

Beggars Becoming Princes

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon powerfully illustrates how God's sovereign grace lifts spiritually bankrupt sinners from their lowly, hopeless state to become heirs of heavenly glory.

Scripture: 1 Samuel 2:8, Job 42:5-6, Romans 3:20, Romans 3:28, Revelation 3:17

Topics: "Spiritual Poverty", "Divine Grace", "Salvation"

Description

In 'Beggars Becoming Princes,' C.H. Spurgeon vividly portrays the desperate spiritual condition of man as a beggar on a dunghill, utterly lacking merit or righteousness. He contrasts this with the overwhelming and sovereign grace of God that lifts such beggars to become heirs of the throne of glory. This evangelistic sermon calls sinners to recognize their need and to come boldly to Christ for salvation. Spurgeon's powerful imagery and biblical exposition offer both conviction and hope to all who hear.

Transcript

"He raises up the poor out of the dust, and lifts up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory." 1 Samuel 2:8.

GOD sometimes does this in Providence. History records several very remarkable instances of persons who have sprung from the lowest ranks of society, or from the depths of poverty, yet who have mounted to a throne. When a certain king, in the olden days, was led in chains behind the chariot of his conqueror, he was constantly observed to look at the wheel and smile. And when he was asked why he did so, he said that it was because he noticed that those spokes of the wheel which were uppermost, at one time became the lowest not long after, while those which were lowest, in their turn took their place on high—and he would not wonder if it should be the same with him—and that he would again become a king and that his conqueror would be a captive. So strange are the workings of Providence that, however low anyone may be in temporal circumstances, he need not give way to despair, but he may cherish hopes of better times coming to him.

About that matter, however, I have nothing to say tonight. I am going to speak of the far greater changes that have been worked by Divine Grace. We know that many who were "poor" in a spiritual sense, such "beggars," as words can surely describe, have been, by Sovereign Grace, lifted up from the dunghill of their natural degradation, set among the princes of the blood royal of Heaven, and are even now inheriting the Throne of Glory, or are on their way to it! It is concerning this poverty and its cure that I want to talk to you in the hope that the Holy Spirit may so guide my words that they shall be for the encouragement of

those who are seeking salvation by Christ Jesus.

In our text we see, first, man's sad plight And, secondly, God's Infinite Grace.

I. First, then, here is MAN'S SAD PLIGHT. He is described both by his character and by his position. He is a beggar—that is his character. He is on a dunghill—that is his position.

Fallen man, whether he knows it or not, is spiritually a beggar What is a beggar? He is one who is penniless. Empty his pockets and you will not find a single farthing there. Take his old clothes from his back and see what they will fetch— no one will give a penny for them. He has not a foot of land that he can call his own and the last six feet which he is pretty sure to have, must be given to him by the parish, and it will perhaps be even then given grudgingly. His old hat has almost lost its crown and his feet can be seen through his very dilapidated shoes. The old proverb says that a beggar can never be bankrupt, but it would be more correct to say that he is never anything else but bankrupt! Do any of you see your own portraits here? I can see just what I was by nature—utterly penniless. If you turn a natural man inside out, you cannot find a farthing's worth of merit in him. The very rags with which he professes to cover himself are so filthy that he would be far better without them. You may search into a man's thoughts, words and actions. You may ransack them and turn them over again, and again and again—and you may put the most charitable construction that you can upon them, but if you judge according to truth, and according to the Word of God—which is the only true way of judging, you must say of all that is in man, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Never was a beggar so short of money as a sinner is short of merit!

I want to preach experimentally tonight, so I ask you how many of us have felt this, how many of us are realizing our spiritual poverty now? Never will a man become rich in faith until first he has learned that he is penniless so far as his own merit is concerned. You must be emptied, you must be drained dry, you must be made to feel and to confess that in

your flesh there dwells no good thing, or else the Sovereign Mercy of God and the riches of His loving kindness shall never be your heritage.

