

# GOD PRAISED FOR HIS WORKS AND WAYS.

## A SERMON

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Preached by Mr. HAZELTON,  
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AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHAD WELL STREET,  
CLERKENWELL,  
ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 7<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER, 1886.

"And the heavens shall praise Thy wonders, O Lord; Thy faithfulness also in the congregation, of the saints." {Psalm 89: 5}.

The love of God was shed abroad in the heart of the Psalmist, when he penned this comprehensive and precious portion of the Divine Word. His spirit was warmed and fertilized with grace Divine, his faith in his covenant God was strong, and his hope was fixed upon the mercy of the Lord. Contemplating himself as a sinner saved by grace, and considering also the greatness of the salvation in which he was interested, he expressed this resolution, " I will sing of the mercies of the Lord (or Jehovah) for ever, with my mouth will I make known Thy faithfulness to all generations." The Psalmist was experimentally acquainted with the triune God; when, therefore, he mentioned the great and glorious name of Jehovah, he had reference to the mercies of the Father, of the Son, and of the Spirit. "I will sing of His mercies for ever." This implies that he believed the mercies of

the Lord would never cease; for "the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting unto them that fear Him." Mercy assumes many forms, and flows in numerous channels, and goodness and mercy are following us from day to day, even all the days of our life. We sing of the great Three entering into covenant engagements for the certain salvation of all the objects of God's love. We sing of mercy as it flows through the wounds of the Saviour, in streams of powerful, fragrant, and precious blood; and we sing of the mercy of the Spirit, which has opened our blind eyes, unstopped our deaf ears, and opened our hearts to receive the greatest boon that God can give,— the Divine nature, a new life, and the root of the matter. This also was implied on the part of the writer, that he verily believed he should live for ever and not finally fall from grace. But shall we not grow weary, and want some other subject to sing about in the presence of God? No, the mercies of God are ever full, and ever fresh and sweet, and their innumerable forms and expressions will engage the enraptured attention of all the countless millions of the redeemed and glorified for ever and ever. Heaven is a wondrous world, and our experience there will be marvelous, as I believe, and our song will ever flow from the sweetest joy that God can give. The pleasure will never become shallow or less than full and perfect. The Psalmist had referred more especially to the mercies of God, which are discovered and displayed in the covenant of grace. "I have made," says God, "a covenant with My chosen," I have ratified that covenant with an oath, for I have sworn unto David My servant. David was a type only, Christ is the Antitype. God made a covenant with David concerning his royal

house, and He made a covenant with David's great Lord concerning all His own royal sons and daughters. "Thy seed will I establish for ever." If we only believe this, under the hallowing and helping influences of the Spirit of God, we shall pursue our pilgrimage with cheerfulness and delight. "Thy seed will I establish for ever." Do we belong to that seed? Are we among the purchase of the Saviour's blood? Have we been born again? Are our names registered in heaven? Are we among that large and mighty number concerning whom it is said, "He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hands?" Then let us take the comfort presented to us in these words, "Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up Thy throne to all generations." And what then? "And the heavens shall praise Thy wonders, O Lord; thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints."

Now having thus reached the text, I will endeavor, by the help of the Spirit, to make some observations upon it by gathering up a few points which it embodies. First, let us look at some of the Divine wonders indicated in the text: "The heavens shall praise Thy wonders, O Lord. Our God is a wonder-working God, and has been so ever since He commenced working, and He will never cease to work wonders. Having begun to work, He will continue His wondrous operations forever. "I will work," whoever is idle, whoever opposes, whoever resists, and "who shall let it?" And what will He do? "I will do all My pleasure."

Nothing can be plainer, nothing can be more absolute than this, "I will do all My pleasure." We contemplate the powers of darkness, for there are such powers in existence and operation; and we are thankful that they are chained and restrained, and that there is not a fiend in existence who can say, I will do what I please, or I can do all my pleasure. We contemplate ministers of the gospel, and deacons of Christian Churches, and persons of influence, and we are thankful that none of them can say, I will do all my pleasure. We meditate for a minute or two upon God's angels in heaven, and although they are like their Maker, and are in perpetual sympathy with the Holy God, these words never fell from their lips; Gabriel has never said, "I will do all my pleasure." It becomes us therefore, on hearing these words from God Himself, to study the character of the Being who says He will do just as He pleases in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. You know there is a saying which embodies a very great truth, although it does not occur in the Bible, "God is too wise to err, and too good to be unkind." He cannot change, He cannot deny Himself, He cannot lie, He cannot do wrong. Injustice and iniquity can never be charged upon our God, He works mysteriously, but He works in holiness; He works in the dark, but He is never wrong, and we sometimes look on with wonder and consternation but He is never capable of making a mistake while doing all His pleasure. Seated on His throne, and surrounded by saints and angels, He is doing all His pleasure, and He will do all His pleasure on the earth. Our God would be unhappy if He were not able to do all He wills to do. His arm is strong enough to do all He pleases, and long enough

