

GOOD THINGS TO COME

A SERMON

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By Mister JAMES WELLS

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“Thereby good shall come unto you.” Job 22:21

THERE is not anything you can think of, upon which we are, apart from divine teaching, more in the dark than we are as to the way in which eternal good can reach us, and we reach and possess that. Hence we read that “many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able;” showing that such persons were not taught of God, for if they had been born and taught of God, the Lord would have commanded all that light to shine into their minds that would have shown them the path of life, the strait gate, and the narrow way, so that they should neither be ignorant of, nor come short of, that good things which the Lord has sworn to do unto the house of Israel. Hence, in the preceding clauses of this verse, on which, as most of you are aware, we had a sermon last Lord’s day morning, we put the words there, as we shall again this morning the words connected with them, into a gospel form; and we shall thus have well set before us the way in which eternal good shall come unto us, salvation, and peace with God, and all the blessedness his holy word has promised, and all this by Christ Jesus the Lord. “Acquaint now yourself with him. “This,” says the Savior, upon the same subject, “is eternal life, to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent;” not the only true God apart from Christ, nor Christ apart from God, there must be that twofold knowledge. If I do not know the true God, the majesty of his law, I shall not appreciate the mediation of Christ, nor the person of Christ: but if I am thus made acquainted with the Lord in that order of things, and reconciled to him, thereby good shall come unto us. Of all the privileges, yes, of all the treasures we can have while we are on earth, there is none to equal that of this experimental and divinely taught acquiescence with a blessed God. I am sure the scriptures do not err when they say of this acquiescence with the Lord, of this wisdom that makes us wise to salvation, “all things you can desire are not to be compared on to it;” because there is not the advantage associated with any one thing within the whole range of existence that is associated with a vital acquiesce with the Lord Jesus Christ. Can we, then this morning have a subject more important or that more concerns us all, and that which is embodied in our text? Why those of you that perhaps feel no particular concern, no abiding concern, for your souls even you sometimes say, I wonder how it will be with me by and by when I grow old? And there are moments when you say, I wonder how it will be with me in a dying hour? I wonder under what circumstances and

in what association's I shall die? What will be in my feelings? And I wonder how it will be with me when I enter into the presence of my Judge, and when I rise from the dead; for my very dust must hear the voice of the Son of God and must come forth; and if I am come forth as an evildoer, it will be to eternal judgment. This the most careless among you are not altogether without these thoughts and these feelings.

I have, then, this morning to point out to you all, as simply and clearly as I can, how that good comes unto us, even that good that delivers us from all evil; that good that blots out all evil; that good that will go working on until it has wiped away all tears from off all faces of those interested therein until there shall be no more death, no more sorrow, and no more pain; until you come into that wondrous state set forth as being led by the Lamb of God to fountains of living waters, and God's presence so enjoyed as to produce fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore.

I must, for the sake of condensation, notice our subject this morning in a threefold form, taking what I have to say from the verses that succeed our text. I shall take only a sample of what is said in the after-verses to our text. The first will be that of *gospel freedom*; this is one part of the good that is to come in and by this acquaintance with God, and this peace with him. The second is that of *plenty of all good things*; and the third is that of *final fellowship with the blessed God*. These are three out of the many things that are suggested in the succeeding verses.

