilt, one bowed down with grief because of the heavy load of past iniquity that lies upon it, why, surely you, if you have the faith, will jump for joy as you read these words, "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." First, he will forgive it, blot it right out. "Be," saith he, "as if you had never offended. Come to me,

come to my heart, as if you had always loved me. Guilty though you be, I will not impute iniquity to your charge, I will forgive it." The great Judge will put on the white gloves, and not the black cap. You shall be forgiven. And then the Lord says, "I will remember their sin no more." It is a wonderful thing when omnipotence overcomes omniscience, when omnipotent love will not allow omniscience to recollect: "I will remember their sin no more." Satan comes and pleads against the sinner, "Lord, he did so and so." God says, "I do not remember it;" nor does he remember it, for he laid it all on Christ, and Christ suffered the penalty due for it, and therefore it is gone. It is never to be recalled; it stands not in the book of remembrance; and as the Lord looks over this man's life, when he comes to the black pages, there is a blank; not a line of it is left, for he who died has made the scarlet sins as white as snow. "I will remember their sin no more."

Oh, what a precious covenant mercy is this! I do not feel as if I wanted to elaborate or garnish it in any way, or give you any illustrations, or tell you any anecdotes. Was there ever set before you such a glorious gift? Will you not have it, the perfect pardon of every sin, and a divine act of amnesty and oblivion, for every crime, of every sort, published in the covenant of grace to every soul that is willing to receive it through Christ Jesus the Saviour?

IV. Let us look a little farther, and see if there is not something more. Look to the next chapter, Jeremiah thirty-two, at the thirty-eighth verse: "And they shall be my people, and I will be their God." That is the next covenant mercy, RECONCILIATION. The offence is put away, the sin is pardoned. "Now," says God, "They shall be my people." "Lord, they are the people who worshipped Baal; they are the horrid wretches who gave their children up to be burned in the red-hot arms of Molech." "They shall be my people," saith the Lord. "But, Lord, these are the men and women who committed adultery and fornication, and were even guilty of murder." "They shall be my people," saith the Lord. "But, Lord, they provoked thee to anger year after year, and would not hearken to thy prophets." "They shall be my people," saith the Lord, "and I will be their God."

Did you ever think how much there is involved in that expression "I will be their God"? God is everything; and when God gives himself to us, he gives us more than all time and all eternity, all earth and all heaven. "Fear not, Abram," said the Lord to the patriarch, "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward," as if it was reward enough for any man to have God to be his God; and so it is. More riches than Croesus, more honour than the greatest conqueror, hath that man who hath this God to be his God for ever and ever. "I will be their God, and they shall be my people." The young people might look that text out, and find how many times it occurs in the Word of God. I remember many times that God puts it, "I will be their God, and they shall be my people." This is another grand covenant blessing. Are you willing to be the people of God, are you willing to take him, even this God to be yours for ever and ever? If so it be, then is the text true concerning you, "I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David."

V. Will you follow me to the next verse for a fifth covenant mercy, the blessing of TRUE GODLINESS? "And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them." See here, that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. "The fear of God" is a description of true godliness; and God says that he will give this to men. He might have asked it of you, and rightly, too, but you would never have yielded it; but when he says that he will give it, that is a very different thing. He is willing to give you his fear, to give you true religion, to bestow upon you that veneration of his sacred name which lies at the bottom of all godliness. He will give you that, give that to you who never had it, and even despised it, to any of you who have lived all your lives without it, but who are willing to come and take it, this night, as the gift of his grace through Jesus Christ our Lord. May the Lord make you willing in this the day of his power, for that is a part of the covenant blessing! The willingness itself is his gift, and this he gives freely to his own.

VI. Now look, dear friends, to the next verse, which is more wonderful than anything that I have yet read. The sixth covenant mercy is, CONTINUANCE IN GRACE: "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." Talk about final perseverance, is it not taught here? "I will not turn away from them, and they shall not depart from me." What a covenant blessing this is! It reminds us of the words of the Lord Jesus concerning his sheep: "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." "Yes," I heard a man say, who did not believe what that verse teaches, "No man shall pluck them out of his hand; but they may crawl away from between his fingers." No, they shall not. See how this text secures them both ways. "I will not turn away from them, to do them good: but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." Here are both gaps blocked; there is no getting out either way. God will not leave you, and he will not let you leave him. This is a covenant blessing indeed. Oh, for faith to grip it! The soul that comes to Christ, and rests itself wholly upon him, shall find two hands to grasp it, even these two gracious words, "I will not turn away from them," and "they shall not depart from me." And this is spoken of the guilty, of the very men who provoked God.

"Wonders of grace to God belong,  
Repeat his mercies in your song."

If God saved the good, and the meritorious, and the righteous, then the proud Pharisees would swarm in every street in heaven, and God would have no glory; but when he saves the vilest of the vile, then the publicans, who are afraid to lift their eyes to heaven when they think of their own unworthiness, will get near the throne, and sing; oh, how they will sing of free grace and dying love!

This covenant would be great enough if there was nothing more in it than the six blessings that I have mentioned.

