

WHAT THINK YOU OF THIS

A SERMON

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“Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land.” Psalm 85:9

IT is the last clause of this verse we have to deal with this morning, bringing us at once upon the great essential of the gospel, “that glory may dwell in our land.” Of course, the strict meaning is that God himself might dwell with us. We see in the land of Canaan how well it was with the people, and how well it was with the land when all false gods were dealt with as they ought to be dealt with, spurned, hated, rejected, destroyed, cast down, and nothing admitted but the true God, his truth, and his order of things. When they so stood and so acted there was health, there was wealth, there was safety, there was everything. They then realized in full perfection the characteristics of the land, a land flowing with milk and honey, a pleasant land, a delightsome land, a glorious land; and after a few years of decision for God’s truth, even poverty so ceased out of the land that silver was not accounted of in the days of Solomon. But there is something in human nature so averse to God’s truth, and so determined to set up something from, by, or belonging to the creature, and so to amalgamate with the world, and get a good name from our poor dying fellow-creatures, that the signs of apostasy have attended the professing church in all ages, and we see them almost everywhere now.

Now this glory dwelling in the land is indicated by the former part of the verse, “Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him.” It is that glory which dwells with the people by salvation, and God himself is salvation. Let us take a fourfold view of this subject very briefly; for it is only a few minutes we are together in the house of the Lord, and even that is almost too much for some of us; we get yawning and gaping, and half grudge sometimes giving the Lord even an hour of our time. We will take a fourfold view of this glory dwelling in our land, or the way in which the Lord dwells with his people. First, by *the humiliation work of Christ*; second, by *the intercession of Christ*; third, by *the gospel of Christ*; and fourth, by *that infinite and eternal plenty which is brought in, to the joy and delight of the people*.

First, then, by *the humiliation work of the Lord Jesus Christ*. I shall take the 65th Psalm as our chief guide in this matter. That psalm presents to us in the beginning the humiliation work of Christ. “Praise waits for you, O God, in Zion; and unto you shall the vow be performed.” The vow to be performed there was the magnifying of God’s law, the finishing of transgression, the putting

an end to sin, and making reconciliation for iniquity. This mighty, this wondrous vow was laid upon the Lord Jesus Christ; and when the Savior speaks in the plural he says, "Your vows are upon me, O God." The dear Redeemer, therefore, did perform this vow; he wrought out and brought in everlasting righteousness; and by that righteousness our God is well pleased; and we, receiving this righteousness, understanding our need of it, and seeing the divinity, adaptability, and glory of it, the duration and certainty of it, we, receiving this, have peace with God. And not only so, but we glory, we stand in this grace, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God; because we know that the reception of Christ's righteousness stands inseparably connected with eternal glory; for "whom he justified, them he also glorified." The Savior therefore, did perform the vow, he put away sin. I wonder how many of us really believe that Jesus Christ has put away sin. We seem three parts of our time as though we thought that he had not half done the work, and we must bring in a little repentance, a few tears, and do a few good things, that we may thereby exalt ourselves; and thus, tempted to turn away from what God is determined his people shall not turn away from. He will keep their sores open: "My sore ran in the night and ceased not." He will keep the depravity of their nature open; he will keep the fountains of the great deep within them open; and they shall be made to feel they might as well trust in Satan as to trust in themselves; and that their best works are so mixed with sin that if judged by them they must be damned to all eternity. And therefore, he is determined they shall not have his presence, his promise, his approbation, nor anything, except only by the completeness of the Savior's work. You must be driven to Calvary; you must be driven out of self; you must be driven to the completeness of his work; and if you stand accepted before God, it must be by faith in Christ, having performed the vow. There, and there alone, you must stand and become as black as hell in yourself, as black as the devil in yourself; you must see the hell bound condition of your soul by nature. These only are they that will prize the way in which God dwells with men. When we sing that hymn sometimes, I wonder if we feel it:

"Black I to the fountain fly;"

How black? Oh, not very black, only a little; that is the language of many. But if in our right minds, we shall see ourselves blackened with the deepest dye, the deepest black:

"Black I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Savior, or I die."