First, that of *gospel freedom*. Hence it goes on to say, "If you return to the Almighty, you shall be built up; you shall put away iniquity far from your tabernacles." Now, the word "tabernacles" means "dwelling" given there in the plural means "dwellings;" and the idea is, that you shall dwell a long way off from your sins, and that your sins shall be put afar off from where you are. It is sin which has done you all the mischief that is done; and if there be dwellings where we could be a long way from our sins, so that they cannot reach us, and if they would come to us, they cannot, and we should have no desire to go over to them, and they could not come to us, such tabernacles, such dwellings, must be very desirable. Here, then, we have in these words, at least, I think so, that which properly may be called gospel freedom. Now, I will just hint at these dwelling-places, that is all, because I feel more anxious to dwell a little upon the removal of that which is our bondage. These dwelling-places will mean, in the first place, Christ Jesus. He becomes the dwelling-place. We dwell in Christ by faith, for faith must do all this. It is by precious faith we dwell in Christ; Christ dwells in us, and we dwell in him. He is a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the storm. So that in Christ Jesus there is no sin; and as we stand in Christ Jesus, we are free from sin, not a fault, not a spot, not a drawback, not a wrinkle. There is nothing in the person and work of Christ which law and justice do not approve, and by which law and justice are not honored. Just so the people. That, then, is one of our dwelling-places. Second, we dwell in the love of God; for "He that dwells in love dwells in God;" he that dwells in Christ dwells in God's love. Here is the love of God, that love everlasting. "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore, in loving-kindness have I drawn you. They dwell also in the Holy Spirit. And you will find that the characters which the Holy Spirit bears to all that are in Christ, and dwelling in the testimony of the Holy Spirit, that testimony is put upon record. God's sworn covenant, these gospel dwelling places, concentrating in Christ, are beautifully spoken of in this way: "My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places;" all these are in Christ Jesus the Lord. So, I am sure that as our earthly tabernacle must soon come down, and as the next we come to is eternity, and as there is no place apart from Christ but all hell, I am sure one of the

best things you can come to us while here is for us to be brought to where the apostle and those with him were, when he said, "We know that when this earthly house of our tabernacle is dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

But it is the separation of the evil from us that I wish a little to enlarge upon. In the first place, then sin is put away by the atonement, and by the mercy of God, and by the salvation of God, and by this sworn covenant of God. First, sin is put far away by a atonement, heaven itself is dedicated to us by atonement, and everything that pertains to the service of God is dedicated to us by the atonement, and the people of God themselves, being made acquainted with this atonement, and hereby brought up out to the pit where there was no water, then made free from sin, and brought into sweet harmony with the counsels and perfections of God, hereby they are consecrated to God and prepared for heaven.

Now, just take the last two verses of the 16th chapter of the Leviticus, and you will find the atonement made mention of in these two verses no less than four times, in a very instructive and beautiful way it is there said, "and he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary." the holy sanctuary there as you are aware means the holy of holies; not the tabernacle that large, but only that part of it called the holy of holies. And so, the high priest was to enter into the holy of holies, and to making atonement; not that there was any sin in the holy of holies. The idea of the atonement there evidently is that of consecration; that the high priest cannot enter the holy of holies except by an atonement; and you, therefore can have access to the mercy seat and the Lord's presence; for the mercy seat and the Lord's presence were in the holy of holies and you can have access to the mercy seat into the Lord's presence only by the atonement. I do think there is very great beauty in that idea. It is delightful. Wherein does sin make us afraid? Why, in God's presence, when we think of his holiness, and righteousness, and integrity, there we tremble, but here is an atonement; and as the priest then could enter, and the people, by his representation of them, into the holy of holies, only by atonement, so, says the apostle, taking up this beautiful subject, he says of Christ that he has entered by his own blood, not into the holy place made with hands, but into heaven itself, to make intercession for us. Bless the Lord, then. Here comes the good. Here, then, we enter heaven without sin. Heaven has nothing against us, and we shall have nothing against that. Sweet harmony here, with heaven prepared for the people, and the people prepared for heaven.

Second. He was to make an atonement for the tabernacle and for the altar. Now, the holy place the priest went into only once in the year. I shall have to refer to that presently. He went into the holy of holies only once in the year, but into the holy place, the tabernacle, he went only once in the year, but into the holy place the tabernacle, he went every day. There was the holy service. So, this atonement being for the tabernacle means it was for the daily service. So, my hearer, where is our daily prayer to God? By the atonement of Christ. Where is our daily love to God? By the atonement of Christ. Where is our daily praise of God? By the atonement of Christ. Where is our daily decision? By the atonement of Christ. So, then he made an atonement for the tabernacle and the altar, to show that the tabernacle and the altar were dedicated to the people of God by an atonement. And so, my hearer now our service must be by the atonement. God comes to us daily by atonement. We have our daily bread by the dear Redeemer's atonement. We have our daily substance by his atonement; and the apostle Paul felt grief, as we see he did, when he found that those Christians of whom he had in times past a better opinion, when he found that they were not yet got to know enough of the depravity of their own and just such a knowledge of their own need of that a

