

# THE WAY TO HAVE PLENTY OF ALL GOOD THINGS

## A SERMON

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“Say you to the righteous, that it shall be well with him; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.” Isaiah 3:10

THE way of being right with God is a matter of essential importance and yet, perhaps, there is not anything in religion upon which men have made more fatal mistakes than that of being right with God; for that is the righteous man that is right with God. Cain had his way of being right with God, but it proved to be a wrong way; and others have had their way of being right with God, but it has proved to be a wrong way. See the vast multitudes in the Savior’s day who thought that they were righteous, and trusted that they were righteous, made sure they were right with God, and the Savior proved them all to be wrong. And the Pharisee made sure that he was right with God, and yet we see that he was not right with God. How infinitely important, then, this matter is, when we consider that the un-right, the unrighteous, shall not inherit the kingdom of God; and that all by nature are unrighteous, all by nature come under the character of the wicked; and “Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall he given him.”

I shall, therefore, this morning notice chiefly two things; first, *what it is to be right with God*; and, secondly, *the happy consequences thereof*, “It shall be well with him; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.”

First, then, *what it is to be right with God*, that is to say, what it is for the heart to be right with God. And I may take up the Israelitish covenant in the first place, just to illustrate this great truth of the heart being right with God; for it must be, for the heart to be right with God, must be after a certain order of things; and that order of things I have now carefully to make as plain as possible. You find, for instance, in the 12th chapter of Genesis, when the Lord called Abraham, he made with him an eternal covenant. That I will for the present pass by. Then, going on a little further in that chapter, we come to another covenant, and I will take that to illustrate what I this morning wish to make plain, “The Lord appeared unto Abraham, and said, Unto your seed will I give this land; and there built he an altar unto the Lord” showing that he understood the way in which this land was to be possessed. This is the covenant which the Lord thus made with Abraham in relation to his literal descendants, “Unto your seed will I give this land.” And then in the 6th chapter of Deuteronomy, there the Lord appears and describes unto us what the essence of this covenant is, in its demand upon the people; and the Savior takes up the same words, showing that the theme

there described fulfilled both the law and the gospel: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord;" that is, if we translate the words, "Hear, O Israel: Jehovah, our interposer, is one Jehovah." There is God there represented in the unity of his essence, and in his interposition on behalf of his people. And then, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might." Now the heart cannot be right with God without this. There must be such a knowledge of God, and there must be unto us such a revelation of God, as shall cause us to do what is there said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might." And then it goes on to describe the advantages these people were to have on the ground of certain doings. The words that demand that we should love the Lord God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our might, he says, "These words shall be in your heart," they are of no use if they are not in the heart; and then it goes on to say, "And you shall teach them diligently unto your children, and shall speak of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them upon the posts of your house, and on your gates."

Now here is a great deal to do. And did the people do all this? We will come back to this presently and show how this part of the matter is settled on behalf of the people of God. And then it goes on to describe the advantages of doing what is there described, namely, that the Lord will "give you great and goodly cities, which you built not, and houses full of all good things, which you filled not, and wells dug, which you dug not, vineyards and olive trees, which you planted not. When you shall have eaten, and be full, then beware lest you forget the Lord, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage," and go away after other gods, and so perish from the land. Now this was the representation of God to the people; and this was the God that would do these things for them on the ground of their keeping to him, rejecting all other gods, abiding by him, and loving him as their Savior from Egypt, and having brought them to the promised land, and given them this land. This was the God that they were to love with all their heart, all their soul, and all their might; and these words were to be in their hearts, but did they do it? Some of them did it partially; but I suppose none of them did it perfectly; and I suppose we, also, are very deficient in some of these truths. Now, then, how are we to settle the matter? We must settle the matter in this way, that the conditions of that covenant rested upon the people. Jesus Christ comes in another covenant, the conditions of which rest upon him.