VII. I must trouble you to turn in your Bibles to another prophecy,

to read about another of the mercies of this covenant, namely, **CLEANSING**. Some poor soul says, "Well, I can see that God is going to do great things; but I feel myself so unclean, I dare not come near to God. Why, sir, I am polluted all over, inside and out, I am altogether like a leprous man!" Come then, let me read this verse to you, the twenty-fifth verse of the thirty-sixth chapter of Ezekiel: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you." God's Word elsewhere says, "Wash you, make you clean." That is your duty; but here you are told that the Lord will wash you, and make you clean. This is your privilege. "Ye are clean," said Christ to his disciples, "through the word which I have spoken unto you." That is "the washing of water by the word" of which Paul wrote to the Ephesians. The Lord sprinkles this "clean water" upon the leprous and the polluted sinner, upon him who lies covered with his own blood, a filthy thing in the sight of God, and loathsome to himself. The free-grace covenant runs, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." When God himself says, "Ye shall be clean," I wot that we are clean, for he is the best judge of true cleanliness. His pure and holy eyes detect every spot of sin, and every latent trace of disease. Though it be deep within the heart, he can spy it out; but he says, "I will sprinkle you, and ye shall be clean." Blessed be his name!

And then he goes on to enumerate that from which he will cleanse us: "From all your idols will I cleanse you." Is drink your idol? Is some lust of the flesh your idol? "Oh!" say you, "I cannot get rid of these things." No, but the Lord can cleanse you from them. Only come to him, hearken diligently to him, trust him, yield yourself up, surrender yourself to him, and he will dash your idols in pieces, and tear them from their thrones. He will also cleanse you from whatever else there may be that is unmentionable, "from all your filthiness;" things not to be spoken of, not even to be mentioned, those things that are done in secret, "I will cleanse you from them," saith the Lord. I may be speaking to somebody here who, as he listens to me, thinks that I am talking some rhodomontade, some romance. "Why," says he, "I am a filthy creature. I am a great sinner. Can God bless me?" Yes, he can bless even *you*. Did you never hear of Colonel Gardiner? On the very night on which he had made an appointment to commit a filthy sin, Christ appeared to him, and he thought that he heard him say, "I have done all this for thee; wilt thou never turn to me?" He did turn to Jesus, and he became noted as an eminent Christian man, more noted than he had formerly been as a debauched officer in the army. The Lord Jesus Christ still works these wonders of grace. He meets men often when they are desperately set on mischief, just as a horse might be rushing into the battle, and he comes and lays his hand on the rein, and turns it, and leads it back whithersoever he wills, such is the power of his almighty love. I pray him to do the same to-night according to this wondrous promise, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you."

VIII. Nor is that all; for, if a man should be made clean once, he would soon get foul again if left to himself, so here follows the next astounding covenant mercy of RENEWAL OF NATURE. Listen: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." It is not said, "I will help you to this," but, "I will do it;" not, "I will help you to make yourself a new heart," no, nothing of the kind, but, "I will give you a new heart." You know that if you cut off the branches of a tree, it will grow fresh ones; but if you could tear out its heart, it would never grow a new one. There are some creatures, like the lobster, that will shed their claws, and the claws will grow again; but a lobster never grows a new heart. If the centre of animal or vegetable life is once destroyed, there is no renewing it; but God can work this miracle in human hearts, he can strike at the very centre of man's nature, and change it. It is little to render pure the streams, but it is a great marvel to cleanse an impure spring, so that a spring of bitter water suddenly turns sweet. This is a miracle that can only be wrought by the finger of God; and there is nothing short of this renewal of nature that is worth having.

I know that some people fancy that Christians, when they do not go into such and such worldly amusements, deny themselves very much. Nothing of the kind. It would be an awful denial to us if we had to go with the worldlings. Those who frequent the theatre and places of loose amusement, perhaps think that it is a denial to us not to go with them. Oh, dear, dear, dear, they little know us! When I go down to a friend's farm, I see a man carrying to the pigs a couple of pails full of food; but I never envy the pigs. I like them to have all that they can, and to enjoy themselves; but do not suppose that I am denying myself in not wanting their food; my taste does not lie that way. But suppose that a man has a hog's heart, what is the way to deal with him? To deny him his swill? Certainly not, let him have it while he is like the hogs. The thing that is wanted is a change of heart, and when his heart is turned into a renewed man's heart, and is made to be a God-like heart, then it is no denial to him to loathe the things which once gave him so much pleasure. His tastes are entirely changed; and that is according to the promise of the covenant, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." The old heart is very hard; in some, it seems to be petrified altogether; you cannot make any impression upon it. You are received with ridicule, however earnest you may be in your pleadings for God. But the Lord can change the stony heart.

"Our heart, that flinty, stubborn thing,  
That terrors cannot move,  
That fears no threat'nings of his wrath,  
Shall be dissolved by love.

Or he can take the flint away,  
That would not be refin'd;  
And from the treasures of his grace,  
Bestow a softer mind."



Then the man, who was just now as hard as flint, sits and weeps over his sins. See how watchful he is in the presence of all kinds of temptations. He is half afraid to put one foot before another. The very man who was called "Devil-may-care" is now the one who does care, and who trembles lest he should in any way grieve the living God. What a blessed covenant mercy is this!