atonement, that he had a great many things to say concerning this continual priesthood of Christ, this continual atonement, this continual service; and he says "You are dull of hearing." But you, some of you, have known the Lord for some years, and have been beaten about in a variety of ways. You are not dull of hearing on this this subject; nor were some to whom the apostle was writing but some of them were like some of you perhaps, there are not many of you, would hear a sermon almost upon anything, rather than upon the atonement; and yet, the apostle Paul was not at home upon anything so much as he was upon that. He felt his life was there, his light was there, everything there. Here then, we have access to God by atonement. "Shall make an atonement for the priests and for the people of the congregation." see how definite, how clear it is; as though the Lord should say, The word shall be repeated over and over again, in all its various applications, least anything should be misunderstood. Err upon this, and you err upon everything. What think you of the atonement? This is the test to try your state and your scheme. You cannot be right on the rest unless you think rightly on this; and the Lord takes care that his people shall come into that way in which all evil is put away, and all good must certainly come. And then, notice the perpetuality. It is summed up there in a beautiful way, "This shall be an everlasting statute unto you." notice that "This shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the congregation of Israel, for all their sins." Did you ever hear a better summing up in your life? It is not beautiful? "It shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for *all* their sins. Mark that; *all* of them; not this and that, and the other; but "make an atonement for *all* their sins," once in the year. And that which was a figure there becomes a fact in Christ. The "everlasting" there means as long as that dispensation lasted; but when I come to the antitype, in the one I get the figure, in the other I get the fact. That which was there a dispensational everlasting is in Christ an absolute everlasting; and that which was there annual is in Christ once, and only once, and done forever. He, by one offering, has forever put away sin. In that dispensation the atonement for the sins of the people was only once in the year. It cleared them up only for one year, but the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin forever. "He has perfected by his one offering forever all them that are sanctified." Here, then, is the good; here is heaven dedicated to us; here is the daily service for us by atonement; here the priests and the people, alike, are favored by this atonement; here is the eternity thereof; here is the universality thereof, pertaining to the people of God for all their sins. As though John was thinking of this very scripture, this very verse, when he said, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin." Here, then, "Acquaint yourself now with him by this atonement; be at peace with him by this atonement; and thereby all the good shall come unto you that God can give, that Christ can bring, and that your soul can ever enjoy." Again, it also means the mercy of God, 103rd Psalm, "As the heaven," I like that, it is gospel, I like that, "as the heaven is high above the earth." I like that, "as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them who fear him," in this order of things. "As far as the east is from the west;" and if you take that not to be the terrestrial east and west, for that would be only about 13,000 miles; but if you take it to be a celestial east and west, then it will mean infinity, for space is absolutely infinite; "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us." Let Christ, in the infinity of his person, come in between you and your sins, and then there is an infinity of distance between you and your sins, for Christ stands between; and if you could set out today at lightning pace towards the west you could never get there; you may go on, and on, and on, and you could not get there; nor towards the east, you would never get there. It is infinite. Space from the very nature of it must be infinite, and Jesus Christ is infinite. Perhaps you may think me using rather strong language here, but I like the idea very much. Jesus Christ is Emmanuel. It was not merely his finite nature, but his whole person that stood between me and

my sins, that has put them away as the east is from the west, so far has he removed my transgressions from me.

Well, then, it comes to this; that to all eternity, if I may use the idea, I use it, of course only after the manner of man because of the infirmity of language, and the inability of the mind to comprehend, but for us to understand matters in any other way, but it seems to come to this, it is in my mind, that to all eternity my sins will be going one way, and I going another. So that the longer I live in heaven the further they will be from me, and the further I shall be from them. Now you will not of course take this literally. I am speaking only to illustrate the blessedness of the man who has this faith in the atonement, in that mercy that that's manifested, "as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us." Here, then, we get atonement; here we get mercy; here we get infinite distance.