But a beggar is not only penniless, he is also without a trade. The only thing that he can do is to beg. If he had ever learned a trade, he might turn to some handicraft and so earn his living. There are many who would be willing to give him a day's work, but there is nothing that he can do. If you should lend him any tools, he would cut his fingers with them, and then come to you to bind them up. He knows nothing and is good for nothing—he is shiftless, useless, and other men are eager to be rid of him! He is like an ill weed that only cumber the ground. He is a hopeless, helpless man, unable to earn a penny—and such is every man of Adam spiritually. Not only has he no merit, but it is impossible for him to ever earn any! I have seen the foolish sons of men trying to win merit, hunting shadows, working in their dreams, seeking to build substantial houses upon sandy foundations, or to make garments out of spiders' webs. Yet they have wearied themselves in vain, for not a particle of merit have they ever been able to earn or win! Listen, Sinner, there is as great a hope of a beggar getting rich as there is of your attaining to Eternal Life by any deeds of your own! No, some beggars do, by scraping and saving, manage to hoard up what is to them comparative wealth, but you may seek to scrape and to save as much as you can—you may watch your morals, and be careful in your deportment, yet not a step nearer Heaven will you be for all your pains! No, you must be born-again! God must intervene on your behalf. You must be saved by the Grace of God, or not at all, for "by the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight."—

"Not for our duties or deserts, But of His own abounding Grace, He works salvation in our hearts, And forms a people for His praise."

Further, though there are exceptions to the rule, it is so generally true that it may form part of the description—a beggar is usually a man without a character. The less that is said about his character, the better. He has a habit of helping himself when others do not help him, only that he helps himself to what does not belong to him! If there is anything lying handy, the beggar is very apt to appropriate it. I suppose that the largest part of beggary results from sin and that you could hardly read any beggar's true history without, at the same time, reading the story of wrongdoing. Certainly this is the case concerning spiritual beggary, for the sad state of humanity is not one of misfortune, but of sin. Well do I recollect when the Truth of God stared me in the face and I saw that my character was such that it would have been an act of justice on God's part if He had shut me up in Hell. Ask a convinced sinner about his character and see what he will say! Before God opens his eyes and shows him what he really is, he plumes his feathers as proudly as any peacock spreads his fine tail. But when he sees himself as he is in God's sight, he is anxious to hide his head anywhere! He feels that he is such a man of corruption—to use Augustine's strong expression, "such a walking dunghill"—that he loathes himself and never dares to open his mouth before God except to cry, "Unclean! Unclean!" "I have heard of You," said Job, "by the hearing of the ear; but now my eyes see You. Therefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." A sight of God will soon show us what our own character is. "The heavens are not clean in His sight," said Eliphaz, "how much more abominable and filthy is man which drinks iniquity like water." May the Lord graciously give us this humbling view of ourselves, for we shall never seek true holiness until we are conscious of our own unholiness! That same Divine Power which reveals to us the Light of God, also shows us the darkness of self. It is brightness that discovers dimness, holiness that reveals unholiness and the purity of God that shows the impurity of man.

I trust that these three points have been burned into our minds and hearts by the Holy Spirit. And if they have, thanks be to His holy name for it, for it is true of all of us by nature, that we think we are "rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing," while all the time, we are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." But when, by Grace, any one of us is brought to say with David, "I am poor and needy," with him we can add, "yet the Lord thinks upon me."

Again, the beggar is usually a man without any friends, or without any friends that are any good to him. In driving through various country districts, I have often seen this notice prominently displayed, "All vagrants found begging in this parish will be prosecuted." Yes, that is English Law which reckons begging as a crime and I suppose it is also an offense to give to beggars, but that is an offense which some people are never likely to commit. Nobody cares to harbor beggars. They apply to a farmer, sometimes, and ask to be allowed to sleep in his barn, but he thinks so ill of them that he bids them begone from his premises for he will have nothing to do with them. If the beggar has any friends at all, they are only the companions who share his poverty who are generally as vile as he is and who can be of little or no service to him.

And the natural man, as Adam left him, is one who has no friends to help him. I know that he has those whom he calls his friends, his companions in sin who make their kind of mirth for him, but they are really among his worst enemies—they cannot do him any good. He has no friends who can help him. The angels of God can only look upon him as a spectacle of Divine Mercy, marveling that he is still spared and wondering at his base ingratitude. But there is no hand in the heavens that can help a sinner except the hand of the Most High God! The saints on earth may look upon the man with pity and pray for him—

"But feeble our compassion proves, And can but weep where most it loves."

The poverty of sinners is too great for us to cure. We might as well attempt to fill a bag that is full of holes, or to fill to the brim a bottomless vessel, as seek by anything that we can do to bring a sinner nearer to God! No, Sinner, apart from God, you have not one friend who can help you! You have no merit with which to help yourself, no power to win any merit, no friend to get any merit for you and no character to be a recommendation to you. You are a beggar, indeed.