And now let us test what I have just said by the Savior, and see if a little faith in him will not help us out, on the one hand, of all our difficulties; and help us, on the other hand, into the possession of all that is implied in the good things there stated. Now, in the first place, these words were to be in the heart; and, says the Savior, "I delight to do your will, O God. Yes, your law is within my heart." And I am sure that the law that was in the heart of Christ was a law of love to God, and a law of love to the people; even that love that many waters could not quench, neither could the floods drown it. "And you shall teach them diligently unto your children." Oh, how diligently did the Savior teach the love of God to his disciples! See his wonderful discourse from the 13th to the 17th chapter of John. See, all through that wonderful discourse, how beautifully he speaks of the love of the Father; and how he speaks of his own precious love, saying, "Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." Ah, then, Jesus has in all ages, and will down to the end of time, diligently teach the love of God to all his children. And he is well able to teach that love, for he himself is the example of that love; he himself is the embodiment of that love; he

himself is the gift of that love; he himself is the way of that love; he himself is the confirmation of that love; he himself is the very essence of that love; he himself is the way in which that love reveals itself, and stands good, according to the Lord's own account, when he says, "I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn you." And the lovingkindness means mediatorial lovingkindness, according to the Savior's own explanation, when he says, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." This is where the lovingkindness of the blessed God draws our souls to him; and here we begin to love God, not where his wrath is, but where his love is; not where his judgments are, but where his mercies are; not where his threatening's are, but where his promises are; not where his anger is, but where his compassions are; not where there is any sin, but where there is no sin; for there is no sin in Christ, there sin is put eternally away. "And you shall talk of them when you sit in your house." And we find him very often in houses, speaking of these things; we find the woman at his feet in Simon's house, and we find Mary anointing his feet in another house, and we find him speaking to Zacchaeus in another house, and saying, "This day is salvation come to this house." So that the Savior spoke of these things in the people's houses; why, it would make a wonderful volume of sermons if we had all the discourses of the dear Savior in the several houses where he visited; but, however, bless the Lord for what we have.

I am showing that he fulfilled this, he did all this; and we must not boast of having done this, or doing this, but by faith in what he has done, a belief that it is done will make us love God ten times more than as though we had to do it. I say, a belief that it is done will make us love God ten times more than as though we had to do it; because, if we had to do it in perfection as a condition of the good things to come, we should be always filled with slavish fear that we should not accomplish it. Hence, "Love casts out fear;" and so "faith works by love." Faith believes this, love lays hold of it, and we stand out for it, and come into possession of what the Lord there promises. And not only so, but "when you walk by the way." And how often did the Savior instruct his disciples by the way! We cannot forget his discourse with the two disciples going to Emmaus. How often then, walking by the way, did he tell out wondrous things to his disciples! "And when you lie down;" and when he laid down his precious life, the love of God was still his theme. See the abundant entrance the poor thief from the cross had to the paradise of God. See the many things that the Savior said while on the cross. His sufferings; here is a difference, again, between his sufferings and ours; when we are suffering affliction we very often forget that which supports us, lose sight of the Lord, and talk about nothing, and think about nothing, and that, perhaps, very unbelievably and very rebelliously, of our afflictions. Not so with Jesus, he was as submissive in the depth of his sufferings as he was on the mount of transfiguration or enthroned in glory now. "And when you rise up." And when he rose from the dead, was not the love of God still his theme? Was it not still, "I ascend to my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God"? "And they shall be as frontlets between your eyes." And was it not so? Were not these things ever conspicuous with him? "And you shall write them upon the posts of your house, and on your gates." And is it not so? We trust that this place is the house of God; and we trust that the Lord's name is recorded here; that it is from sabbath to sabbath our theme. Let us, then, view the Lord Jesus Christ as having done all this; let us believe in this; let us view him as the end of this covenant, as having done this; and, as I have said before, the belief of what he has done will make us love God ten times more than a belief that we ourselves have to do it. And then, there were cities; let us take it in the singular; there is a city which you built not. And so, by Jesus Christ we have a strong city; "salvation has God appointed for walls and bulwarks; open you the gates, that the righteous nation, that keeps the

