

SERMON IV.

PREACHED ON SUNDAY MORNING, AUGUST 19th, 1877.

"For the Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand: He knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the Lord thy God hath been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing." DEUTERONOMY ii., 7.

GOD the Holy Ghost, speaking by the apostle Peter saith, "Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things ye shall never fall." Now all religion lies in union and communion with the God of heaven; the great thing is to have an interest in the great Jehovah, for as to all other things they are passing away, and we are passing from them. What the Son of God spake to Martha appertains to us, "One thing is needful;" that is, to know and realize we have an interest in the God of heaven.

"When I can say 'This God is mine,'
When I can feel Thy glories shine,
I tread the world beneath my feet,
And all that earth calls good or great."

If you can say with an appropriating faith, "This God is my God," though, like the great apostle, as regards this world's goods, you possess nothing, you will possess all things. I have no doubt there are some before God who have not five pounds to call their own, yet if you have an interest in the God of heaven, "the lines have fallen to you in pleasant places, you have indeed a goodly inheritance." You will find there is no want to them that fear God. He has got all things. We read, "The Lord thy God is a merciful God;" that is what we want from day to day; look at our many sins and misdoings; we want the mercy of God. There is more mercy in God to pardon our sins than guilt in our sins to damn us. If a man has no interest in the God of heaven his sins will be his ruin. It is declared, "The Lord your God is a God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God and a mighty one." He is such a God of gods that he says, "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God." He has thrown down those gods you formerly worshipped; He will be all and everything, or He will be nothing at all. I trust some of you can say, "Other lords have had dominion over us, but by Thee only now will we will make mention of Thy name;" "they are fallen, they are dead, they shall not live." What a mercy for God to have the heart!

"Partial service is His loathing,
He requires pure desires,
All the heart or nothing."

We have had many lords in our hearts; there is lordly pride, ambition, vanity, and folly, all these things are lords, they work at times in the heart, but God puts them all down. Therefore it is said, "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and thou perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little." Isaiah says, "Every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire. For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder." If He is your God you have found something going on in your heart, subduing those things I just mentioned, bring-

ing you to His feet, with, "Lord, save me, have mercy upon me;" and making you a willing subject of the Lord your God.

"The Lord thy God." O to have an interest in Him! If you have got an interest in this God all He has is yours, all He can do is yours. See how they found it as I read in the chapter. Balak was a great king, but all the witchcraft and powers could not stand against the God of heaven, therefore Balaam said, "The Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a King is among them;" He will be too much for all and every one that opposes Him. If you have got an interest in this God you have got all His power to subdue your iniquities, if He is not pleased to remove them; and you will find Him to be more than a match for the devil, though he is wonderfully strong. If we have got this God we have His power against all that may rise up against us. "Who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man that shall be made as grass, and forgettest the Lord thy Maker?" The man has all power to defend him in every way; this made David say, when Saul was surrounding him, "I will lay me down in peace, and sleep, for Thou, Lord, makest me to dwell in safety; I will not be afraid of ten thousand that shall rise against me." If a man has not got God he will be exposed to the power of the devil. Our sins will be more than we can control. If a man has not got God there is no safety. When a man has got God he has got a shield and a buckler. A man that has got God has got His all-sufficiency; see what that is, everything he can need or desire. O that God would stir you up, and "give no sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eye-lids," till you have found Him. The man that has got God will find He is as a precious stone, that will turn every way, whether he wants power, goodness, or mercy. "My God," says the great apostle, "shall supply all your needs, out of His riches in glory, Christ Jesus." There is none can forgive our sins but God. What is all this world if a man is burdened with the filth and guilt of his sins? Who can forgive sins but God? Therefore He says, "Son, (daughter), thy sins are forgiven thee." The man that has got the forgiveness of his sins can look beyond the grave into eternity, and feel, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." What a blessed state that man or woman is in who has got God. What miserable, desolate wretches they are that are without God. "O," say some before God, "how these things set my mouth watering, so to speak, if I could but say, 'This God is my God.' How many prayers have I put up, 'Lord, say to my soul, I am thy salvation.' How many times have I gone in secret, entreating God to put the great question out of question with me. How many times I have said, 'Lord, do confirm me; let me know that I am Thine and Thou art mine; if I did but know that, I think I should be to-day the happiest man in the parish of Croydon.' Is that really anything like your religion? Are those really some of the feelings of your heart? "Yes," say you, "it is so; I think if I did but know that I could die in a ditch, but I can come to nothing satisfactorily." If these things are really the feelings of your heart, I have no doubt nor question but that God is your God. There are some stars so small that they are hardly discernible, so in the hearts of some of God's people their grace is so small that they cannot see it is grace. A little fire does not send out much heat, so the little grace you have does not give you much comfort, still it is grace. So with the little heat there is, if it does not enable you to say,

