

# GOOD AUTHORITY FOR A GOOD HOPE

## A SERMON

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“They looked unto him and were lightened; and their faces were not ashamed.”

Psalm 34:5

THE Lord has given those examples of mercy in his holy word, which seem good in his sight; and however much difficulty the observation may have in several respects, it is nevertheless a truth, that the Bible is just what the Lord intended it to be. I say this without charging the Lord with any one of the faults therein recorded; but the faults of his own people, that are therein recorded, are truly recorded; the record of those faults is given by inspiration of God and therefore we may rely upon it. But connected with an account of their trials, faults, persecutions, and circumstances, we have successive and effectual displays of his power, his grace, and his mercy, by which we ourselves under similar circumstances are encouraged to look for the same mercy and assured of the same salvation. Therefore, says the apostle, “Take, my brethren, the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction and of patience.” And whatever state we may be sunk into, we shall be sure to find something in the Word of God, descriptive of that state. No man ever yet sank lower than the third chapter of the Lamentations of Jeremiah. You have in that chapter described that experience of which the Lord’s people are subjects sometimes. For you must draw a line of distinction between your general experience and those seasons of special distress, bondage, darkness, and difficulty, in which the Lord has manifested peculiarly the greatness of his love and power in delivering you; these circumstances stand out, as it were, by themselves; your experience between these circumstances maybe of that kind, that it is hard perhaps for you to discover whether you have any real experience of the Lord’s salvation or not, and therefore he points us to such circumstances as so many mile stones, “Set you up way-marks, make you high heaps,” and so on. Thus, you find, that when Jacob had a peculiar display of the Lord’s mercy, he set up a pillar, and said, “This is God’s house;” and when the Israelites passed through Jordan, twelve stones were taken from the river and set up as a memorial. David, again, did not look at his experience in the general as a means or source of encouraging his mind; but he said, “I will remember you from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.” And it is so with, many of you; there are some peculiar circumstances through which you have been brought, there are some distresses into which you have been sunk, there are some deliverances which you have realized, and perhaps some of you can say, “Well, if none of the rest form any part either of soul trouble or God’s salvation, these are displays of my history, which I cannot give up.” Jeremiah looked back even to his soul trouble, and gathered encouragement from that,

remembering the wormwood and the gall: “My soul has them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me; this I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope.” So then, “they looked unto him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed.”

Now as I am trying to get myself, if I possibly can, into the habit of preaching short sermons, I come at once to the language of the text, under the two ideas which it evidently contains. First, *expectation*: “they looked unto him.” Secondly, *confirmation*: “they were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed;” and they thus became confirmed in their expectation, for “hope deferred makes the heart sick; but when the desire comes, it is a tree of life.”

First. Now, first, “they looked unto him.” Not, however, that we can separate altogether the “Looking” and the “being lightened:” for they will both attract our attention naturally, as we pass along.

“They looked unto him.” The first question that arises is, Upon what subject, under what circumstances, did they look unto him? and then, How were they under those circumstances lightened? Now let me point out some of these; and we shall see that we are brought spiritually under the same circumstances, and we are lightened, and our faces are not ashamed.

In the first place, here is a deluge to involve the whole world. There is no possible way of escape; and if men had set all their wisdom and power and skill to work to build a vessel of any kind, even if it had been built as well as the ark, and if it were not built by divine authority, God would not have owned the means of security which they adopted, and all must have proved ineffectual. And therefore, it is said of Noah, who stood at the head of his family in this matter, and who was taught of the Lord, making him know that the flood was coming, that he was “moved with fear.” Now the Lord, in beginning a work of grace in the hearts of his people, brings into their consciences, not only a knowledge that there is a deluge to come, but also this truth, that a deluge is already come, and that there are two more deluges yet to come; and these truths are fastened upon the mind. And if you ask what that deluge is that is already come, it is sin; for in the fall a deluge of sin came, and the whole human race is deluged in that sin. Is there one that ever did, or ever can, escape by any creature power? No; as Paul says, speaking of the subject, “We are all under sin.” Little do men think that they are already in this deluge, little do men think that they are already under the entire power of this deluge, little do men think that they have not (they never can have of themselves) any means of commanding deliverance from this deluge, which is already come; it has overwhelmed all the good qualities we had before the fall; it has overwhelmed our earthly paradise, and it is perished, it is gone, it is lost, to be recovered no more forever. Even if we go no further than this, the matter becomes solemn; and under these circumstances “we look unto him,” that we may “be lightened and our faces not ashamed.” But then, as we have yet many comforts in a temporal point of view, here is another deluge at hand; and that is the deluge of death, that is rolling about, overwhelming one and another, until this deluge also overwhelms the whole. The Lord brings this matter into the conscience, and asks this question, “If you have run with the footmen” (the common affairs of life), “and they have wearied you, then how can you contend with horses? and if in the kind of peace” (in this world, social peace), “wherein you trusted, they wearied you, then how will you do in the swelling of Jordan?” “what will you do in the day of visitation?” But then, besides these two, there comes another deluge in which they meet; and that

