

## ~Other Speakers A-F: Andrew Bonar:

## Psalm 103: 1-5

IN this psalm we find the Psalmist standing at the golden altar with his harp in his hand, recounting all his mercies. This psalm teaches us adoration. Adoration is not thanksgiving; it is silent wonder. I once saw a striking instance of this in a sick one, who said to me, 'I got such a sight of the Lord Jesus — His wonderful Person—His finished work—that at last I was obliged to stop giving thanks, and just look, look, look!' Adoration is wrought in us by the Holy Ghost, and it is very sanctifying when He gives us such moments of nearness to Himself. Looking on Him at such times we cannot say, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul!' we can only gaze and wonder. Praise is a little lower down Pisgah. Adoration is higher, nearer the upper sky. It is more than apostolic, it is angelic; for the angels say, 'Glory to Him who sitteth upon the throne.' It is the feeling of a soul under God's afflicting hand, to whom God has given great sanctification. 'Blessed be the name of the Lord. He gives, and He takes away.'

That is adoration.

This psalm is a call to praise 'His holy name.' His 'doings' come after. His holy name is the fountainhead; His doings, the streams from Lebanon. We are called to praise Him because

I. He forgiveth all our iniquities. — Our first true acquaintance with God is when He pardons us. Manasseh — that awful sinner — that man who leaned over hell — who spoke with the devil, and would not speak with God — that man was brought to know the Lord, and when He had forgiven him, 'then Manasseh knew that the Lord He was God.' What we need is a God who can take away our sins. 'All thine iniquities.' He does not leave a single sin resting on the conscience; the blood that cleanseth one sin cleanseth all. For our sins are linked together, one great awful chain round our soul, and God takes hold of the first link, and so casts the whole chain 'into the depths of the sea.' We need not wonder that the Psalmist puts this first, 'Who forgiveth all thine iniquities.' Looking up to-day to the Lord Jesus are we not saying, 'In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace'?

II. He healeth all our diseases. — This may refer to bodily as well as to spiritual healing. I like to think in connection with this of the palsied man brought by his four friends to Jesus, and Jesus looking on him, and saying, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.' Then a few minutes after, 'Rise, take up thy bed and walk.' When God takes away our sin He does not forget our bodily trouble. He may not heal us completely, but He takes the sting out of the disease. He has given us a pillow for our aching head in giving us pardon, and He whispers in our ear, 'This chastisement is that you may be partaker of My holiness.' This is the fire that is to melt away the dross. After pardon He gives healing of the soul's diseases. 'Sin shall not have dominion over you.' It is in the repeated use of the forgiving blood, day by day, that we mortify our corruptions, just as it is by the blood that we quench the fiery darts of the devil. When they touch the blood they are quenched. As it is 'all thine iniquities,' so it is 'all thy diseases.' There is not a corruption over which He will not give you victory.

III. He redeemeth our life from destruction. — We are 'kept by the mighty power of God.' We every day escape dangers that we are not aware of. Is it not a beautiful touch in Jeremiah 2: 6, where God says to Israel, that He took care of him when he was going through the wilderness, 'a land of deserts and of pits.' Israel was skirting the margin of these pits as the Pillar-Cloud led him along — a picture of how we are led. How we shall praise Him yet for all His deliverances! If we but saw the snares Satan lays for us spiritually, how we would adore the Lord who enables us to escape them all! How often the devil tries to make us unwatchful, or gives us false peace, but God is watching over us, and He redeems our spiritual life from these spiritual injuries.

IV. He crowneth us with loving-kindness. — Providential supplies all the way as we journey on, putting a crown of tender mercies and loving-kindness round our head. We are wearing it, and perhaps do not know that we are. Look at the comforts of your lot. Think of the spiritual mercies of your life. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul!' Is He not satisfying your mouth with good things? When you were going to become a backslider He restored your soul. He fulfilled His promise that 'they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength,' and the earth looked very small as you ascended on eagles' wings. 'Forget not all His benefits.' There is a great deal of unbelief implied in forgetting. Faith has a good memory, unbelief forgets. Let us ask the Lord to give us better memories for all His benefits, that we may fix our minds on His grace, in spite of all that may happen to us.

'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits!'