"I love the Lord with mind and heart,
His people and His ways."

it burns in your feelings in this way, "The desire of my soul is to Thee and to the remembrance of Thy name;" "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee." You know you might have some jewels in a room, bu

if the room was full of smoke they would not shine, yet they are there. There are some jewels in your heart, but there is fear, doubt, and corruption, like so much smoke, that you cannot see them clearly. If you have got this little grace, you cannot put your hand on your heart and say you are destitute of and know nothing about those little things I have spoken of. Now mind, that little grace will yield you heaven; if it does not bring a heaven of comfort to your heart now, it will bring you to heaven by-and-bye. The child in arms has as much interest in the father as the grown-up lad; the one can rejoice more in his interest, but he has not a greater interest in his father than the other. So the weakest child of God is a pardoned one, a justified one, an adopted one, a saved one, and will go to heaven.

"The Lord thy God." It is having something from God in our hearts whereby God lays claims to us, and says, "This people shall be My people," by what He has wrought in us. I would not flatter you for the worth of the parish, I desire to build you up in truth, but I have no doubt that God is your God if this is the state of your heart. You will find if you cannot claim Him He claims thee, and, being thy God, what He is appertains to thee. "All things shall work together for good to them that love God."

"The Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand." Now we read of the "work of faith," the "labour of love," and the "patience of hope;" these are some of the works that God blesses us in. There is the "work of faith." Faith will bring a man after God, although he does not know the consequences. If I were to say to some of you, "Do you believe you are going to heaven?" you would answer, "O, sir, we would give anything to be sure we should land there." Have you turned your back on the world? "I often find the world in my heart," say you, "yet in my right mind I can say,

'Let worldly minds the world pursue,
It has no charms for me.'

I can say this world is not my rest, I have been enabled to turn my back on it, and I can say I am looking for something more real, more substantial. I have left many of my companions, my friends do not like my religion, and I have had some sneers and jeers from the world. Though I do not know what the end will be, I am willing to follow on." God will reward your work. You are just like Abraham. Hearken: "As many as are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham;" he went out not knowing whither he went. God told him he would give all the land of Canaan to him and to his seed after him; so there is something you have heard about heaven that has set your heart upon it, and you say,

"O may I live to reach the place
Where he unveils His blissful face,
Where all His glories you behold,
And sing His praise to harps of gold."

That is what you have set out after. What did Abraham find? As he journeyed toward the south there was a famine in the land. What have you found? For your peace you have had great bitterness; nor did you expect to be so buffeted by the devil as you have been. You did not expect that some of the saints would turn their backs on you, and look coldly on you. You did not expect to have some of your friends and relations to look on you as they have done. I ask, while you have been thus seeking after God, have you not found the testimony of an approving conscience, and somewhat of the approbation of God on your way? Have you not been helped with some smiles and tokens when in God's house, or when seeking His face? It is said of Moses, "he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;" what followed? God made him king in Jeshurun, and has given him a name a great deal better than he would have had in Egypt.

He found God to be his God, and God blessed the works of his hands. God has blessed your faith; you have gone after Him, and again and again you have had something to lift you up. You have had the scorns of the world but you have had the smiles of God, and the testimony of an approving conscience. A man never loses anything by going after God; his faith is rewarded. You find Naomi saying to Ruth, "Return, my daughter; if you follow me there is no good in this world that I can promise you;" but Ruth said, "Entreat me not to leave thee, thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God, though nothing but poverty, misery, and death follow." See how God rewarded her faith.

"When Ruth a gleaning went,
Jehovah was her guide;
To Boaz' field He led her straight,
And she became his bride."