truth, may enter in.” “And houses full of all good things.” And are not the truths of the gospel full of good things? All the blessed testimonies, all the precious promises; they are all full of mercy, all full of love, they are full of meaning, and full of goodness. “And wells dug, which you dug not,” And is not this another representation of the consolations of the gospel, that we have wells by the work of Christ that will never run dry? “With joy shall they draw water from the wells of salvation.” “And vineyards and olive trees, which, you planted not;” all expressive of a state of peace; and so, Jesus Christ has brought about that peace by which the Lord is thus good unto us. Thus, that which the Lord demanded of the people they failed to perform; but Jesus Christ steps in, and performs all the conditions, and renders it unto us yea and amen. So that precious faith, laying hold of what Jesus Christ has done, while our fears may say, Well now, you have not done; and, indeed, our consciences may justly say, You have not done all that is there described; then my answer is, But Jesus Christ has; and there I rest, and it is in and by what Jesus Christ has done that I love this God, that gives me this city; that gives me these houses full of good things; that gives me these wells that will never run dry; that gives me these vineyards and olive trees, this gospel state; this is the Lord God. I can truly say, in the sight of a heart-searching God, that after this order, in and by Christ Jesus, by what he has done, that I do love God with all my heart, with all my soul, and with all my might, and that I have no desire, yes, I disdain the thought of any other God. “Whom have I in heaven but you?” and there “is none upon the earth I desire besides you.” Thus, then, you will see the way in which the heart of the Israelite was to be right with God; it was by performing these things. You also see, in contrast to that, the way in which the Christian’s heart is right with God; it is by believing that Jesus Christ has done what the people failed to do, that he has done this; that you stand by faith; that you live by faith; and that you walk by faith; and that you are saved by faith; “Go your way, your faith has saved you;” and that you triumph by faith; that you rejoice by faith; that it is by faith that you shall have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I say to that man to whom the Lord thus appears, the man who is thus led to see that the people failed, but that Jesus Christ has done all these things; the man that receives this testimony and understands it, and to whom the blessed God, Father, Word, and Holy Ghost, is supremely endeared, we say to that man, it shall be well with him. We do not say so because he is righteous in and after the flesh, for he is anything but righteous in and after the flesh; the Savior’s description of the evil thoughts that proceed out of the heart is descriptive of every man and woman under the sun, unregenerate and regenerate, only unto the regenerate it is a burden; it is the only element of the unregenerate; it is the burden of the regenerated; yet it answers to the character; so that no man is righteous after the flesh, anything but that. “With my flesh,” said one, I serve “the law of sin.” Ah! blessed Jesus; he diligently teaches God’s love to his children; he, when he sits in his house, the church, teaches the same thing; he, when he walks by the way, teaches the same thing; he, when he laid down his life, taught the same thing, the love of God; he, when he rose from the dead, taught the same thing, the love of God; he writes the same thing upon the posts of wisdom’s house, upon the gates of wisdom’s city, the same thing, the love of God. What is to be our theme to all eternity, but the love of God? In other words, God himself being love, for he is unto his people love, and they shall be perfect in love. That is the man that is right with God. Now, the people then failing to do these things, should perish from off the land; but then Jesus Christ did not fail, and therefore he did not perish from off the land, and so he is not perished from off the land, but is gone into possession of the land, and enjoys the land, and is happy in the land, and will dwell in the land, and that forever. Ay, say you, he is safe, but how about his people? Well, he says, “Because I live, you shall live also; and my sheep shall never perish. I am the good shepherd, I lay down my life for the sheep;” and as I have got

possession of the land, I will take care they shall have possession also; for “because I live, you shall live also.”