is the deluge of Jehovah's eternal wrath, sweeping us everlastingly away, to return no more. Now let the Lord bring this matter into a sinner's conscience, and that man will acknowledge, that of all the weighty subjects to which his mind has been attending, he has never had a subject in his mind so solemn, so awful, so tremendous as this.

Then what is to be done? Who can escape the first deluge? None. Who can escape the second deluge? None. Who can escape the third deluge? None. "Then said Jesus, "Lo, I come." The first deluge rolled in, he dried it up; the second deluge rolled in, he swallowed up death; the third deluge rolled in, the almighty wrath of God, and "deep called unto deep," and he was standing in the middle deluge, standing in death, when the first and the third came rolling in upon him, our sins and the overwhelming wrath of God, and yet in this threefold deluge, as the priests stood on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, so the Lord Jesus Christ, being God as well as man, was standing upon the rock of his own eternal divinity, and though the waters descended and the floods came and the winds blew, they could not overwhelm him.

So then, the Lord having made this a matter of importance with us, we have through his mercy to "look unto him;" and we see that Jesus Christ is a most glorious refuge, a sure way of escape. We see that God the Father takes us away from all these deluges through his dear Son; we find the dear Redeemer carrying us through all these deluges in his own bosom, we find the Holy Spirit revealing these things, and saying unto us, "When, you pass through the waters, I will be with you;" and therefore, let what may come against us, having our God on our side; all is well. Some of us know a little about expecting deliverance from these deluges, and we know a little about some of the sweet tokens of the Lord's determination to deliver us, the Lord having endeared himself to our hearts, and given us some little experience of the pardon of our sins. Our religion includes in its experience a knowledge of what we are and makes the soul restless until it finds its refuge in Christ Jesus, and realizes a little of his emancipating, his delivering, his saving, his securing power.

These, then, are circumstances in which we are brought to "look unto him." If the deluge that is come be not felt, if the deluges that are yet to come be not felt and feared, through the revelation of Jehovah's character as a God of majesty, purity, and holiness, then these things are a matter of secondary consideration; but if we are taught of God, they will be the matter of first consideration. For we shall see, that if we are safe in this, we are safe in everything else; for nothing else can injure us very much or very long, if we are but delivered from this eternal "wrath to come." I like the words of Watts:

"Proclaim salvation from the Lord  
For wretched dying men."

and until a man feels that he is wretched and dying and perishing, he will never prize this. And therefore, if you ask the reason we are so high in doctrine, why we are so high upon this subject, it is because we feel that we are "wretched dying men," and therefore nothing can be of any use to us, but God in all the perfections of his nature and of his grace. "They looked unto him and were lightened."

But this is not all; many more circumstances illustrate it. You have the Israelites in bondage; and how are they to get out of this bondage? They are scattered over the land; and now the question arises, what authority have they “to look unto the Lord?” This is a point I want to be clear upon this evening, in order that you may see what divinely authorized looking to the Lord is. Now to go back for a moment, what authority had Noah to look to the Lord for deliverance? God’s own authority. God told him of the flood, commanded him to build the ark, gave him the plan, gave him a promise that he should survive, and shut him in. Well, the Israelites are oppressed, very much oppressed; what authority have they to look for deliverance? Why, four hundred and thirty years before, yes, before they went into Egypt, he had told Abraham that his offspring, the Jews, should be afflicted four hundred years, “and afterwards” (said he) “they shall come out with great substance;” and we find that the offspring of Abraham (if I may so speak) delighted and rejoiced in this light which God had given. The Lord seemed to show Joseph peculiar favor in this matter; and he says (many years before the Lord did visit them), “God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from hence,” and bury them in the cave of Machpelah, where my parents lie. Here was the promise, “God will surely visit you;” and the Lord did so, and Joseph’s bones were brought up, taken care of, and buried just as he had said. Therefore they had divine authority to look for deliverance, in the face of Egyptian oppression, in the face of Egyptian power, in the face of Egyptian wisdom; for they dealt wisely with the Israelites, very wisely (such wisdom as it was), but the people “looked unto the Lord,” knowing he had engaged by unconditional promise to interpose for them, and the more they oppressed them, the more they multiplied and grew, so that the schemes of their oppressors were defeated, they were delivered, our God was glorified.