That is the real feeling of the man that dwells with God, and that God himself dwells with. Now notice the words, "Praise waits for You, O God, in Zion." Ah, when you shall break the neck of their pride, when you shall bring them into Job's ditch and Jonah's hell, when you shall humble them down and make them feel that the vow that Christ has performed can alone give them acceptance with you, oh, how will they then praise you, how will they then break forth in one eternal song of "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto your name be all the glory." Is it any wonder that those who came out of great tribulation, who washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, should cry with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God which sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." This is one step towards God dwelling with men, and men dwelling with God. Wherever there is a knowledge of this there is a spirit of prayer. "O you that hears prayer, unto you shall all flesh come." "For these things I will be inquired of." Lord, did your dear Son die for me? Were my sins laid upon him? Is his work imputed to me? Was my name inscribed

before the world was in his eternal book? Am I one of yours? Lord, make it manifest; clear up the doubtful case; let me not go limping and doubting all my days; but bring me into that soul struggle and soul trouble that I may not rest until I can say, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." "O you that hear prayer, unto you shall all flesh come." He dwells with his people, then, by the work of Christ, by the spirit of grace and of supplication. And now mark the confession and the confidence. "Iniquities prevail against me." I like that very much. "Iniquities prevail against me," in the first Adam, and in myself, and in ten thousand ways; a law in my members bringing me into captivity to the law of sin. Not one. Is there not one you can eradicate? Not one you can conquer? "Iniquities prevail against me." What, is there not one? Is there not one you can atone for? Not one. Is there not one you can get rid of? Not one; they prevail against me. What is to be done? "As for our transgressions, you shall purge them away." Here it is; Jesus, the brightness of the Father's glory, "and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." He is "heir of all things;" and those who are thus brought to feel solemnly, personally, experimentally, their need of the Savior doing this, they are joint heirs with him. Here, then, is the glory that dwells in our land. But who sees the glory? None but the wounded sinner, none but the sensible sinner, none but the convinced sinner, none but the humbled sinner, none but the self-despairing sinner sees any glory in this. What is it in the eyes of the world? Something mysterious, which they cannot understand. And what is it in the eyes of professors? Antinomianism, and I don't know what beside. But you must not be moved by that; you are a fool if you are moved by what blind people say, and by what dreaming people say. Do you think any less of the Savior because they called him a wine bibber, a gluttonous man, a friend of publicans and harlots? Do you think any less of him for it? No, say you. Then do not think any less of his truth because men say of it what they do. Nothing but these great truths can save the soul from death, fit it for heaven, give it a triumphant entrance and a welcome possession there. God, then, dwells with man by the humiliation work of his dear Son, and by the spirit of grace and supplication. "As for our transgressions, you shall purge them away." You have no hand in it any more than you had in creating the world. Why, not one disciple was allowed to go to the cross with the Savior; for had they gone, I was going to say, if left to their own natural feeling they would have gone away and boasted they had helped. Therefore, they were all scattered, and the Savior was left alone, that it might be clear to all that his own arm brought salvation unto him, and thereby brought salvation to us. And when are your friends scattered from you sometimes, and those very persons from whom you expect help; perhaps professed Christians, perhaps real Christians, how is it that you meet sometimes with more trouble, vexation, and reproach from those whom you look upon as friends than you do from enemies? Ah, God does this in order that you may cease from man, and see that there is no one to be trusted in with any safety but the living God himself. He will sweep away every false refuge; he will leave you on the bleak, wide world, with nothing to hope in, nor to look to, nor to be safe in, but God himself. He makes his people drink the wine of astonishment; they do not like it at the time, but it does them good afterwards; the Lord knows they are angry with him at the time, but they are pleased with him afterwards; and they then bless the Lord that he broke the neck of their pride, humbled them down, drove them out of every false hope, to the end that he himself might become their all in all. Thus, then, the Lord dwells with his people by the humiliation work of Christ. What! not concerned whether he dwells with you or not? Are you content to go on from day to day without seeing his face, or hearing his voice, or hearing from him, or sending any petitions to him? What! content from week to week to have no communication from God? Are you satisfied if you are doing very well in the world? Do you say, "I have got very good health, a very good home; I have