There were equitable grounds upon which the desire, the prayer rested, “Father, I will that those whom you have given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.” Now then, the Israelites had to hold fast this covenant, but they did not hold it fast; but Jesus Christ did, and we, by believing in Jesus Christ, get the whole finished, completed, settled, and done; there we stand approved in him, accepted in him, complete in him. And this lets us somewhat into the secret; “Blessed,” as the apostle says, “be the Lord, that always causes us to triumph in Christ.” That 6th of Deuteronomy taken in the gospel sense is a beautiful chapter all through; I should like to have gone all through it this morning; I have been through it in private a great many times in my time; it is so beautiful; there is a stream of gospel life running all through that chapter when read in the light of what the Lord Jesus Christ has done. Therefore, for our hearts to be right with God it must be by faith in Christ, who has confirmed the covenant, fulfilled the covenant, and caused it to be an everlasting covenant, even a covenant of sure mercies. But we will go on again. Now then, taking the Lord Jesus Christ as the way in which, we are to be right with God, it establishes certainty. Hence our hearts must be right, as I have said, with God after his own order of things. The next thing I notice, then, in this matter, is that of certainty. “God is not man;” now comes in Christ, he has fulfilled the law and the covenant, and made everything yea and amen; and “God is not man that he should repent;” he will not repent having made Christ our High Priest; “and he is not the son of man that he should lie;” he will neither lie nor repent; he remains the same; the Eternity of Israel will not lie. Even the false prophet said, constrained so to say, “Has he said, and shall he not do it; or has he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless; and he has blessed, and I cannot reverse it.” Now in order for our hearts to be right with God, we must be right with the certainty of his truth. Neither sin, nor Satan, nor hell, nor tribulation, nor anything, can reverse it. Hence, in the first covenant God made with Abraham, and recorded in the 12th of Genesis, for there are two distinct covenants there; in the first covenant, “Blessed is he that blesses you, and cursed is he that curses you.” It does not say that in the other covenant, because there they could by their own sins let the curse in upon them; but in the other, the first covenant, no curse can come unto them; “Blessed is he that blesses you, and cursed is he that curses you.” It cannot be reversed. There they stand, blessed in Christ Jesus with all spiritual blessings. Were those blessings ever withdrawn? Never, and never will be. The dear Redeemer, when he rose from the dead, lifted up his hands, and blessed them; will he ever reverse that blessing? No. Blessed when called out of darkness into light, to see these things; and will the Lord ever send us into darkness again? He never will. Blessed at a dying hour; “Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.” Blessed at the last day; “Come, you blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you.” And you are not a righteous man in the gospel sense if your heart be not right with God in this matter of the certainty of the blessing. Why, the real Christian can say, I love that testimony with all my heart, and with all my soul, and with all my might; for I feel I have no safety without it. I account the longsuffering of God to be my salvation. Also, your heart must be right with mediation; that comes next to the certainty; though I know the certainty is confirmed not only by the oath of God, but by mediation. The Lord has not beheld iniquity in Jacob, nor seen perverseness in Israel.”

Now this must endear God the Father, endear Christ, endear the Spirit of God, and endear God altogether, and the ways of God, and must endear heaven. In order to be a righteous man, that is,

to be right with God, your heart must be right with this mediation. Then the next is that of salvation, "God brought them out of Egypt; he has, as it were, the strength of a unicorn;" they were never to forget that. Whenever the Israelites lost sight of their free salvation from Egypt, it always distorted their minds in all other things. And so, my hearer, as soon as ever you lose sight of the kind of salvation that Christ wrought; as soon as ever you lose sight of the truth that you are saved entirely by grace, that the salvation Jesus Christ has wrought was an entire salvation, that Israel by that salvation is saved in the Lord forever, shall not be ashamed or confounded, world without end; our heart must be right with this also, or else we are not right with God. And then comes the preservation. "Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel." Well, but, say you, there are a great many enchantments against them, and a great many divinations. But none can ultimately prevail. They shall have their tribulations, their losses, and their trials, in various ways; still, at the same time, none can ultimately prevail; nothing can separate them from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. "According to this time" very significant mode of speech there, "according to this time," this time of revealed mediation, this time of revealed salvation, this time of revealed preservation, the Lord take care of you; "according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel;" what have the people wrought? no; "what has God wrought!" Then appears the final victory: "Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion; he shall not lie down until he eats of the prey, and drinks the blood of the slain;" poetic language to denote the final victory that this people shall surely have. Thus, then, for the people to be right with God is to be right with him in this covenant that is confirmed by the Savior. See how the Savior has fulfilled the condition where the people have failed, and how he confirms all these testimonies that I have just noticed. Faith, as I have said, in what Christ has done, it is this that beyond all expression endears the Lord.