to reach the most distant friend, and the most distant enemy in existence. His ear is not heavy, that he cannot hear the voice of His people, the groaning of the prisoner, and the unuttered, and unexpressed desires of them that put their trust in Him. His eye, unlike yours and mine, never becomes dim; for He is the same, and of His years there is no end. He is not affected by time nor by eternal ages, and the fact that He has existed from all eternity has never changed Him. He is ever omnipotent, and ever great and glorious. Therefore let us sit down at His feet, and watch His hand; for He has formed a great plan which He is executing, and His operations are ever worthy of Himself. He has a right to do as He pleases in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. Yes, God is a wonder-working God, and "the heavens shall praise Thy wonders, O Lord." Now, if I were able I might try to go into the wonders of God in creation, in providence, and into His deeper and richer wonders expressed and revealed in His covenant of grace and mercy. I have neither time nor ability to set forth the wondrous works of God in creation; but I frequently think of one or two expressions in the fortieth chapter of Isaiah and elsewhere, " Who stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in." I always regard these words as most grand and sublime, The heavens over our head are stretched out by God's hand, not like an arch of granite, but like a curtain, and the hand that so stretched them out will roll them up and change them one day, as a garment that is worn-out to be laid aside. "And stretched them out as a tent to dwell in." Spread them out as a tent. And are the mighty visible heavens a tent only?

Why are they said to be a tent 1 A tent is not a permanent building, but one set up with a view of being removed at some future time. The purpose to be fulfilled by the setting up of a tent is a temporary purpose, and when it is fulfilled the tent is removed. What a wonderful tabernacle is this! Who dwells in it? For He spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in. Worlds dwell there; whether they are inhabited or not, I cannot say; and it is not for me to dwell upon such a subject in a sermon. This world is peopled, and we, its numerous inhabitants are dwelling in this great tent. There is, however, a more wonderful world than this, and a state of things far more substantial and glorious than the visible heavens. "In my Father's house are many mansions," — not tents. In my Father's house are many mansions, and they are all to be inhabited. I tell you the truth; "if it were not so, I would have told you." I am going out of and beyond this tent, to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again into this tent, and take it down, and fold up the curtain, and swear that time shall be no more; and then, I will receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also. "The heavens shall praise Thy wonders, O Lord." In Thy works, Thy word, and Thy ways. The works of God are,

*"Immensely great! Immensely small!  
Yet one strange work exceeds them all."*

The wonders of God appear in a blade of grass, and in a common daisy; in mountains, and in grains of sand; in the hugest creature, and in the tiniest being. I pity the person who fails to see the

name of God upon every creature; for He has left it indelibly impressed upon all the works of His hand. I am not, however, to go into these matters or the wonders of God in creation.

Since my text refers to the covenant of grace, and to David's great and glorious and reigning Son, let us limit our attention for a few minutes to the wonders of God in His grace and salvation. Can anything be more wonderful than the incarnation of the Son of God? Oh that my heart felt it more deeply, and my lips spoke it more freely! Can anything be more astonishing than the fact that the mighty God became a babe, that the infinite One appeared in a human form a few spans long? "The heavens shall praise thy wonders, O Lord." I am lost in this mystery, and can only mention it. I introduce it at this time to bring it before you as well as I can. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulders, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end." Of whom speaks the prophet this? Of the Babe in Bethlehem, concerning whom the angels praised God in the visible heavens, and said to the shepherds, "Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord." The infinite God appears in the form of a babe. The immeasurable, the unsearchable Jehovah, assumed a limited form, in a limited locality, for suffering and saving purposes. I am not speaking of God's essential greatness, but of what He was sovereignly pleased to become and do; He became flesh, and dwelt among us, limited as

to locality and form. That apparently helpless little one, whom Mary and Joseph looked at with wonder and astonishment, was the God that made the world, and upholds it by the word of His power.