got a good deal, and I hope to have more”? Oh, that is wretched work; that is not religion; that is the devil, and your old man. Why, our God with infinite delight has sought to dwell with us by the gift of his dear Son; Jesus has sought to dwell with us by taking our sin, shedding his blood, laying down his life, obtaining eternal redemption, accomplishing eternal salvation. God grant unto us, then, more of the spirit of Christ; he is seeking to dwell with us, that we may seek to dwell with him, that glory may dwell in our souls; for its dwelling externally will not suffice; it must be an internal dwelling. “The king’s daughter is all glorious within;” it does not matter what her outward glory may be if she is not made glorious within. What is our religion if it will not sustain us in the hour of affliction; if it will not give light to us in darkness? If we cannot retire to our dying chamber and feel that we have a personal acquaintance with the blessed God, nothing else can support us in that solemn hour.

But secondly, the Lord dwells with his people *by the intercession of Christ*. “Blessed is the man whom you choose, and cause to approach unto you, that he may dwell in your courts.” Whom you choose, and cause to approach unto you.” See how well the Old Testament saints were acquainted with all the doings of the Savior. Christ did not take the honor of magnifying the law to himself; Christ did not take the honor of abolishing death and bringing life and immortality to himself; Christ did not take the honor of carrying our names into heaven as our representative to himself; but he was called of God. I have not assumed this: “I came not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.” My Father sent me; my authority is from on high; I am not doing the work that I as man have devised; I am doing a work settled in the infinite mind of God from eternity; and I have gone forth in this matter from eternity. “No man takes this honor to himself but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.” Therefore, “Blessed is the man,” who also was the Son of God, “whom you choose, and cause to approach unto you.” Hear it, you that love him, that he draws nigh unto God by his own blood; he entered into the holy of holies by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption for us. “That he may dwell in your courts.” And then notice the consequence of Christ’s humiliation work and his intercession on high, the two together; see how beautifully the children of God in that age recognized the happy consequences; “We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, even of your holy temple.” And what is that house but Christ? what is that holy temple but Christ? The first temple, as consecrated to God, was holy; but it became an unholy temple, it became desolate, it became a den of thieves, and God turned it into a dung heap, as it is to this day. But here is a temple that was holy, is holy, and shall be holy; here is a temple embodying treasures that thieves cannot get at, that moth cannot corrupt. “We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, even of your holy temple.” Is it not so? You that know his name can lay your hand upon your heart in the presence of a heart-searching God and say, Oh God, I am as satisfied with your dear Son and with your blessed self by him in the revelation you have made, I am as satisfied as it is possible for me to be in heaven; I am not yet satisfied as to the extent of my enjoyment and realization of it, and therefore, I still hunger, and thirst, and sigh, and seek; but you know I can lay my finger upon your covenant, and can truly say I would not have one item, from first to last, altered for ten thousand worlds, for it is ordered in all things; there is not a single thing left to chance; it is all sure; and this is all my salvation and all my desire. “We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, even of your holy temple.” Can you say that of anything else? How many of you have supposed that you have found satisfaction in matters that are temporal? Ah, they last but a few hours; they soon lose their substance. The things of time are like the apples of Sodom, you gather the apple and you are going to enjoy it, but alas, in your very hand it turns to dust, the wind, blows it away and you are left with the shadow; there is no real

substance anywhere but in the Lord our God. Here, in Christ Jesus, is perfect satisfaction. The Lord says, "I will quite take away the murmurings of the children of Israel," so that before long, when these things are realized in their perfection, there shall be no complaining throughout the heavenly streets, for all the citizens shall be happy, God glorified, Christ exalted, beyond what we can ever describe.