Then there is nobody who particularly cares for the beggar's acquaintance. His company is not generally sought after. There are few who make such a supper as that which our Savior described, to which those who were in the highways and hedges were to be compelled to come. Men may give the beggar bread and a place to sleep, but they put him by himself, for he is not a person whom they would like to have in their houses—they know not what loathsome disease he might impart to any who consorted with him. Now just such is man in his natural state when the Holy Spirit makes him see himself as he is in God's sight! I know that my own moral character was not worse than that of others and that it was indeed better than the characters of many whom I knew—yet when the Lord opened my eyes to see myself as I really was in His sight, I felt that I was unfit even to go up to His House and I wondered how Believers could let me join in the hymns they were singing, or take any other part in the service! I have known the time when I would have liked to occupy the worst seat in the Chapel and when I would rather have been where no one could see me, that I might listen to God's Word alone. My going up to the Lord's House in those days was like the dog's coming into the dining room when he tries to slip unobserved under the table and to watch for the crumbs that fall to the ground. He feels that he is there only on sufferance—he does not take his seat at the table, for he feels that he has no right to do so. I would not give much for a man's conviction of sin if it does not produce in him a very loathsome idea of himself and make him marvel how it is that the mercy of God can ever be outstretched to such a wretch, so vile and self-condemned as he is! If there is anyone here in such a condition as this, it is very likely that he is saying, "Why, I feel just like that, but I thought that mine was an utterly hopeless case." No, poor Soul, your case is a very hopeful one, for it is the beggar, the loathsome, leprous, foul, filthy beggar covered with disease and defilement, whom God will lift up from the dunghill and set among princes, and make him inherit the Throne of Glory!

To complete the picture, let me add that the beggar is one whose entire dependence is upon charity. He knows that he cannot claim anything from you. As he holds out his hand to you, or follows you with his importunity, he is fully aware that whatever he may get will come to him, not according to law, but rather against the law, and simply as an act of grace. Such beggars are we with regard to spiritual gifts. If we are to receive pardon, it must come to us by Divine Grace. If we ever become reconciled to God by the death of His Son, it must be by an act of charity which we can do nothing to deserve. The beggar is a man whose only virtues are his boldness and his importunity—and as for you, Sinner, there is nothing that becomes you so well as to press boldly to God's Throne and appeal to the graciousness and goodness of His Nature and especially to that display of His Love which was given in the Person of His bleeding and dying Son! There is nothing more fitting in you than to be importunate, to knock and knock, and knock again with a holy resolve to take no denial! Your sins are your most urgent reasons for coming to Christ. Your rags are your best livery. Your emptiness your only fitness! Your ruin is that upon which you are to look and you are to go to Christ in that ruin just as you are! As you go to Him, go boldly, for you are asking a great mercy from One who has a great heart! You are knocking at the door of the most hospitable King who ever invited beggars to come to Him! Come to Him with a holy boldness and perseverance—knowing that you will perish unless He looks upon you with eyes of love—and resolving that if you must perish, it

shall be as a poor mendicant pleading that for His mercy's sake, He would have pity upon you! No one ever perished who came to Him like that—and nor will you!

Thus I have described the character of the spiritual beggar, but it is much blacker than I have painted it. Now we are briefly to consider the beggar's position. According to the text, he is on a dunghill—that is the only throne he has by nature.

Why is the spiritual beggar said to be on a dunghill? I think it must be, first, to show that he is as worthless as the rest of the stuff that is there. If the Lord shall only reveal to us our filthy condition as it appears in His sight, we shall feel that it is a positive nuisance, and we shall cry to Him, "Take it away, O Lord, take it away!" Sin is an offense to the nostrils of the thrice-holy Jehovah even more than a dunghill can ever be to the most delicately active man or woman! And when we realize our true condition as sinners, we feel that a dunghill is a fitting place for such a mass of defilement and corruption.

Why is the spiritual beggar said to be on a dunghill? I think it is, next, because that is the most suitable place for the best thing that he has. The only thing a man can trust to before he comes to Christ is his own righteousness, and what is the verdict of Scripture upon that? You know well what it is—"We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." The best things that we have, those that we reckon to be of righteousnesses, are only like filthy rags that find a fitting resting place on a dunghill! So if our best things are only fit for such a position, it is no wonder that we, ourselves, in our natural state, are relegated to the dunghill with the rest of the unclean things that are thrown away there!

I think the spiritual beggar is also said to be on a dunghill because that place is typical of the best joy that he has. An unconverted man has some joy, some merriment, some pleasure of a certain sort—but what is carnal joy, after all? Think of the character of the places where the ungodly go for their amusement, or of the various ways in which they seek to gratify the lusts of the flesh and then ask yourselves if anything is a more appropriate emblem of them than a dunghill with all its filth and abominations! So, when the man who is a beggar with regard to spiritual things mounts his throne, and sits down upon its softest seat, it is only a dunghill!