Now let the matter come home to us. Do we know what bondage is? That is the question. For the Lord has promised to deliver his spiritual prisoners; yes, that he has. That is a beautiful scripture, to this effect in the Psalms, a prayer indited by the Holy Ghost, and therefore sure to be answered: “Let the sighing of the prisoner come before you; according to the greatness of your power, preserve you them that are appointed to die.” Now what are the sins of our nature but task-masters? everlastingly exacting some fleshly service or other from us, and yet (as the apostle says) we owe these task-masters nothing, for we are “not debtors to the flesh, to live after the flesh;” not at all, and if we follow these Egyptians, they will only lead us down to death, (“if you live after the flesh, you shall die”); and therefore Paul describes that “law in the members” as “bringing him into captivity to the law of sin.” Now it is said of the Lord Jesus that he came to “proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that were bound,” to “break every yoke, and let the oppressed go free,” to bring the stranger to his house, and to “heal that which was sick, and to strengthen that which was lame, and to bring again that which was driven away, and to save that which was lost.” Is not this descriptive of our state in bondage? sick, lost, helpless, destitute in ourselves and of ourselves. Then we have God’s authority (and we can do it on no other), to “look unto him” for the pardon of all our sins, the subjugation of all our foes, the supply of all our needs, and final possession of the promised land.

Thousands, in the day in which we live, “look unto the Lord” professedly by human authority. I shall not soon forget what a farmer told me last summer in the country, when I was asking him the use of church ministers, or what use his minister was. “Why,” said he, “I believe, if I do as he tells me, and go in the way he points out, I shall be saved, and shall be right at last.” “Well,” I said,

“and what does he tell you?” “Why, he tells me that the church ministers are successors of the apostles.” “Well,” I said, “they are certainly not predecessors, they are after them, certainly” “and that as I was christened at church I am a Christian, and that if I abide by the church and do my duty, I may look for salvation at last.” “Well then,” I said, “you have human authority for what you do.” Not that I was speaking contemptuously to the man; nor am I now speaking contemptuously of the man; but I mention this just to show what poor blind mortals we are by nature. He was “looking unto the Lord,” but by human authority. The Pope of Rome says, ‘Do you give so much to the church, and by my authority you may expect salvation;’ and then Free Will comes in, and says, ‘Do you do so and so, and by my authority you may expect salvation;’ and moderate Calvinism comes in, and says, ‘There is an election, but you have nothing to do with that; attend to your duty, and by my authority you may expect salvation.’ “Friend, how came you in hither?” The Lord will bring it into the hearts of his people. ‘What authority have I to expect I shall survive the deluge? what authority have I to expect I shall be saved? what authority have I to show on my side?’ ‘Why,’ say you, ‘it is, “Whosoever will.”’ ‘Ah! but is mine a true willingness?’ says the Christian. Well, but it is, “Come unto me, all you that are heavy laden”’ ‘Yes, but am I really heavy laden, and do I really come to Christ?’ ‘Well, but it is, “Ho, every one that thirsts.”’ ‘Yes, but do I really thirst?’ You may go on in this way with your remedies, but the child of God will go on faster with his diseases. Human systems may cry, Peace, peace! but without divine authority there is no peace. Why, suppose the Lord had left no promise of deliverance to the Israelites, and did not intend to deliver them, but a person had come and told them to look to the Lord for it; they would all have been disappointed together. I can give you an instance. All of you that have read Josephus, or Keith, or Newton, or any other writer upon that part of the history of the East, forty years after the ascension of Christ, are acquainted with the circumstances, the awful circumstances, of the siege of Jerusalem; now there were prophets that rose up in Jerusalem at that time (when the Roman armies were besieging Jerusalem and fulfilling the Savior’s words by casting a trench about it,) that kept telling the people the Lord would deliver them; some said it was not so, some said it was so, but upon the whole that was the way they were deluded. But what authority had they to believe that God would deliver them? Not any; and consequently, they were destroyed. They were sold, in many instances, for a piece of silver, and in several cases they could not get a man to give a penny for a Jew, no, nor for thirty of them; when a man said, ‘I have got thirty Jews to sell,’ the answer would be, ‘I will not give a penny for them all;’ they sold the Savior for thirty pieces of silver, and they were brought into such circumstances that thirty of them would not fetch one piece of silver, as Moses had prophesied, “You shall be sold for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you.” So again, when God declared by his prophets Ezekiel and Jeremiah, that the city should be taken into captivity, there were prophets that opposed this and declared it was not so, that the city could not be destroyed, but Nebuchadnezzar should be destroyed, and the people delivered. Now what authority had they to believe this? None at all. Those who were the people of God believed his words: and when Nebuchadnezzar came the first time, almost all those who feared God went quietly to Babylon with him, and Daniel became prime minister of the kingdom. Then Jeremiah wrote a letter, and said, Build houses and plant vineyards, for this shall last seventy years; and they felt, ‘How good the Lord is, fulfilling his promise, “I will be to you as a little sanctuary in the country where you shalt come!”’ But those who were not in

