

Sermons and Addresses

BY

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“The God of all grace . . . make you
perfect, stablish . . . you.”

*A Sermon preached at Bethesda Chapel, Great George Street, Bristol,
on Sunday Evening, March 28th, 1897.*

But the God of all grace, Who hath called us unto His eternal glory, by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.—*I Peter v., 10.*

IN meditating for a little while on this verse, let us notice, in the first place, the title given to our precious Heavenly Father. He is called “The God of all Grace” He is God Almighty. He is the God of Power, the God of Justice, the God of Holiness, the God of Wisdom, the God of Infinite Compassion. He bears a variety of precious names, because they set forth His attributes, and prove, all of them, His character.

Now, in this portion He is called “The God of all Grace,” That is a most precious title given to Him for our comfort. We are sinners, we fail in a variety of ways, we have failed in numberless ways before this; and we therefore need One Who is not merely Almighty, not merely righteous, not merely infinitely holy, not merely infinitely wise, but Who is also full of pity and compassion towards poor sinners, such as I am, and as you are. And therefore this word, that “He is the God of all Grace,” suits us admirably. We just need such a God as this is. “He is the God of all grace” and were He not, O what would become of us? But because “He is the God of all grace” there is hope for the oldest, the greatest, the vilest sinner among us. None need to despair, since “He is the God of all Grace.” That is, the grace that is found in God is without limit, and it can be applied to every one of our various failures and shortcomings, of whatever character they may be.

There is even the possibility that the greatest thief, the greatest robber, the vilest person that ever lived under heaven, can obtain forgiveness for his crimes. There is grace found in God, since “He is the God of all Grace,” that whatever amount of grace is needed, it is to be had from Him. It is to be found in God. The greatest sins can be forgiven. Look at Manasseh’s case, and see what God did for him. He was swimming, as it were, in the blood of the individuals whom he had murdered; and his idolatry went beyond everything that had ever been seen. But after he was taken a prisoner, and he humbled himself before God—really and truly humbled himself before God—see how merciful and good God was to him. It was all forgiven! There is an instance of “the God of all Grace!”

Look, again, at the great persecutor Saul, who delighted in having the believers in Christ beaten in every synagogue; who delighted in having them cast into prison, again and again and again; who delighted in tormenting them till they blasphemed the worthy precious name of the Lord Jesus; who delighted in having believers in Christ put to death. Yet this great persecutor—in his day, we have reason to ‘believe, the greatest of persecutors—was forgiven. “I obtained mercy,” he himself says. “I obtained mercy.” Why? Because God was “the God of all Grace.” That was the reason, not because he deserved it, not because he had become a better man now. No! While he was on the very way to Damascus, to do to the believers in Christ there what he had been doing to the believers in Jerusalem, the Lord Jesus met him and changed his heart, and made him one of the holiest men that ever lived on earth (as a mere human being, I mean) and this because God is “the God of all Grace.” How this suits sinners, as we are, in all our variety of failures and shortcomings—even in the case of the converted. Though they hate sin and love holiness, yet how many are their failures, how many their shortcomings, how many their words which are contrary to the mind of God! Though they do not live in sin, and though they do not go on in an evil, wicked course, yet their failures, their shortcomings, if not in action, yet in word, and if it were even not in word, in thought, in feeling, in desire, in purpose, in inclination, O how many are they! How many are our failures and shortcomings! But our Friend and Helper in heaven, our Father in Christ Jesus, is “the God of all Grace.”

O, a precious title! And I advise my beloved Christian friends to study this title yet further and further; to think about it, and to pray over this name given here to our Heavenly Father, that more and more they may be comforted by “the God of Grace,” Who hath called us unto His eternal glory.” *That* is the prospect we have! The weakest, the feeblest, the least instructed of the children of God have this prospect before them—to share the eternal glory of God! What a wonderful thing is this! And all the glory which the Father will give to the Lord Jesus Christ, on account of His mediatorial work, the weakest, the feeblest of the children of God shall share with Christ, because they are members of His mystical body, of which He is the Head, because they belong to Him; and *that* is the reason why they shall share it with Him. To this eternal glory of God the Father, and to this eternal glory of God the Son, we are called, and we have obtained (for the very purpose that we might be assured that we shall share it) an *earnest*, which is the Spirit of God. And as assuredly as we are the partakers of God the Holy Spirit, so surely we shall share the eternal glory of the Father and of the Son. Bright, and blessed, and glorious, therefore, are our prospects!

And how do we come to all this? What is our title to all this? It is stated, “Who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus”—rather in

Christ Jesus, because we belong to Christ. No goodness, no merit, no worthiness found in us; not because we are better than other people; not because we pray a great deal; not because we work a great deal for God. *That* is not the reason, but because we are *in* Christ Jesus, members of His mystical body. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to us. He, in our room and stead, fulfilled the whole law, the law which we had broken times without number. And thus it comes that we are justified before God—that is, accounted just, reckoned just, though unjust and unrighteous in ourselves.

This perfect obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ unto death, the death on the Cross, is put to our account, is imputed to us; and therefore it is that we are called unto His eternal glory through Christ Jesus. The Lord Jesus Christ suffered in our room and stead, as our mediator, and bore all the punishment which we deserve on account of our numberless transgressions. And thus God, though just and holy and righteous, can in Christ Jesus give to us this wonderful blessing, to share His own eternal glory, and to share the eternal glory of the Lord Jesus Christ! O the wonderful, wondrous prospects which we have! If this were entered into, we should sing and rejoice all the day long, under all circumstances, under all trials; but because we enter so little into it, we apprehend so little of it, we pass by so much of what is declared in the Word of God about these things, and are so short of happiness as we are! Now let us ponder more abundantly all these things, that the heart may be brimful of joy. This is so important, because “the joy of the Lord” is the spiritual strength of the believer while we are this side eternity.