That dunghill is also an emblem of his end. It is not only a symbol of the corruption that awaits his body after death, but it is also a type of the final doom of the body and soul when they are flung away as worthless refuse fit only for the dunghill. There have been sinners who, even in this life, have had at last a glimpse of the ruin that sin has worked in them, and who have, as it were, looked into the Hell that stood ready to receive them. I have personally witnessed some terrible experiences in which men, helplessly and hopelessly lost, have been upon the very brink of Hell, and I have then understood what it meant to be a spiritual beggar on a dunghill.

I have tried to make the meshes of my net so small that none of you might be able to escape from it, but I see some who seem determined not to be caught by it. They turn on their heel and say, "All that we have been hearing does not relate to us! We are not beggars and we are not sitting on a dunghill—we are most respectable members of society." Well then, Sirs, why are you here? Why do you read your Bibles? Why do you pray? If you need no mercy, why do you come to the House of Mercy, and call upon the God of Mercy? We have no Gospel to preach to such as you, for even Christ, Himself said, "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Go, you Pharisee, and say as he did in the temple of old, "God, I thank You that I am not as other men are"—yet no justification shall drop like blessed dew upon you! But come, Publican, you who dare not lift up so much as your eyes unto Heaven! I think I hear you as you

smite upon your breast, dolefully crying, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." You shall go down to your house justified rather than the other, "for everyone that exalts himself shall be abased; and he that humbles himself shall be exalted." "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall"—but to the humble and the contrite, God reveals the abundance of His mercy and to the poor in spirit He gives the riches of His Divine Grace!

II. Now, as my time has nearly gone, I must speak very briefly upon the second part of my subject, which is GOD'S INFINITE GRACE. "He raises up the poor out of the dust, and lifts up the beggar from the dunghill; to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory."

As deeply as they fell, so high are they raised! No, they are raised still higher than they were before, so that Dr. Watts sang truly when he said that God—

"Has made our standing more secure Than 'twas before we fell."

We lost much through Adam's transgression, but we get all that back and much more through Christ's obedience and death, so that where sin abounded, Grace does much more abound, and—

"In Christ the tribes of Adam boast

More blessings than their father lost."

Our text tells us what is done for the poor beggar upon the dunghill—he is set among princes and made to inherit the Throne of Glory. So, first, he is clothed as princes are clothed. The glorious robe of Christ's righteousness is thrown around this naked beggar and now he is clad as well as the best of the princes by whom he is surrounded! And he, also, fares as well as they do! Manna from Heaven is his daily portion and water from the Rock constantly supplies his needs! And, like all the saints, in a spiritual fashion he feeds upon the flesh and blood of Christ, who is now his life!

He is also guarded as princes are, and far more securely guarded than any earthly prince unless he, also, is a child of God, for the strong right arm of the Almighty is his perpetual defense. He is also housed as princes are, for he dwells in the secret place of the Most High, and abides under the shadow of the Almighty. He has a seat at the table of the royalty of Heaven, for he is of the blood royal, a son of the Highest and of the household of God.

Furthermore, he is rich as princes are. Are they heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ? So is he a sharer in that high honor. Are they priests and kings unto God? He, also, is a priest and a king. Do they say, "Abba, Father"? He, too, can say the same. Does each of the princes say, with, Thomas, "My Lord, and my God"? He too can say, "My Lord, and my God." Have they been pardoned? So has he. Have they acceptance, adoption, calling, regeneration, election, eternal security. He has the same, for however foul and filthy a sinner may have been, when God calls him by His Grace, and adopts him into His family, He gives him not half the family inheritance, but the whole of it! He does not put off the big sinners with the leavings of the feast. When the father welcomed the prodigal home, again, he did not send him to the kitchen among the hired servants, but he killed for him the fatted calf and gave him a son's place at the table. It would be an eternal mercy if the Lord would allow us just to put our heads within the gates of Glory, but that is not His way of rewarding the travail of Christ's soul. Jesus Himself prayed, "Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am: that they may behold My Glory which You have given Me." And to His disciples He said, "Where I am, there shall also My servant be." That is

the position that is reserved even for the chief of sinners—with Christ where He is! What a wonderful change is in store for the beggar from the dunghill!—

"To dwell with God, to feel His love, Is the full Heaven enjoyed above! God the sweet expectation now Is the young dawn of Heaven below,"

See then, Sinner, what the Lord does when "He raises up the poor out of the dust, and lifts up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the Throne of Glory." He gives them the full heritage of the saints on earth and then crowns it with the glorious inheritance of the saints in Heaven! There is nothing good that the Lord keeps back from them. All the promises of this blessed Book, all the blessing guaranteed by the Everlasting Covenant are theirs most richly to enjoy. Oh, that the Lord would come this very night and lift up some of you who are like the beggar upon the dunghill, and set you among princes and make you inherit the Throne of Glory!