*“His shoulders held up heaven and earth,  
While Mary held up Him.”*

Can you understand it? My text does not say, The heavens shall comprehend Thy wonders, or fathom them, or reach their bottom; for they are incomprehensible, unfathomable, and bottomless; but “The heavens shall praise Thy wonders, O Lord; Thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints.” But that is not all. That Babe became a Man of sorrows, and yet He did not cease to be God. No, all the Godhead was in Him when He worked at the trade of a carpenter, when He was baptized of John in Jordan, and when He stood unmoved and opened not His mouth while they spat upon Him. “Oh,” said the infidel, “if Jesus were God, He would have struck the wretch dead in a moment that spat in His face.” Devils might have done that, but it required the mighty God to bear it all calmly and patiently. Angels looked on and wondered where the scene would end; when their Maker was thus insulted and degraded. “The heavens shall praise Thy wonders, O Lord.” The Man of sorrows born to enter into sorrow, to extract all the penal bitterness from it, to sanctify it, to preside over it, and to convert it into a blessing to His people. Yes, He was a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Not only did the infinite One become a babe and a Man of sorrows, which

was marvelous; He was made a curse for us. God made Him who knew no sin, to be—not sinful—but sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Our Lord was nailed to the cross, and all the terrible curses that were due to sin fell upon Him, and had He not been the mighty God as well as a suffering and sorrowing man, they would have withered and destroyed Him. He was strong enough, however, to bear it all, and to exhaust the wrath incurred by guilty men, and the heavens are still praising these wonders of our God. What followed? He became our salvation and our life. Oh that I might sit until I die, under the cross of this mighty and wondrous Sufferer, and experience the working of that wonderful power by which sin is pardoned, mortified and removed. I need not seclude myself in a monastery, or isolate myself from society in order to mortify sin. Under the shadow of the solemn cross of Jesus, and realizing my interest in this wondrous act of the Lord my God, my eyes fill with tears, my heart expands and melts, and my feelings become spiritual and holy. Brethren and sisters, we need more of that power which comes from God through the wounds, and sorrows, and sufferings of His dear Son. Well, the heavens shall praise Thy Mediatorial wonders, O Lord.

What shall I say about heaven itself? I have not been there otherwise than I trust I have been at the gate of heaven by a living faith in the Lord my God. I think I know what heavenly joy and pleasure are, and what it is to be so near to heaven as to look down upon this vain world through which we are passing, without the

slightest wish to live in it for ever. To look down upon its pomp, and show, and toys, and all its empty bubbles, with that gracious and spiritual contempt which is felt by one who almost joins in the songs of heaven, knowing that he is an heir of the kingdom, and longs to be there. But what shall we say about the wonders of God in heaven? "The heavens shall declare Thy wonders, O Lord." You that are parents are, I imagine, doing the very best you can for your children, for it is natural so to do. And God has done the best He could do for His children, wherefore He is not ashamed to be called their God. Whose child is that? It is the child of So-and-so, and he has done for him all he intends to do. He should be ashamed; for he might have done much more for him, without injuring himself or others of the family. The character of that saint or that pilgrim is marvelous. Who formed it? God. In what relation does God stand to that character? A Father. What provision has He made for that child? All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come—all are yours, even all that God can give. "The heavens shall praise Thy wonders, O Lord." The best world in the universe is our home; it was built by God, and fitted up and furnished by Him for His family, and all is ready for every child. It is a wonderful home, and the way to it is as wonderful as heaven itself. "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." We are going to heaven by faith in a bleeding Christ. All other ways lead to darkness, death, and destruction. He that is a simple believer in the dear Redeemer is in the way to heaven. "The redeemed shall walk there, and the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein." A

wonderful way to a wonderful home, and God's dear people are gradually and perpetually arriving. Three of our dear friends went a few days ago, and were received; I have no doubt, into everlasting mansions.

"Ten thousand to their endless home This solemn moment fly;

*And we are to the margin come,  
And soon expect to die."*

What wonders! a world of light, a path of blood unto it; redeemed and sanctified ones walking in that path, and gradually arriving there, and as they enter into bliss they are welcomed with an abundant entrance into the kingdom and glory of God. Hallelujah! "The heavens shall praise Thy wonders, O Lord." I might go further into this part of the subject if I had time and ability, but the time is nearly gone.

Now, secondly, the text indicates the character of this wonder-working God, "The heavens shall praise Thy wonders, O Lord; Thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints." I take it that the faithfulness of God, my dear friends, preserves His glory and reveals Him as a worthy object of trust. Our God cannot be unfaithful, the thing is simply impossible. He is not faithful because He wills to be so, His faithfulness is not the result of His sovereignty; He is essentially so, and He must be faithful, since He is the glorious Jehovah. Well, His faithfulness guards His honor, and He is the only object of hope and trust. If He were not faithful, or if we or angels had

a doubt concerning it, that very doubt would leave all the holy joy and happiness of all angels and men impossible. But whatever change or changes may take place, He remains the ever-faithful God. It is the Rock on which His church is built, and without it there would be nothing firm underneath your heart and mine, and no safe foundation for His church and kingdom. But there is His covenant of grace, and also His beloved Son ; God is ever faithful to His covenant; and to show that it is His fixed and unalterable intention to fulfill His promises, He has ratified His covenant with an oath. "Once have I sworn by My holiness, that I will not lie unto David." "On this Rock I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. His faithfulness sustains His word; for without this fact the gospel would not be glad tidings of great joy, since it would be based upon nothing trustworthy. The Bible, however, and every gracious promise, are sustained by the unchanging faithfulness of God. This is the resting-place of the saints, "Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpass." Into what chambers are we to enter but His attributes and perfections? And faithfulness is one of them. If I am blessed with a promise in the hand of my faith, and am permitted and enabled to enter as a poor pursued soul into the faithfulness of God, I can sit down and sing,