"Who is this damsel?" "Ruth the Moabitess that came with Naomi." "Let fall some handfuls on purpose for her; let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not." God begins to reward her faith. "It hath been told me, my daughter, how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, to come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust." See what faith did. "The Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand." God will honour that faith of thine. I will venture to say, if you look, you will see He has blessed it; you would not give up what you have felt and found in secret for all the pleasures of sin; this will prove you would not, you have had plenty of opportunity to return, but you desire another country, therefore God is not ashamed to be called your God, for He hath prepared for you a city. You have left all, but God will give you more than you left; you have now got a hundredfold more than you lost, in peace in your conscience, and the love of God in your soul.

Next there is the "labour of love," God will try our love, He knows what His grace will stand; He says, "I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and try them as gold is tried; I will say, 'It is my people,' and they shall say, 'The Lord is my God.'" If you notice, when the people had left the Son of God, after He had given them a sweet and blessed discourse upon real religion, (they followed Him while the loaves and fishes were about.) He turned round to His disciples and said, "Will ye also go away?" "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe and are sure that Thou art the Christ that should come into the world." Now He says, "There is no man that hath left father or mother, houses, or lands, for My sake, and the gospel's, but shall receive manifold more in this present life, and in the world to come life everlasting." "Well," says Peter, "we have left all and followed Thee." I have sometimes said, that was a great "all," a few old boats and some fishing nets. Now see how the Lord hath blessed them. Jesus said, "There is no man that hath followed Me, but in the generation shall sit upon a throne, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." They followed Him in love, as Paul says, "The love of Christ constraineth me; I could go through fire and flood for the love I have to Him." What sends a man to God in prayer? The hope that he may catch a smile from God. He drops on his knees before God, and the devil comes too, while on his knees he will torment and tease him. You may soon find out your besetting sins, for the devil will always come and stir up these things in your heart when you are at prayer. How that will try a man; he drops on his knees and tries to get near to God, then comes the devil stirring up the vile things in his heart, and tormenting him all the time. Then the poor thing gets up, worse in his feelings than when he knelt down; then he will try it again.

Then he will try to read God's Word, but his thoughts are here, there, and everywhere; it is up-hill work, but the crown, the palm, and the robe will make amends for all. How I have my eyes and heart on this, "Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you;" my thoughts are on that; whether it may be a short or long time before I get there. I was thinking this morning, "I may have got very near to the end of my journey; Lord, Thou knowest where my heart is, I am panting and desiring to "finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I received of the Lord Jesus Christ." The man comes again and again to the house of God, crying, "Pray speak, pray look, Lord," and as soon as he sits down, away runs his heart, and when the service is over, he says, "Where have I been all the time?" This is a labour of love; you will not stop the man.

"Tis love that makes the cheerful feet
In swift obedience move;
The devils know and tremble too,
But Satan cannot love."

Whatever is done for God and His service God remembers; all this labour of love—the eye and heart of God is upon, He will as surely requite it as His Word is true. I remember reading of a Mr. Throckmorton, who followed God for thirty-seven years, yet could never realize what he wanted, but the last hour of his life God came in and blessed his soul, and swallowed it up in the love and blood of the dear Son of God; that was a crowning thing. The great apostle says, "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed towards His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." Martha and Mary had been kind to and had entertained the Blessed Son of God; now Lazarus is sick, so his sisters sent to tell Jesus, "He whom Thou lovest is sick." The Son of God stayed where He was, but by-and-bye He said to His disciples, "Lazarus is dead, and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there." Mary goes after Him, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died; we would have done anything for Thee." "Where have you laid him?" "Ah, Lord, we did think there was more love and kindness in Thy heart than has been made manifest; by this time he stinketh." "Lazarus come forth," and he that was dead came forth. So they got the blessing. Again, you find if it be done in love it does not matter about the greatness of the gift. A great emperor gave a gold cup to one man and a kiss to another, and the man that had the gold cup said the other had the best gift, because he had his heart. It is not the amount we give, it is the love we do it with God esteems and regards. Jesus sat over against the temple, and a poor woman came and cast two mites into the treasury, all her living; He trumpets it up directly, He says, "She has done more than all the others." So when the woman brake the box of ointment, and poured it on His head, He said, "Wheresoever this gospel is preached this also that this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." "The Lord hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand." These labours of love shall not be forgotten. "Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared: I was hungry, and ye gave Me meat; thirsty, and ye gave Me drink; sick, and in prison, and ye visited Me." He trumpets it before angels, devils, and men, and it echoes through heaven itself. Who would ever think that our little love would be noticed of Him? What have you found? You have found this to be true, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Many things you may have done which are known only to God and yourself, God has not forgotten them; in some way He has let you know He has approved of them. Every now and then He has come and warmed your heart with His love, and you have felt it is good to draw near to God. You cannot say He is a hard master, you cannot say you have opened His doors for nought, you cannot say, "It is in vain to serve God." He may have tried your love in many ways, but you must say to his honour, "He is a good