But thirdly, the Lord dwells with his people *by the gospel of Christ*. Let us look at the progress of the gospel. "By terrible things in righteousness will you answer us, O God of our salvation." Just as he answered the groanings of the children of Israel by hurling his judgments upon their adversaries, just so now he will hear the sighs and groanings, and prayers of his people by hurling his judgments upon their adversaries. They may pray God to have mercy upon their adversaries, and it is right they should do so, but in nine cases out of ten the prayer returns to their own bosom, for God will avenge his own elect, that cry unto him day and night. Therefore, Isaiah says, "Oh, that you would rend the heavens," that is, the Jewish heavens: they were to be rent in twain from top to bottom, to be folded up as a vesture, and to pass away; "Oh, that you would rend the heavens, that you would come down, that the mountains," the sins of the people, and all the hindrances, "might flow down at your presence. When you did terrible things, which we did not look for, you came down, the mountains flowed down at your presence." Ah, said the Israelite in Egypt, what will God do with these Egyptians, these slanderers and oppressors of his people, these tyrants over his people? You shall see what he will do. The Israelites looked not on the one hand for the judgments upon the adversary, nor on the other hand for such a series of miraculous interpositions on their behalf. God increase our faith in his omnipotence, in his ability to do all that is needful to be done. "By terrible things in righteousness will you answer us, O God of our salvation." Let us refer to two or three instances. See how they treated the Savior. What became of their nation in consequence? Were there ever such sins heard of as they committed in slandering, persecuting, crucifying him? The world never saw such sins before. As we said some Sundays ago, hitherto the earth had concealed her blood, but there stood the prediction that "the earth shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain." Hitherto the earth had covered her slain; but Jesus rises from the dead, ascends to his throne, the magazines, the reservoirs of wrath, are opened, and the apostles had to bear testimony that the wrath of God had come upon that nation to the uttermost. And need I remind you of Rome Pagan? You all know what miseries that empire suffered. And Rome Papal must suffer judgments as well. Always remember what Popery is; Popery is the smoke of the bottomless pit, and all its servants are the servants of Satan, whether they know it or not. They are still drunk with the blood of the saints; the blood of the poor innocents is in their skirts; God will not forget it; terrible judgments must overtake them. It is true among them as among the Jews, we hope there are some that shall be gathered out, and brought to know that Emmanuel's blood can cleanse and save even them, as it did Luther, and many more out of that accursed apostate church. "By terrible things in righteousness, will you answer us, O God of our salvation." Commit your way unto him. If you have an enemy, man or woman, public or private, go to the Lord. We are as a general rule to pray for our enemies, not always, there are exceptions; the apostle did not pray for Alexander, the coppersmith, except that the Lord would reward him according to his works. Elijah did not pray for Jezebel, and there is a mystic Jezebel in the New Testament. By terrible things in righteousness God dwells near his people; he will hear your sighs and your groans, and will appear for you; and the more you are enabled to commit your way unto him, the happier you will be. You will feel conscious of the infallibility of his promise, the certainty of his love, the prevalence of his grace and his mercy. But then there are some very tried ones, who are