Third: *Salvation*. Atonement removes them, mercy removes them, salvation removes them. "For peace I had great bitterness." You are not the only one, Hezekiah. I have often been very happy, enjoying the truth of God; and it has been sweeter, as one calls it, than honey and the honeycomb, and I have been very peaceful, very happy, and something has occurred to dash the cup out of my hand, as it were, and to feel filled with bitterness; and I have become bitter in spirit, and bitter in soul, and wretched, more wretched than I was before happy. Bitterness for peace. I had great bitterness. Every Christian knows something of this. It is astonishing how uncertain our peace is in ourselves, how uncertain our consolations are, how uncertain (I mean, as far as we ourselves are concerned) though, not uncertain in Christ, nor uncertain in God's truth; but they are uncertain as far as we can foresee. So, Hezekiah, when he enjoyed peace with God, we see what a decided man he was for God. When he rose up, down went all false religions, down went the whole of it, the temple was cleansed, the service of God established, the people were happy, Hezekiah enjoyed peace with God; but he must yet again taste the cup of bitterness, and so, "for peace I had great bitterness." Well, but your bitterness will not last forever. "But" (here comes the turning-point). There are some very troublesome "buts," and there are some excellent "buts," and that is a good "but" "but, you have in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption, for you have cast all my sins behind your back." There it is, "but you have in love to my soul", not on the ground of anything in me, mark that, "you have in love to my soul cast all my sins behind your back." I think an old divine somewhere says, it is an expression that none of us can understand or comprehend, but I like his words, I like the idea he intends to convey. This old Divine says, "If Jesus Christ cast the sins of the people behind his back and Jesus Christ is God, then he has cast them behind the back of eternity." It does not go on to say that he has cast them so far back before eternity began. Now we know that cannot be true literally so but still I like that those ideas. There is something in such expressions that deny Satan. It sinks Satan to nothing and establishes a sinner, in spite of all his sins, to hope in Christ's ability to save, and then that love that covers a multitude of sins, and then that salvation they can bring out of the pit of the most destructive corruption and can set our feet upon the rock. Hereby, then, good, comes to us. This made Hezekiah hope in the Lord, "We will sing my songs." What! Your songs? Yes, my song; and every poor sinner will join with me, and we will sing our songs in the house of our God all the days of our life. See what his song was, the song of atoning blood, the song of heaven and mercy, the song of free salvation the song of everlasting love, the song of sins abolition, the song of peace with God, the song of victory through the blood of the Lamb. Again: this is gospel freedom. The man is brought on to this, is thus acquainted with him, and enters into this peace. This is the liberty of the gospel. What says Micah

on this? I speak a little from my own soul's experience. You seem very unhappy, Micah. What is the matter? Matter! "Woe is me. Ah! Micah, that is what you say. The Lord never applied a woe to his people in one instance yet. They apply woes to themselves; but it is a poor, weak application; it will not do them any harm, it will do them good. The Lord applies woe to his enemies, but never to his friends. Isaiah said, "Woe is me; I am undone." The Lord does not say that. And Micah said, "Woe is me." What is the matter? Why, I am like a fruitless, lifeless, leafless, worthless vine; that is what I am like; for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, and the grape gleaming's on the vintage. "There is neither fruit, nor leaf, nor apparent life, nor anything else left. You have your destitution left yes. But then the Lord will not say a word to you. And you follow the prophet on, and we see he begins to look up. "He will turn again." What sort of a turn will it be? Why, "he will have compassion upon us." That he will; "he will subdue our iniquities;" and then I shall have life and liveliness; then my leaves again begin to be green; then I shall begin to bear fruit. "He will subdue our iniquities." And where is the secret of all this turning again; where is the secret of his reappearance? where is the secret of this revival? "You will cast *all* their sins into the depths of the sea." Just as the Egyptians were drowned in the sea, and not one could move his tongue after that against an Israelite, so are the sins of the people of God all destroyed in the fathomless depths of atoning blood; they are gone. After what order will he do this, Micah? Why, "You will perform the truth to Jacob." What truth was that? Why, that recorded in the 28th of Genesis, yea and amen promises; "and the mercy to Abraham." What mercy is that? Why, "In blessing I will bless." "The mercy to Abraham, which you have sworn unto our fathers from the days of old."