God;" He has been mindful of you, He has regarded in your low estate, and, though poor and needy, you have not been forgotten of Him.

"The Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand." Then there is the "patience of hope." How many before God have been hoping and looking to be able to realize and feel their interest in Jesus Christ, and to be able to say, "This is my God, I have waited for Him, and now He has become my salvation!" You will find this to be true, they that wait upon the Lord shall never be ashamed. What does God's Word say? "Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Therefore James saith, "The husbandman hath long patience in waiting for the precious fruits of the earth, until he receive the early and latter rain; be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord." The Son of God saith, "In your patience possess ye your souls." God said to Abraham, "You shall have a son," but what a while he was kept on the stretch, until hope seemed to give up the ghost; "but after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise." Look at dear old Simeon waiting for the consolation of Israel; he received it. God is not unmindful. The Son of God said to His disciples, "Tarry at Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high;" they had to wait for forty days, then down came the Holy Ghost, and filled all the house where they were sitting, and filled their hearts with joy and peace in believing. See what the "patience of hope" is. When you sow your seed or plant your trees, you do not expect to gather fruit the next day, you have to wait; you sow in hope, there may follow frost and drought; but what was sown last autumn is being reaped now. You know there was a great outcry about how bad the harvest would be, and so little fruit, but we have plenty. God hath blessed the works of your hand; again and again He has confirmed and strengthened your hope.

God has not only blessed the works of our hands in faith, love, and hope, but also in a providential way. "Stay," say some, "not so." I will stand fast to my text, God cannot deceive me. Do you stand in need of anything? Have you not food and raiment? What did you have seven years ago? "Just as much as I have now," say you. How is it you are not in the Union? "O, I do not know," say you. I will tell you then, if your memory is short, because God has blessed the works of your hands; He may not have added tens to your fifty, but there is nothing wanting. If you look you will see your case is like the poor woman's, with a little meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse, God blessed it. Hear her piteous cry, "I have a handful of meal in a barrel and a little oil in a cruse, and I am going to dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it and die;" but they did not die, it lasted. Perhaps some before God have been blessed in the works of their hands like David, Joseph, Hezekiah, and many others; they multiplied and grew great. Here are others, as I said just now, like the poor widow. While God is blessing you according to His wisdom in this way, He has fed and clothed you, the same as He has the lilies, birds, and beasts. Whatever your pittance may be, I have no doubt at times you can say,

"Not more than others I deserve,
But God has given me more."

God has blessed the work of your hands; if He had not supplied you, you would not be in the position you are. Paul says, "Having food and raiment, let us learn therewith to be content; for we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." Again, you hear the great apostle say, "My God shall supply all your needs out of his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus." What a mercy it is to have to do with such a loving, faithful, and good God, who prospers the things we undertake. See how He can multiply what we have, when He pleases; it is His blessing

that "maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow therewith." Therefore say the words of my text, "The Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand; He knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the Lord thy God hath been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing."

"From Egypt lately freed,
By the Redeemer's grace,
A rough and thorny path we tread,
In hopes to see His face.

"The flesh dislikes the way,
But faith approves it well;
This only leads to endless day;
All others lead to hell.

"The promised land of peace,
Faith keeps in constant view,
How different from the wilderness
We now are passing through!

"Lord, pardon our complaints;
We follow at Thy call;
The joy prepared for suffering saints,
Will make amends for all."—NEWTON.