the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea; the ends of the earth, who are they? Why, those that are made concerned about eternal things, that have tried every earthly means to make themselves holy, righteous, and good and pleasing to God, that have listened to false gospels, and false professors, until they find out that the creature is a thing of nothing, altogether, gone like an autumnal leaf, gone like a piece of stubble, vanity, and less than nothing. And now they are driven to the end of all earthly holiness, righteousness, and confidence. Now this God is the confidence of all these ends of the earth. You will see from afar the shining towers of the New Jerusalem; you will see what Jesus has done, what he does do, and what he will do; he will become your confidence, and your language will be: I will go unto him if I perish; I will perish there, and if I do perish there, I shall be the first, for none ever did perish yet that have in this way been enabled to make him their confidence. "And of them that are afar off upon the sea," that must be taken figuratively; that is, they are tossed about as on the stormy sea, they are tossed hither and thither, and stagger, as the 107th Psalm said, like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end; they cry unto the Lord in their distress, and by and by he speaks and there is a great calm, and then are they glad because they are quiet. Now there are some mountains spoken of in this Psalm, "Which by his strength sets fast the mountains; being girded with power." There are four kinds of mountains: there are the mountains of division, "Whom he did foreknow, them he did predestinate;" and them he called justified, and glorified, and he has set those mountains fast. Then there is the mountain of myrrh, the mountain of bitterness, Mount Calvary, that is established and cannot be moved. Then there is the mountain of frankincense, Christ's intercession, that cannot be moved. And then there are the mountains of spices, expressive of the pleasant country to which the people shall at last come. Then it goes on to say, "Which stills the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people." Ah! dear, dear, what tumults and noises have men made against these mountains; how hard they have worked to get rid of God's foreknowledge, of God's predestinating favor, of effectual calling, and of absolute justification by the righteousness of Christ, and to sever glorification from justification. Oh, how the angry waves of Popery and Arminianism have dashed against these mountains; but they may dash long enough, these mountains of division will eternally stand; Mount Calvary will eternally stand; the mount of frankincense shall remain immovable forever; the mountain of spices, the mountain of eternity, where the people shall range, shall never sink; these mountains shall stand for ever. I am very fond of them myself. I rejoice at the thought that I was ever driven up out of the swampy religions of men, into the lofty settlements of the ever-lasting God; I rejoice that my pastures are on the high mountains; I rejoice that I dwell on high, that my place of defense is the munitions of heavenly rocks, not of earthly, the stable realities of the everlasting gospel, where bread is given, where waters are sure, and where eternal sunshine settles on our heads.

Now there is one little verse we must notice, it so quietly and comfortably describes the conversion of a sinner. "They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at your tokens; you make the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice." "They that dwell in the uttermost parts," who are they? The Pharisee in reality, but not conscious; the Publican, where are you? I am afar off from God; I am in the very uttermost parts; I am just slipping into hell; all hope is gone; a few days more, and I shall lift up my eyes in hell. What makes you afraid? God's tokens, the tokens of his wrath. He drowned an ungodly world; why not drown me in perdition? I am ungodly, that is all I am. He destroyed the cities of the plain; why not destroy me? I am as wicked in my nature, if not outwardly as bad. He overthrew Pharaoh; why not overthrow me? The earth opened her mouth and swallowed Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; why not open her mouth and swallow me? The rich

man is in hell; why not me? He is afraid of God's tokens. Ah, the tokens God has given of his wrath frighten me:

“Whither shall I flee,
To hide myself from wrath and you.”

Now comes something and puts it all right very quietly. “You make the outgoings of the morning” the morning sacrifice of Christ; that sacrifice begins to dawn upon the mind of the alarmed sinner. Ah, he says, there are all the judgments gone, all my sins are gone; oh, what a sweet morning star, what a lovely rising sun; here is a morning without clouds, a morning of one eternal day: the sun risen to set no more forever. Once a child of darkness, now of light; once accursed, now blessed; once afar off, now brought near; once on a dunghill, now enthroned in glory; raised up to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. “You make the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice;” here is the evening sacrifice as well. I not only want the beginning of eternal day, but I want an end put to my old Adam day, I want an end put to my mortal day; and so it is; Christ brings in the one, puts an end to the other; and by this morning and evening sacrifice, there stands the promise, God grant it may be so with us when we come to die, “At evening time it shall be light.”