Thus, then, by faith in Christ's atonement, by faith in the sworn covenant, as set forth in the last chapter of Micah, by Christ's atonement we can dwell where there is no sin, consequently no death, no wrath, no curse, no condemnation, no coming short, no breaking in, no going out, no complaining in the streets. "Happy is the people that is in such a case; yea, happy is the people whose God is the Lord." Perhaps I am rather too high for some of you this morning; I don't mean too high in doctrine for you, but I am a little too much on the mount for you; because there are the valleys as well as the mountains; and it is said in the 33rd of Jeremiah that "flocks shall lie down in the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the vale;" and so on. And so, one says, Now if you had preached from such a scripture as this this morning, "I am like an owl in the desert," you would have just come where I am. Well, bless the Lord for that; if you can't get on the mountains, it is a great thing to be low enough to appreciate what there is in the valley. It is rather short grass in the valley, but it is very sweet, very indeed. And so those low-ground scriptures, they describe the Christian when he is down in the valley, when he is low, in a low place; and the Lord will look at that man that is poor, and of a contrite spirit; and it is by these humbling experiences that he brings us down to know what these low ground scriptures mean, and hereby prepare us for the higher ground scriptures, prepares us to rise with wings as eagles, and to range in this gospel liberty that is in Christ Jesus the Lord. Here, then, is the freedom. What a vast matter is religion. The creation of this world and the government of it is a secondary matter in comparison with the great matter of atonement for sin by an incarnate God, the entire destruction of evil, the possession of everything that is infinitely, eternally good by him. As Watts rightly says,

"God in the person of his son,
has all his mightiest works out done."

The Holy Ghost give us eyes to see it, and then we shall worship the Creator more than we shall

the creature; for all the time we see more beauty in the creature than we do in the Creator we shall worship the creature more than we do the Creator; but the more we know the bBlessed God in Christ Jesus, the more we shall worship and praise him.

Now these people set free, it is no use setting people free, unless you can sustain them afterwards, so the next good presented is that of riches. "Then shall you lay up gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks. Yes, but the almighty shall be your defense;" or, as the margin reads it, "the Almighty shall be your gold." the Hebrew word, *betzer*, is sometimes rendered *gold*, sometimes *defense*; and therefore, our translators have given the other reading in the margin: "The Almighty shall be your gold, and you shall have plenty of silver." Now of course, you must take this, in the first place, spiritually, and then the doctrine contained in it, plenty of all good things; that as gold and silver enable you to obtain food and raiment, houses and lands, so the Lord chooses this figure of speech sometimes to set forth that sustenance, and that plenty and blessedness, into which he brings us. And it follows very necessarily too, because after the freedom, the next thing is sustenance. Hence, when the Israelites got into the wilderness, Well, we were slaves in Egypt, but now we are come out, what is the good of it? Why, this Moses has brought us into the wilderness to kill us. He has set us free from one evil, to involve us in another; he has set us free from slavery, and now we have nothing to eat. Such was the reasoning of those that judged not righteous judgment, judged after the sight of the eyes, instead of judging after the spirit. But was there any deficiency in sustenance? No: the manna came, and they had plenty; the water flowed from the rock, and they had plenty. The enemy came against them, but the Lord gave them the victory. The cloud guided them through the wilderness, and they, in reality, wanted for nothing. And so said Moses at the end, concerning it, said to the Israelites, "You that did cleave unto the Lord your God are alive unto this day." So, if I have this precious faith in what Christ has done, then the word of the Lord will be my gold and my silver; the golden promises, the golden precepts, the golden rules, the golden laws, they will all be precious to me. "Your word is unto me as golden laws, they will all be precious to me. "Your word is unto me more precious than gold, sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. you are brought into this freedom, you will find promises, golden promises, and take those promises to God, and plead them; and by those promises, by that gold, you shall obtain all that heaven can bestow; you shall thus buy wine and milk without money and without price. I say, in a sense, without money and without price. And "The almighty himself shall be your pleasure," not only his word, but himself, "and you shall have plenty of silver." I like that idea. The word of the Lord also is compared to silver. "The word of the Lord says David, "is as silver purified seven times," to denote the purity of the certainty of God's truth. "Your word is very pure; therefore, your servant loves it." We must, therefore in the first place, take the gold and the silver to mean the Lord's word. We say of an excellent rule that it is a "golden rule;" well, I think we may call them golden promises; they will all command all the blessedness we can ever possess. And that's to receive Christ Jesus, in receiving him you receive all the promises, for all the promises are in him. Why, it is a blessed thought you can never come to want: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." His children never came to beggary yet. Nor do I know that I have occasion to point out the temporal view; for if we have ever so little we have as much as the Lord sees fit we should have. The Lord knows whom to make rich, and whom to make poor; and if he make you poor, it is because he sees it is better for you to be poor than to be rich; and if you make you rich, it is because he sees it is better for you to be rich than to be poor. Ah! say you, I would rather be the rich one. I daresay you would. Well so would I. Now, think again, think again. Could you now really on your knees before God tell him that he has made a mistake in making you poor, and that