Thus have I hurriedly set before you what is done for the beggar upon the dunghill, and I can only hint at the answer to the next question, Who does it. "He raises up the poor out of the dust and lifts up the beggar from the dunghill." If any of you saw a beggar lying on a dunghill and wanted to help him, I expect you would send your servants to lift him up from his unsavory resting place. I do not suppose you would go and do it yourselves. It would be very kind for a man to arrange for a beggar in such a position to be taken care of and so to do it by proxy. But listen to this. "HE raises up the poor out of the dust, and (HE) lifts up the beggar from the dunghill." The great Lord of Heaven and earth does this work Himself! He does not do it by proxy. There are two verses in the 147th Psalm at which I have wondered thousands of times—"He heals the broken in heart, and binds up their wounds. He counts the number of the stars. He calls them all by their names." He who looses the bands of Orion, and brings forth Mazzaroth in his season, and guides Arcturus with his sons is the same Lord who bends down in tender pity over the broken in heart and binds up their wounds with a skill and success that no earthly surgeon can even equal! Oh, the matchless condescension of the great Lord of Love that He should thus pity a sinner, love a sinner, embrace a sinner and even lift up a sinner from a dunghill! No one else can do it. The minister here frankly confesses his inability to do it. Not all the holy angels together can do it! Only the Spirit of the living God, who first opens our eyes to see our state as beggars can lead us to look to Jesus Christ and find in Him everlasting riches and eternal salvation!

Now, lastly, why does the Lord do this great act of Grace? Why does He lift up the beggars from the dunghill? I cannot tell you any other reason than this—God does it because He wills to do it. Why does He thus look after some of the chief of sinners, and yet leaves many more respectable people to go on in their own way? I know no reason except than He does it because He wills to do it. His name and His nature are both Love, and it is characteristic of love to pour itself out on behalf of misery and helplessness. The Lord looks abroad and sees the poor, ruined, helpless soul, and straightway the floodgates of His heart go up and out flows the stream of His loving kindness and tender mercy!

Perhaps, someone asks, "Do I rightly understand you, Sir? I do not often go to a place of worship, but I was passing the Tabernacle and just stepped in. Now I am as bad as I well can be, you surely do not mean to say, Sir, that God loves me and such great sinners as I am?" Indeed, my dear Friend, I do mean to say it, and to say it upon the authority of God Himself. "What? Do you mean to tell me that God loves me as I am?" Yes, just as you are. "What? God loves an ungodly man?" Yes, here is a text to prove it—"God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ." Why, if He had not loved us when we were dead in sins, He would

never have loved us at all! And we would have remained dead in trespasses and sins. 'Tis His great Grace that lifts a beggar from the dunghill and sets him among princes! When poor Jeremiah was in the pit and likely to die of starvation, Ebedmelech the Ethiopian did not go to him and say, "Come up out of the pit and I will dress your wounds, and feed you." He took men with ropes and some old rags to put under the Prophet's arms, and so drew him out of the dungeon. In like manner, God does not say, "Now, Sinner, make yourself a saint, and then I will love you," but He lets down the great rope of the Gospel, which is long enough to reach you wherever you may be, and He lines it with the soft rags of loving invitations—and then He lets you put them beneath your arms and trust to them as Jeremiah trusted to Ebedmelech's ropes—and so you shall be drawn up out of sin's dungeon. David did not say, "I climbed up out of the horrible pit, and then began to sing." Oh, no! He said, "He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He has put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God." David's song, like Hannah's, and like Mary's, ascribes all Grace and Glory to God! And if you put your soul's trust in Jesus, the one and only Savior, you also will—

"Give all the Glory to His holy name For to Him all the Glory belongs."

Oh, that some spiritual beggar may tonight be lifted up from the dunghill and set among princes, and the Lord shall have all the praise world without end! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: 1 SAMUEL 2:1-10; LUKE 1:16-56.