IX. But I must hurry on. The ninth covenant mercy is, **HOLY CONVERSATION**. Let me read verse twenty-seven: "And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." When God deals with a man in the way of grace, he not only calls him to holiness, but he gives him holiness; he not only bids him walk in his way, but he makes him walk in his way; not by compulsion, not by any kind of physical force, but by the sweet constraints of infinite love. The man's entire life is changed externally, just as I have shown you that his heart is changed internally. "Oh!" says one, "this is very wonderful." It is; it is the standing wonder of the gospel. Certain miracles have ceased; but the miracles of turning men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, are being wrought every day: I rejoice that they are constantly being wrought in this very house of prayer; and I believe that they are going to be wrought to-night on some who are listening to me. If this miracle be wrought, you will not attribute it to me; I know you will not, for you will remember how feeble I am; but you will understand that there is the power of God, working through the preaching of the gospel, making dry bones to live, and turning black sinners into bright saints, to the praise of the glory of his grace.

X. Once again, will you kindly look at the thirty-first verse? This will be the tenth covenant mercy, **HAPPY SELF-LOATHING**. Perhaps you will wonder that I called this a mercy. Listen: "Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations." Free grace makes men loathe themselves. After God has done so much for them, they feel so ashamed that they do not know what to do. "O Lord," says the saint, "to think that ever I should have sinned against one who loved me so much! That I, the elect of God, should have acted like the elect of hell! That I, who was God's own, should have called myself the devil's own! That I, who was chosen unto holiness and eternal life, should have passed it all by as if it were no concern of mine!" Oh, may God grant us this holy loathing, as he will do when we have once tasted of his infinite love!

XI. The next covenant mercy, mentioned in the thirty-seventh chapter, verses twenty-six to twenty-eight, is the blessing of **COMMUNION WITH GOD**: "Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore." God promises to set up his tabernacle

and his temple in the midst of his people, and to make them his priests, his servants, his children, his friends. God will be no longer absent from you when this covenant work shall have been wrought in you ; but you shall be brought to dwell in his presence, to abide in his house, and to go no more out for ever, until the day when he shall take you to his palace home above, to be for ever in his presence, and to serve him day and night in his temple. And all this is promised to the worthless, to the vilest of the vile, all this without asking of you anything but that you will be willing to receive him, all this without requiring of you anything but just your emptiness that he may fill it, your sinfulness that he may cleanse it ; only you must surrender to him. What have you to surrender ? Nothing but a lot of rubbish of your own ; your self-righteousness especially, which is but filthy rags. The Lord bring you to this surrender even now !

XII. There is only one more covenant mercy for me to mention, and I put it last because you will be surprised, perhaps, when I read it. It is about **NEEDFUL CHASTISEMENT**. For that I must ask you to turn to Psalm eighty-nine, and verse thirty : " If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments ; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments ; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail." There is a rod in the covenant. Children of God, you do not like it ; it were no rod if you did ; but it is good for you when you come under the fatherly discipline of God. Though he will never take his everlasting love from you, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail ; yet, when you transgress, the rod shall be sure to fall upon you, and sometimes its strokes shall come upon you before you transgress, to keep you from sinning.

I often hear of some of God's dearest servants suffering. I heard of one whom I am sure God loves very much. He is very useful ; he spends himself in his Master's work. He is also very prosperous ; God gives to him great wealth, which he discreetly and wisely uses ; but he has had a very sharp affliction come upon him lately, which is enough to break his heart ; and when I heard it, I said, " Yes, yes, God loves him ; God loves him." If you are a child of God, note this truth, and accept it with joy, our heavenly Father never pampers his children. We may spoil our girls and boys ; but our Father never spoils his children. If he gives you great happiness, and great success, and makes you useful, he will every now and then give you a whipping behind the door. You think sometimes, " That man is very happy ; he has great blessing resting on his work." Yes, this man is very happy to tell you that he has not all sweets to drink, to make him sick and ill ; but there are bitter tonics, sharp blows of the rod, to keep him right. If we have to bless God more for any one thing than for everything else, it is to thank him that we have not escaped the rod. Sickness is a choice blessing from God ; I cannot measure the unutterable good that comes to us full often in that way ; and losses in business, and crosses, and bereavements, and depressions of spirit, are all, when we see them in the light eternal, so many covenant mercies.

The true-born child of God cannot escape the rod, and would not if he might. He gets afraid when he does not sometimes feel it. He will not long have to be afraid about it, for it will come in due time. I think that I hear somebody say, "I do not want that." No, just so; you want worldly pleasure. Perhaps God will let you have it till you have spent all your substance on it, as the prodigal did; and then you will find that it is all weariness and sorrow, and you will want something better. But if to-night you will say, "I will take the covenant of grace, rod and all; for if I can be God's child, I will very gladly take the rod as part of the mercies of the covenant," come along, and you shall have it. Do seek the Lord to-night. Give not sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids till you have found him. God grant you all the mercies of the everlasting covenant, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

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HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—228, 489, 549.

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