Now then, *with those persons whose hearts are thus right with God, it shall be well with them.* Not, indeed, well with them in their own apprehension. Here I might enlarge upon some of the mysterious dealings of the Lord with his people; but I must not branch out upon this matter. God does move, and has in all ages, in a mysterious way. You look through the Scriptures (and I bless the Lord the Bible is a public book, I am glad all the Lord's people have it to read for themselves); look through the Scriptures, and how mysteriously the Lord's people in many cases have been dealt with! See what troubles they have had in their families, and see how they have been sold into slavery, the people of God have in different ages; see how they have been martyred and slain; see how they have wandered in goatskins and sheepskins; and see how they refused to accept deliverance, because they desired a better resurrection. Now all this time it was well with them, though circumstantially it was tribulation. The natural tendency of tribulation is to destroy us, and that is Satan's object, and therefore it is a miracle that tribulations do not destroy our hope, and our faith, and our love to God; it is a miracle that tribulations do not do these things. The stony-ground hearer, tribulation destroys his faith, and destroys his love, and destroys his prayer, and destroys his religion altogether and it is nothing short of a miracle that the tribulations that the Lord's people have in various ways, that make them rebel, and attracted here, and driven there, it is nothing short of a miracle that they continue in the faith, that they continue to love a God that seems at times to deal so unkindly, and so harshly, and so bitterly with them. "The Almighty has," said one, "dealt bitterly with me and the Lord has afflicted me." And so, it is, I say, a miracle that these things do not destroy our hope altogether. They do make dreadful havoc upon us sometimes, and all this is to humble us, and to bring us into the dust; and the Lord does so order it that the end of these things is an increase of self-loathing, and an increase of love to God. These tribulations,

they blast so many gourds, and they break so many cisterns, and they dry up so many springs, and make us sometimes almost conclude that we will never look to anything within the whole range of nature for another particle of comfort; for we are found to be poor, miserable creatures after the flesh, and miserable creatures as creatures; it is all thorns and briers together. I admit this is over-coloring it, but it is that color that our murmuring state of mind sometimes gives, yet we are not without our comforts from the Lord as a God of nature and a God of providence; but I speak of those times when we are so tried as though existence itself is hardly bearable. It is a miracle it does not put an end to our faith; but, bless the Lord, he overrules these very things to the increase of our faith; and after you have been, as it were, in the sea with Jonah, or driven about in the desert, after you have been thus tried in a variety of ways, what do you think of the gospel now? Ah, says such, I did not before think so much of a covenant ordered in all things and sure as I do now; I did not before think so much of that completeness that is in Christ as I do now; I did not think so much, I rather shrank from the idea, of being called a *hyper*; I thought those hyper-Calvinists were what people represented them to be, and I thought that their doctrines were what people represented them to be; but I find out now that it is with them as it was with their Lord and Master, they are belied, they are slandered, they are reproached, they are misrepresented, and they are hated. Tribulation has taught me, after all, if I get to heaven, it must be by the boundless grace, eternal mercy, sure covenant, and complete salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ. So then, notwithstanding that it may not seem to be well with us, yet it is always well with us in Christ, and always well with us, as the poet says, in God's account; and after all, we have our afflictions measured out to us by the hand of him that cannot err.