We shall read two portions of Holy Scripture, and may God the Holy Spirit bless us in the reading of His own Words. We shall first read in the First Book of Samuel, the 2nd Chapter, the Song of Hannah. You remember that Hannah was a woman of a sorrowful spirit. A womanly sorrow preyed upon her heart and brought her very low. Not so low, however, as to prevent her from constantly praying to God. Her prayers were heard and when she came up to the Lord's House, the joyful mother of a son, she took care to remember her former supplication and to offer unto God thanksgiving. Hannah was a woman of great ability, perhaps the chief poetess of either the Old or the New Testament. I expect that Mary borrowed part of her Magnificat from the Song of Hannah—at least the recollection of that song must have been strong upon her when she sang what we shall presently read.

1 Samuel 2:1. And Hannah prayed and said, My heart rejoices in the LORD. My horn is exalted in the LORD: my mouth is enlarged over my enemies because I rejoice in Your salvation. Her deliverance seemed to her to be a type and symbol of the way in which God delivers all His people, so she rejoiced in that great salvation which He works out for His people as a whole.

2-7. There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside You: neither is there any rock like our God. Talk no more so exceedingly proud; let not arrogance come out of your mouth: for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength. They that were full have hired out themselves for bread, and they that were hungry ceased: so that the barren has born seven; and she that has many children is waxed feeble. The Lord kills, and makes alive: He brings down to the grave, and brings up.

The LORD makes poor, and makes rich: He brings low, and lifts up. With what jubilation she sings of the way in which God deals with men, putting down the mighty and lifting up the lowly!

8. He raises up the poor out of the dust, and lifts up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and He

has set the world upon them. Whatever solid thing it is that bears up the frame of this natural world, it is God's power that supports it. He has made all things that are, and He upholds them with the word of His power.

9. He will keep the feet of His saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness. What an awful picture that is of the doom of the wicked, "Silent in darkness." We read of the one, in the parable of our Lord, who had not on the wedding garment, that he was speechless. And at the last the wicked will have nothing to say, nothing with which to excuse themselves, nothing with which to comfort themselves, and all around them will be—

"Darkness, death, and long despair." Vanquished in their fight with God, conquered forever, "the wicked shall be silent in darkness." I hardly know of a more dreadful picture than that of a spirit sitting amidst the clammy damps of the thick darkness of desolation, forever silent.

9, 10. For by strength shall no man prevail The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces, out of Heaven shall He thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and He shall give strength unto His king, and exalt the horn of His anointed. That is the song of this happy woman—and if we read the last three verses of Psalm 113, we shall see that the writer seems to have studied Hannah's song and to have molded his Psalm upon it—"He raises up the poor out of the dust, and lifts the needy out of the dunghill, that He may set him with princes, even with the princes of His people. He make the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise you the Lord." Now let us read Mary's Song in the 1st Chapter of the Gospel according to Luke. You remember, dear Friends, how the Lord Jesus said, "I thank You, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because You have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight." The Savior's heart found a sacred satisfaction in the execution of His Father's Sovereign Will in revealing to babes what He had hid from the wise and prudent! And it is remarkable that both Hannah and Mary sang upon that very theme which made the heart of the Savior leap for joy. We might have expected to find an abundance of affection in a woman's song rather than a depth of Doctrine, but both Hannah and Mary make the Sovereignty of God the strain of their songs.

Luke 1:46, 47. And Mary said, my soul does magnify the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.

[See Sermons #606, Volume 10—MARY'S SONG; #1514, Volume 26—THE KEYNOTE OF A CHOICE SONNET; #2219, Volume 37—A HARP OF TEN STRINGS and #2941, Volume 51—MARY'S MAGNIFICAT.] The burden of Mary's Magnificat is very similar to Hannah's song, though there was one respect in which she could raise an even loftier note, for she had been chosen to be the mother of our Lord!

48-55. For He has regarded the low estate of His handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For He that is mighty has done to me great things; and holy is His name. And His mercy is on them that fear Him from generation to generation. He has showed strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He has filled the hungry

with good things, and the rich He has sent empty away [See Sermon #2582, Volume 44—ALTO AND BASS and Sermon #3019, Volume 52—THE HUNGRY FILLED, THE RICH EMPTIED.] He has helped His servant Israel,

in remembrance of His mercy; as He spoke to our father, to Abraham, and to His seed forever You see that the theme of the song is the same all through—the casting down of the proud and the mighty—and the uplifting of those that are bowed down and despised! And all this is ascribed to the Sovereignty of God.

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