Babylon were destroyed, and the king himself was treated in a way horrible to think of; his eyes were put out, and he was brought in a most barbarous manner to Babylon, and there he died.

So then, if we are looking to the Lord for eternal salvation by human authority, as sure as we are men we shall be deceived; but if we have a knowledge of our condition by nature, if we are reconciled to God's way of mercy, if we see our need of the rich provision he has made, and while the Bible says, "Ho, every one that thirsts," we feel that we have this thirst, that we have the hunger, that we are the prisoners it speaks of, then the Lord describes our characters, and we have his own authority to "look unto the Lord" for all the mercy we need. Jesus still "receives sinners and eats with them." Think you, you will be disappointed? No.

Let me give you another instance of "looking unto the Lord" by his own authority. The Jews were at Babylon seventy years, and there was a promise that they should return to Jerusalem after seventy years; therefore, they had his authority. Daniel, knowing the time was nearly expired, besought the Lord on behalf of the people; knowing, though his prayers could not change the mind of the Lord, that as the time was just at hand it was a great privilege to look to the Lord. Well, they began to return, but amidst great discouragements; only still "looking unto him." And by and bye, the adversaries that opposed them were obliged to contribute to the furtherance of the work, the finishing of the walls, the completion of the temple, and the establishing of the people; and the Lord fulfilled his own word. And thus you see, Noah and his family "looked unto him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed;" the Israelites, by his own authority, "looked unto him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed;" the Jews who believed in the prophecies relative to the captivity of Jerusalem, "looked unto him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed;" and though taken captive there, they looked unto him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed."

I might remind you again of the siege of Jerusalem; and there is one circumstance so striking, I really must refer to it. You know, the Savior says, "Let him which is on the house-top not come down to take anything out of his house," and so on, and "pray you that your flight be not in the winter;" and the Lord's object was, to give his people such a knowledge of the signs that should precede the destruction of Jerusalem, that they might escape. Now all of you that know anything of the history, know that Cestius Gallus, who was at that time the commander of the Syrian armies, who were under the direction of the Roman emperors, came against Jerusalem, but soon afterwards, for no ostensible reason, retired from the city and gave up the siege; the Christians seized the opportunity to leave the city, and in a few weeks the Romans returned, besieged it all round, and rendered escape impossible. So, it was that the Lord delivered his own. And he has a great many ways of delivering his people. Why, Paul is not ashamed to tell us of one of his deliverances, "let down by the wall in a basket through a window."

The time would fail me to speak of the instances that might be named; but at the same time, there is always to be the Lord's authority for looking to him. There is David in Keilah, and though he had saved the inhabitants from the Philistines, he knew not the hearts of the people, any further than that he knew they were not to be trusted; then David goes and inquires of the Lord, "Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul?" and the Lord said, "They will." Then

David, having his divine authority, left Keilah, and Saul found it was of no use to go there. There must, you see, be divine authority.