you would rather be a rich man? Would you not rather say, with one of old, "Give me neither poverty nor riches;" for if poverty makes me kick, I am afraid riches would be a snare. Ah, well, if I could not get riches without there being a snare to me, I had better be poor. Well, then, it is best as it is; depend upon it, it is very much indeed. There is not so much suffering in comparative poverty as is supposed. I did not mean absolute poverty but comparative poverty. "Having food and remanent, let us there with be content." If there is not so much happiness in riches as is generally supposed. Why, the rich man can just enjoy his food, and we can do the same; they get a bit of tidy clothes to appear in on Sunday, and we do the same; and when they die they cannot take their silver and gold with them and I believe we can pray better than they can sometimes, because we need the Lord everyday as a God of providence, and they have a good stock and feel hardly any occasion to pray. So, I don't know but what we poor folks are the best off. But be that, as it may, I am sure, friends, that the Lord does right, and I believe no one will, at the last, at all complain, the Lord can make a very little plenty. There is the handful of meal, and there is the cruse of oil; and if you ask the widow and her son, and Elijah, at the end of their days, Well, how have you fared? Oh, we have had plenty. They were fed, they were sustained; and there it was. So that if we are brought, then, into the knowledge of what Christ has done, he that spared not his own son, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things? Reconciliation, as I said last Sunday morning, is a great thing. I know you say sometimes, Oh, dear! behold, all you that pass by, and see if there is any sorrow like unto my sorrow; nobody troubled as I am. I am as unhappy as possible. Don't know whether I shall go to chapel, for it is no use to go. But, by-and-bye, the Lord is pleased to come and say, What ails you? and again to revive the work in your heart; again to make Christ precious; and then you will smile at that you were just now frightened at, and that heavy burden becomes a feather, and that gloomy wilderness becomes an Eden, and you will say, What a poor, stupid, weak thing I was, to be fretting after a few toys, and forgetting the infinite and eternal treasures that I have in the Lord! Is it not his order of things that "in the world you shall have tribulation; but in me you shall have peace"? It is a great thing, then, to be reconciled to the Lord's way of leading us.

I should like to say much more, but I must say only a word or two, and then close; or else the last part was that of *final fellowship with God*. "Then shall you have your delight in the Almighty and shall lift up your face unto God." This is the last good I intended to name, and I had thought of naming two or three beautiful scriptures illustrative of the last point. I will just name one or two: "Shall lift up your face unto God;" stand before the Lord approved; "lift up your face unto God. This certainly means justification before God. The poor publican could not lift up his face to God; he could not lift up his eyes to heaven; guilt made, his countenance fall. But when that guilt is gone, when condemnation is gone, and justification comes in, then by this justification in Christ, we lift up our faces unto God, and we hear the Redeemer saying, "I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am you maybe also." And as John says in the last chapter of Revelation, "His servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face; and they shall reign for ever and ever."