*"My steady soul shall fear no more,  
Than solid rocks when billows roar."*

“Thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints.” God is faithful in His love. I have been loved, I think, by some few persons who have ceased to love me; I have not much to complain of in that respect however, for I have been highly favored; yet we have been loved by persons whose love has ceased, for creatures are fickle. That was perhaps our own fault, but we have a Divine Friend, and our faults before God are more numerous than they have been before our fellow men; yet He has not changed, though creatures have. He is faithful in His love, and faithful to His Son; He said He would send Him, and He did so. He said He would smite Him, and His faithfulness to Himself and to His church required Him to do so, and He smote the Substitute of sinners. He spared not His own Son, because He was and is the ever faithful God. He laid upon Him the iniquities of us all, and then poured the curse upon Him, because He was faithful; and Christ having finished His work presented it to His Father, who faithfully accepted it. Christ rose from the dead as the Head and Representative of ransomed millions and entered into the presence of His Father with, “Here am I and the children who are interested in my mediation.” And the Father was faithful to accept the whole. Then Christ the Redeemer is first, and all Christians behind Him. The little ones, feeble ones, faint ones, and fearing ones, are all accepted by the ever-faithful God. And what will be the result of all this? Christ, who is gone to heaven as our Forerunner has left ,

*“A way so broad, so unconfined,  
That all His church may march behind.”*

Thirdly, we have the praising observers of all this. “The heavens shall praise Thy wonders, O Lord, Thy faithfulness in the congregation of the saints.” By heavens, understand not the visible heavens, the sun, moon, and stars. They can never praise God for His works of grace. By heavens, therefore, understand the inhabitants of that upper world ; as when we say London has done so and so, we do not mean the material city, but its inhabitants, so all the inhabitants of heaven shall praise Thy wonders, O Lord. The angels of God are students of His greatest work. They desire to look into the deep mysteries of redemption; “which things the angels desire to look into.” Saints and angels constitute one vast congregation. There are two orders of beings, one of which is far more deeply interested in these wonders of God than the other; both orders, however, praise the great God for the wonders He has wrought. Angels will help us to sing the song of redemption up to a certain point, but they will be unable to go all the way through it: “Unto Him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins,” and so on. Angels will be with us and hear our enraptured souls pour forth our spiritual, grateful praises before our wonder-working God and then they will join with us, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.” “The heavens shall praise Thy wonders, O Lord; Thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints.”

Fourthly, the fact asserted. They will praise them, but not as we said a few minutes ago, comprehend them, not dive down to their bottom, for these works of our God are perpetual wonders and will never cease to be so. This great miracle, or combination of miracles, will never lose its freshness or its power. Praise is due to God. "Give unto Him the glory that is due unto His name." Who can do that? How can we pay the debt we owe, or angels either. Angels do their best, and their best perhaps is great; but when all God's angels and all His saints united, have brought their all and their best, God will be exalted above all blessing and praise. How sweet, how blessed is the thought, that you and I are destined to unite with countless thousands of angels in blessing and praising our wonder-working God. I almost wonder how it is we are so prone to cleave to this world, and to cling to our present life, when there is a better world than this which is our home and our heaven, and,

*"Where we shall sing more sweet, more loud,  
And Christ shall be our song."*

*But Watts has put it in the correct form when he says—*

*"But tim'rous mortals start and shrink,  
To cross this narrow sea ;  
And linger shivering on the brink,  
And fear to launch away.*

*Could we but climb where Moses stood,  
And view the landscape o'er,*

*Not Jordan's stream, nor death's cold flood,  
Should fright us from the shore."*

Fifthly, there will be perfect unanimity in heaven. Saints and angels united in Christ, and united for ever in ascribing all majesty and glory to our wonder-working God. Brother, there will be no complaints, no doubts, and no fears there. We shall leave them all behind, with all trouble, turmoil, and care, and we shall be glad to leave them altogether with all our sins and imperfections and enter into that wondrous world which our God has prepared for us. We shall be at home in a moment there, and the spirit of eternal praise will instantaneously pervade us, and we shall unite with saints and angels in heaven at once, and with as much readiness as if we had been singing God's praises thousands of years.

The Lord command His blessing for Christ's sake. Amen.