“Called us unto His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile”—more exactly and minutely, “after ye have suffered a *little* while.” It is only a little while, in comparison with *eternity!* Suppose it were to last 20 years, or 50 years, or even 80 years, and if it were even longer than this, yet, in *comparison with eternity*, it is a *little while!* For a little while only! O how short it will be, in comparison with eternity! We must never lose sight of the fact that eternity is a period without end. A thousand years are as one day! A thousand years, a little time, a very little time! And ten hundred millions of years, a *little time*. Eternity only beginning, though a thousand millions of years shall have passed away! Only the beginning of eternity! And 50 millions, and 5,000 millions of years, O how little, how little a period *its comparison with eternity*.

So after this life, suffered a little while, what comes? He will “make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.” It is a positive statement! It is not merely a wish, not merely a desire, on the part of the apostle, nor merely a prayer. But He *will* make you perfect! When you look at your spiritual conflicts now, remember they will not always remain. We shall have the victory, *completely*, through our Lord Jesus Christ. No temptations any longer! Nor hesitation whether we shall do a thing, or not do it—all this completely

done away. The will of God will be declared to us, and instantaneously, without a second's hesitation, without a moment of pondering whether we shall do it or not, the heart will say, "Thy will Heavenly Father, is my perfect delight; I shall rejoice in glorifying Thee, by doing what Thou wilt have me to do." This is the state of things to which we are hastening on! Perfect conformity to the mind of Christ! Perfect, universal, and eternal obedience to our Heavenly Father! When hereafter in the glory, His holy pleasure made known to us, instantaneously we shall comply. That is the meaning of being made perfect, and that is the promise we have.

He will make you perfect as to holiness and as to intelligence; there will be no remaining in ignorance found in us, but "we shall know in that day, as perfectly as we are known now." We shall completely know God, we shall completely know the Lord Jesus, we shall completely know everything that is according to the mind of God, or contrary to the mind of God. O the bright and blessed and glorious prospect that every particle of ignorance now found in us will be completely done away with. We shall be perfect as to holiness; we shall be perfect as to knowledge. O how bright, how glorious, these prospects are! We are not perfect now, even as to knowledge, or as to grace. Far otherwise. We are weak and feeble in ourselves still, though believers in the Lord Jesus; and though hating sin and loving holiness, we are far from being perfect. But we shall be perfect! This is the bright and blessed prospect, "He will make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."

Stablish—that is, He will give unto us a state in which there will no double-mindedness, all a reality, in regard to the things of God; all one-minded, all according to the mind of God. This is the bright prospect before us. Then we shall be strengthened—that is to say, completely firm according to the mind of God, no double-mindedness whatever; one mind, and only one mind, to glorify God; one purpose, and only one purpose, to live for God, to labour for God; and everything that is contrary to the mind God will be entirely removed from us. A bright and blessed prospect this, that just as the Lord Jesus Christ was, while on earth, thirty-three years and a half, so hereafter will be the feeblest, the weakest, of the children of God; so completely minded shall we be, as the Lord Jesus Christ was, for glorifying God while on earth. That is the prospect before us.

And lastly, we shall be settled—that is, such a foundation of complete spirituality shall we be brought to, that a shaking of the foundation will be entirely impossible. O this prospect of being settled, with firm foundations, will be ours; no shifting and changing will be the question then, but one purpose, and one purpose throughout eternity, will be ours: to glorify God, to do the will of God, to work for God, to have no will of our own. O how bright is the prospect for us weak ones, feeble ones, and erring ones, as we

are, that we shall not remain thus. O how often have we condemned ourselves since our conversion, in that we are not altogether Christlike, that we are still not always inclined to do the things which are perfectly according to the mind of God, and though at last we come to it, and do the thing according to the mind of God, yet that we hesitated for a little moment, that we considered whether we should do the thing or not. This should not be found in us; this shows that we are not altogether according to the mind of God, that yet the corrupt nature is found in us, that the devil has still a measure of power over us, and that we are not yet perfect in holiness.

All this will then be altered completely. One single aim throughout eternity, one single mind throughout eternity, to live for God, to glorify God, without the least particle of hesitation at any time; instantaneously, when the will of God is presented to us, to set our seal to it, that we will obey Him, that we will glorify Him, that we will do His will. How bright and blessed and glorious these prospects! Now is there yet an unbeliever here present? If so, to you, my dear friend, I would say in whatever way you seek after happiness now, you will never have it, can never have it, except you find it in this way that I have been pointing out, through Jesus Christ. The Apostles, holy men, exceedingly holy men as they were, obtained all this through Christ. They did not obtain it by their own exertion. It was as poor, guilty, hell-deserving sinners, they accepted what God gives to the sinner in Christ Jesus.

We have to own before God that we are sinners, and, if we do not see it, to ask God to show it to us, and then to confess before God in prayer that we are sinners, and, having done so, to put our trust solely in Christ Jesus for salvation. It is this, and this alone, which brings the blessing, and can bring the blessing. Any, therefore, who are not yet believers in Christ, if they desire really and truly to be happy, this is the only way to obtain it; if they desire to go to heaven, this is the only way to get there. God grant that some soul or other may be benefited through this our meditation, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.