Second: Now take notice the next clause: “They were *lightened*, and their faces were not ashamed.” This is capable of a twofold meaning; first, *illumination of mind*; and secondly, *release from bondage or burdens*.

It means illumination, of mind. When Noah “looked unto the Lord,” he obtained a clear understanding of the plan of the ark; and so you and I may look to men, and we shall not want a knowledge of the letter of Gods salvation; but looking to the Lord we shall get an acquaintance with the plan in the spirit of it; and the Lord will not allow us to alter it. Moses, looking to the Lord, had a clear knowledge of the plan of the Lord; if he had had it before, he would not have slain the Egyptian; however, he went away and had forty years’ experience, and the Lord gave him a clear knowledge of the plan. David gave Solomon a plan of the temple, that Solomon clearly understood; the Lord blessed him with wisdom. And so, with Zerubbabel in building the second temple: he is said to have seven eyes, to denote the perfection of knowledge he had. And it is a remarkable thing, not unworthy of observation, that neither Moses, Solomon, nor Zerubbabel (shall I say, the Lord’s three builders? the first built a tabernacle, the second a temple, and the third a second temple) not one of them committed one error: Moses not one error in building the tabernacle, Solomon not one error in building the temple, Zerubbabel not one error in building the second temple. No; for “they shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel, with those seven, these are the eyes of the Lord;” he shall mark out everything, and overlook everything, and not one error shall be committed. And here you have the Redeemer building “the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man;” here you have the Redeemer building the true temple, and he never committed one error, and never can; the top-stone shall be brought forth “with shouts, crying, Grace, grace unto it.” So, then, “looking unto Him and being lightened” means illumination of the mind; we become acquainted with these great things.

But then it also means release, refreshing of soul. Hence Jonathan, when he had tasted a little of the honey that was in the wood, said, “See how my eyes have been enlightened” (that is, how I am refreshed and strengthened, and fit to fight like a good soldier); “and if the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies “ (which Saul had forbidden, being in this an emblem of those systems and those people that would forbid us to feed upon the provision God has made,) “then had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?” It offended Saul, the un-pious Saul (shall I say, to use an un-lexicographical word?) but Jonathan found it enlightened his eyes and strengthened him. And if you and I eat of God’s provision, we shall work fast enough; this is the kind of food to enable us to work.

But now to pass to the expectation. You see, in the first place, that our expectation of eternal mercy rests on divine authority, God’s own authority. Secondly, the end rests upon the same infallible authority; and therefore, the Lord might well say, “I know the thoughts that I think towards you, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end.” I like those words uncommonly well; I like them because they leave something out. ‘Leave something out?’ Yes; notice, the Lord does not say, “to give you an expected *way*.” No, for you expect to be comfortable here, and to get pretty well on there, and pretty smoothly yonder; ‘I shall not give you an expected way, I shall

disappoint you there; in many cases you shall have barrenness instead of fruitfulness, darkness instead of light, bondage instead of liberty, opposition instead of help, adversity instead of prosperity; but I will “give you an expected *end*,” I will not disappoint you there. You have Jeremiah taking rather a wrong view of the promise of God; I do not wonder at it; he takes just such a view as I should take myself. The Lord said, “I have made you this day a defended city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls, against the whole land, against the kings, and the princes, and the priests, and the people.” Jeremiah thought, of course, he should stand quite impregnable; and so he did as a prophet, and they could not move his prophecies nor move him from them; but as a man they got hold of him, and Jeremiah was in a dungeon. A pretty sort of “iron pillar” now; a pretty sort of “brazen wall” now: and he said, “O Lord, you have deceived me, and I was deceived.” And the Lord will deceive us there; we form a pretty path, and the Lord says, ‘No, it is a rough path;’ and therefore the apostles went through various cities, “confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.” ‘I will give you “an expected end,” but not an expected way.’ Not but he will in thousands of instances enable us to get on by the way better than we thought we should; that he will. Says David, “My soul had almost dwelt in silence;” and how was it, it did not quite, David? “Your mercy, O Lord, held me up.” And I could point out here a great many instances in which the Lord’s people have fared better by the way even than they expected. However, let the fare by the way be what it will, the end is well; and “all is well that ends well.” So then, “their faces are not ashamed.”