I suppose I must hasten now to the last point, *the infinite and eternal plenty which is brought in*. The Psalmist thus describes it; it is a summing up of the whole. “You visit the earth.” And what are we in our nature but earthy? “The first man is of the earth, earthy;” earthy in our hopes, confidences, affections, and pursuits. “You visit the earth, and water it,” softening it. Ah, what a happy time that was when he visited you, and gave you a softness of heart towards your precious soul, gave you some degree of softness of heart towards Christ, and towards God, and made you begin to say, How could I live all this time in ignorance of him, and hatred to him? You will find out that you would have so remained till you were lost if grace had not freely and effectually stepped in. “You greatly enrich it with the river of God, which is full of water.” What river of God is this? Christ. Thirty-second of Isaiah, he shall be “as rivers of water in a dry place.” And when the sinner is thus softened, mark the language; “you prepare them corn, when you have so provided for it.” Ah, when the incorruptible seeds of God's word come sometimes with power to my mind, I say, Lord, is there some poor sinner to be there this morning or this evening whose heart is softened down, and made willing to receive God's truth? Lord, grant that the seed sown this day may go down into that good ground, may take root there, and bring about what that beautiful description indicates; “you prepare them corn, when you have so provided for it.” How true it is that “the preparation of the heart in man,” as well as “the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord.” Ah, after you have received the truth, there will be a great deal of hardness felt, a great deal of rigidity; and so it goes on to say, “You water the ridges;” there is a great ridge of unbelief, and a great ridge of impenitence, and a great ridge of rebellion; and they stick up, and you say, that field has some great hard lumps in it, they look as hard as adamant stones; it will not produce anything, surely. But “you water the ridges thereof abundantly; you settle the furrows thereof; you make it soft;” not with a shower, but “with showers;” blessing after blessing, softening after softening, reviving after reviving, comforting after comforting, until the heart at last is fairly melted down; and you feel as the woman did when she washed the Savior's feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. She loved much; her heart was made soft with showers, blessing after blessing, blessing after blessing. Ah, Lord, if your mercy has reached me, if your

salvation has saved me, if this be so, I will despair of no one, I will never again find fault with your ministers for going too far; for if they could go far enough to reach a wretch like me, then I will despair of no one. The apostle might well call the grace of God "the unsearchable riches of Christ." "You bless the springing thereof." Have you not heard the word sometimes, and there is a sweet shining that seems to bring up your desires, and affections, and feelings; and perhaps you hear a sermon, and go with it in the spirit of love, and it seems to you as though there was fulfilled in your experience that scripture in the sixteenth of Ezekiel, "I passed by you, and spread my skirt over you, and it was the time of love." Your soul springs up towards God, and you say, What a pleasant thing it is to feel that I love God; what a pleasant thing to feel that I love Jesus Christ; that I love him that has loved poor sinners, and sent his dear Son to be the propitiation for their sins. "You bless the springing thereof. You crown the year with your goodness." He that began the work in goodness carries it on in goodness, and finishes it with his goodness. Mark, he crowns the year not with our goodness, no, no, no, for we have none; "you crown the year with your goodness; and your paths drop fatness. They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness:" and what is the consequence? "The little hills rejoice on every side;" and well they may; their iniquity is taken away; here is Christ interceding for them, and they are brought near to God; and he, hearing their prayers, pours out his judgments upon their adversaries, pours out his blessings upon them, and goes on blessing and blessing. "The little hills rejoice on every side." What a paradisiacal state of things is here brought before us. "The pastures are clothed with flocks." Go back to the apostolic age for this; not the poor sort of flocks there are in our day. I should like, if the Lord's will, to see a great alteration in our Churches. I think we are all dying together pretty well; it seems so to me. Never mind; if we are conscious of it, I am sure we shall cry out against it, and pray the Lord to keep us alive; for there is no advantage in any life compared with the advantage of a life of faith and liveliness in God. "The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn." There is no want of anything. You may go from Dan to Beersheba, and not find a wilderness; no, there is the corn waving, the pastures flourishing, everything looking well; plenty of everything, and not an evil in Christ, nor an adversary occurrent. "The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy; "They also sing." Now, I ask in conclusion, can anything be more expressive of this glory? See the result; "they shout for joy." What will be the ultimate happiness of your soul? Why, those raptures that will make you shout for joy. "They also sing." Just as that psalm terminates, so shall be the destiny of every poor sinner that is brought to hang upon Jesus, and Jesus alone, for eternal salvation.

But your time is gone, while my subject remains, and I must say no more now.