But I will hasten to the next clause. I have said nothing concerning its being well with them, nor shall I, in comparison with what it is, because who shall undertake to say how well it shall be with them, chosen, and called, and justified, and sanctified as they are, and saved as they are, and taken care of as they are? He that touches one of these touches the apple of Jehovah's eye. And where are they going to? The light, the liberty, the peace, the joy, the splendor, the magnificence, the eternity, the presence of God, the likeness of Christ, the durable righteousness, the unsearchable riches. Well with them! Who can undertake to say how well it shall be with them? There is something so wondrous to be realized in their destiny that an incarnate God was satisfied with the glory thereof. "For the joy set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame;" and is now set down, surrounded with all the glory from which he drew consolation while he was in this vale of tears. The Lord help us to draw more of our consolations from him, and then we shall be contented with fewer upon earth. I might have dwelt here, for it has been exceedingly dear to me this week, on the Savior's devotion on our behalf. Really, when I look at it, amidst ten thousand attractions on earth, not one thing could draw his pure mind for one moment away from God or us; and amidst all the reviling's, and slanders, and tribulations, the houseless, penniless, friendless state in which he lived and in which he labored, none of these things could for one moment move him. Truly his was love; indeed, not that we loved him, but that he loved us. Constant devotion night and day. While the disciples retired to rest, he himself was on the mount in fervent prayer to God for the welfare of our souls and the eternal glory of God. Ah, it may well be said that "it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure." I get all my consolation from believing, believing in what the Lord Jesus Christ has done. It is in believing that we are filled with joy and peace. But again, "They shall eat the fruit of their doings." Now, this is an old-covenant form of speech again. In the Old Testament dispensation, when the Israelites abode by their covenant God, and by the order of his service, and rejected all false gods, what was the

consequence? The consequence was that their floors were full of wheat. That was a temporal covenant; and the temporal advantages were a type of the spiritual advantages of those who abide by the truth. Their floors were full of wheat, the vats overflowing with corn and wine, and they did eat in plenty, and praised the name of the Lord their God, and had nothing to be ashamed of; the Lord had dealt wondrously with them. And yet, so blind and besotted is human nature, that in the face of it all it must set up some loathsome idol, thus sin against God; and so, whatever was made popular, as it was then, so it is now, the people followed. But the truth has never remained popular long at a time; whenever it is made popular for a time it soon goes down, very soon; so it is still the strait gate and the narrow way, and few there be that find it. But when they did right, then there was plenty of everything; they wanted nothing. Just so now, let me abide by Jesus Christ, and there I have plenty. Let me abide in the faith, I have the bread of life, the water of life, the tree of life, the wine of life, and the meat that endures unto everlasting life; I have everything; I have the Lord on my side, and can need nothing. I will just mention one scripture to illustrate this clause, "They shall eat the fruit of their doings," and then close. Now, in the 3rd chapter of Malachi, when the Lord expostulates with the people, he says, "Bring you all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." This is what the Lord said; but they did not do it, they did not bring the tithe in, and therefore there was not meat in God's house, and the blessing was not poured out. But Jesus Christ did. What! say some, do you mean to say he brought tithe in? Yes, I do. What does tithe mean? The tenth. And what tithe did Christ bring in? He brought his righteousness in, and consequently there is meat in God's house, for it is by that righteousness coming in that famine goes out. He brought his atonement in; the tithe, the end of the law, the ten commandments of the law, the tithe meaning ten; and he went perceptively and penally to the end of the law. He brought in his life and his death, and by bringing in his life and his death famine goes out. Here is meat in the house "And prove me now herewith" and Christ did prove God, "if I will not pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." And so, Christ did prove God, and God did towards Jesus Christ just as Jesus Christ did towards God. And when did God do that? On the day of Pentecost. God poured out on that day such a blessing there was room to receive only a part of it; they could not receive it all; their little hearts could not hold it all; the house where they were sitting was full of the glory; it filled all the house. Why, they could not drink in all the blessedness God poured out. There was the house full; they were full, and the house was full; the place was full, the people were full, and it was all full together, and a great deal of it was obliged to go back to heaven again, could not contain it, not room enough for it all. "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes,"