Now by way of conclusion, let me give you four reasons why we are not ashamed of our religion.

The first is, because it is better than anything else. You may take the sun and the moon, and the stars and the earth; you may take human splendor, human monarchy, human wealth, human wisdom, human pleasure; you may take in all that Solomon possessed; and set all these things beside our religion. Why, set them by the side of Jehovah in his eternal glory, and they are mere passing toys, not worthy to be named in the same day.

“God in the person of his Son  
Has all his mightiest works outdone.”

Creation is good, but it cannot give us eternal life; creation is good, but it cannot pardon our sins; creation is good, but it cannot save our souls; creation is good, but it cannot answer to the hidden powers of our minds; creation is good, but it cannot conform us to the image of God, nor bring us to him. But our religion is better than creation. Christ has “obtained a more excellent name than angels;” and his people are “heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.” This is one reason why we are not ashamed of our religion.

What is the next reason? The next reason has been enlarged upon because of the great evils from which it delivers us. First, because it gives us an inheritance better than anything else; and now, secondly, because of the boundless evils from which it delivers us. Oh! shall I be ashamed of that God who by the great act of eternal election took me away from eternal damnation? Shall I be ashamed of that Redeemer who by the great act of his atoning death brought my soul up from the pit? Shall I be ashamed of the ever-blessed Spirit of God, who sought me, and found me, and



quicken me when I was “dead in trespasses and sins,” and “raised me up to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus”? Therefore, we are not ashamed of him; and God, on the other hand, “is not ashamed to be called our God.”

Another reason is, that our souls must exist forever. And this is a subject I am very proud of; it does my heart good sometimes. I think, ‘Here I am now, and this mere mortal life is going away; but never mind, I have to exist forever!’ Oh! it is a view that nature itself (I do not mean under the influence of sin, but nature in its own intelligent force) glories in, delights in, bathes itself in, looking for the expansion of its powers in an infinite and eternal world. And therefore “what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” If, indeed, our existence had a terminus, then our religion would be altogether invalidated; but our soul shall live forever; there is “fulness of joy,” there are “pleasures for evermore” to be possessed. These are three good reasons why we are not ashamed of our religion; are they not?

The last reason is, because there is no danger of our being disappointed: not the least whatever. And there is a fourfold sense in which we shall not be disappointed. First, we shall not be disappointed as to our safe arrival:

“Our feet shall travel all the length  
Of the celestial road,  
And march with courage in his strength,  
And see our Father, God.”

There is no danger; we shall assuredly get there. Secondly, we shall not be disappointed as to the way in which the Lord Jesus Christ will introduce us. And how is that? Why, he will introduce us as his brethren: ‘These are my brethren.’ He will introduce us as children of his Father: “My Father and your Father, my God and your God.” “He will introduce us in all the magnificence of his own mediatorial work; he will introduce us in all the perfection of conformity to his image by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Then, thirdly, we shall not be disappointed as to our being welcome. Ah! sometimes to one friend and another we have to say, Do you think I shall be welcome? I have sometimes wondered how it would be if it were possible for some that are invited of men to get to heaven and stop there. Why, here is one that goes by human invitation, and the King comes in and says, “How came you in here?” ‘That man invited me to come; he said, Come to heaven along with me, and I am come by his invitation.’ ‘Oh! very well,’ then you may go out again.’ So, you see the importance of divine authority in this matter. However, we know we shall be welcome, how welcome I cannot describe, for I cannot find language or metaphor for it. Oh! how welcome the dear Lord is to come and take our hearts and affections to himself! Yes, “they gladly received him.” And what will be the joy of our great Redeemer when he gets all his children home! They are sure to be welcome. And then, fourthly and finally, our company will be complete. All who were given to Christ Jesus will be there. If, then, we are not to be bold for these things, this great deliverance, this light from on high, this divine authority on our side, this honor which comes from God, this glory set before us, if we are not to be bold for these things, for what are we to be bold? Other things are perishable; these things are imperishable. Other things will soon leave us, but these are our portion forever.

Mercy constrains us to acknowledge the Lord in all our ways; then shall our eyes and our hearts be lightened, and our faces shall never be ashamed.