

**Sermon preached at Old Baptist Chapel, Chippenham**  
**by Mr. G. D. Buss**  
**on Lord's Day morning, 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2012**

**Text:** *“A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.” Psalm 37, verse 16.*

This well-known, well-loved Psalm, much used by the Holy Ghost, was penned through God's servant, David. The things that David wrote in Psalm 37 were those things he had been walking in, and those things he had proved. Like another child of God, he could have written: ‘tried and proved’ by it. (Perhaps he did in his own copy of the Word of God that he had in his day). It is a wonderful thing if you can write that against any verse in God's holy Word that you have tested, and proved God to be faithful in.

Well, David could say that concerning the truths of Psalm 37. These were truths he had not learned by borrowing his religion from other men. He had not just learned them by studying the Jewish traditions, good though they may have been. He had learned these things by *experience*. That is, the Holy Ghost had called him into divine life, and led him in such a way in his path of providence and grace, that those things that we have before us this Sabbath morning are the fruit of what we might call a sanctified life and a sanctified path.

You may ask: ‘What is a sanctified path?’ It is a path that God uses to teach your soul your need of the Saviour and the preciousness of that Saviour. I wonder how many sanctified lives there are here this Sabbath morning. God alone knows in how many hearts this vital work of sanctification and teaching is taking place. It is, really, a divine preparation for the worship which will be enjoyed above when those sanctified ones join that blessed number of whom it is said: “These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” Be sure of it, dear friends; you will never join the congregation above that never breaks up, unless your life is sanctified this side of the grave. You will never enjoy that Sabbath that never ends, unless the Holy Ghost so teaches you, so leads you, so overrules for you, and undertakes for you so you are prepared for that prepared place. Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. That is something you should never forget.

So, how was God preparing David? In this chapter we read of him waiting for an earthly throne, as well as a heavenly one. The heavenly throne meant more to David than the earthly throne. Nonetheless, it was God's will that he should sit, for a season, on Israel's throne. But he was not there yet. God had ordained that the path to that throne would be such that would make him a king who would be worthy of the name when he sat thereon. And you must watch this, dear friends, in your life. If things are working for good (as I trust they are), remember God has a work that He is performing. He is preparing you for those future things you may come into here below, and, we trust, also for that heavenly mansion above. We read: "This people have I formed for Myself; they shall shew forth My praise."

David, while he waited for his throne, had many, many troubles. Javelins, thrown from King Saul, whistled past his ears. He had Doeg, who betrayed him, and caused the death of many innocent priests in so doing. Twice there were those in Gath who turned on David through jealousy, envy and spite. We could speak of many other troubles that came upon David, all of which were used of God to bring forth the truths of this text.

But before we come to the words of our text, there were three things David was learning which you would do well to lay to heart. The first thing was that God does have a people. They are a people who are a *separated* (we go back to the word we started with), a *sanctified* people. They are people set apart for God. David was a 'set apart' man. God had set him apart in the very presence of his brethren. Samuel had anointed him with oil, at God's command: "Arise, anoint him: for this is he." From that moment he was set apart. It was noticed among his family, by those who knew him, and more and more by the nation. They could discern that here was the man God had set apart for the throne of Israel.

And so it is spiritually. God has a 'set apart' people. None of us are set apart by nature. We are "of the earth, earthy." We are at home in the world; we love its principles, its company and its pursuits. As long as we are happy in our body and flesh and can live a contented life, that is how we would live, naturally – not set apart. But, if God has mercy on your soul, He is determined not to leave it to sink into a lost eternity. He will set you apart from this world, from its spirit, from its pursuits, from its company and from its paths. It will be a painful way, it will be a humiliating way and a lonely way. Yet, dear friends, it will be a blessed way. Just lay to heart this thought. If God *does not*

set you apart from the world this side of the grave, you will not be set apart from the world when He calls the righteous to His right hand and the ungodly to His left hand, in the great day when He returns and time shall be no more. I say it again: if your life is unsanctified this side of the grave, then you have no right to expect a happy eternity to follow.

The second thing in this text that David was learning was the necessity of knowing himself. You will never get to heaven, dear friends, without knowing yourself. Although David complained of evil doers and evil men, and he had many to contend with, yet I believe the most he had to learn was about himself. That sometimes shut his mouth. When he might have complained about those who were cruel to him, persecuting him and who were unjustly treating him; when he looked within and found the potential of his old nature and its evil propensities and what it would be left to itself, he found he had no stones to throw. He could not say that he was holier than any other, or purer than any other. He could not say that God had set him apart because he was different from the rest. No. "Such were some of you." says the Apostle Paul. And so was David. "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified," (there we have it again) "but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Paul knew it in New Testament language and David knew it in Old Testament language – the same truth.

So, David knew something of himself. And friends, the more he knew of himself, the more he knew he needed a God to help him on his way and to put him on his throne, naturally speaking, and to put him on that eternal throne at the end of the journey. Do you know enough about yourself this Sabbath morning? Are you well persuaded that "the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps"? If you are left to direct your own steps, you will slip into eternal misery. "Hold up my goings in Thy paths," says David, "that my footsteps slip not. "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe."

The third thing that David proved was something you sang of in your opening hymn - 318. Time and time again a faithful God came to his aid just when he needed it and just when he was most unworthy of it. There were times, when, had God dealt with him according to his sins, he never would have come out of the trouble into which he had slipped. But, he had a faithful God. He could look back to times when he could say: 'God stood on my behalf, came to my aid and stood by me.' He could say: "For this God is our

God for ever and ever: He will be our Guide even unto death.” These are the lessons David was learning. We have it emphasized in our text this morning hour. “A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.”

So, here we have the two descriptions that I have already told you of: the righteous and the wicked. What is it that distinguishes the two? Who has made the distinction? Friends: *God has*. “For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?” What has God done for a righteous man that is not done for the wicked? First of all, God has given him something he was not born with: a nature he did not inherit from his parents. That nature is something that did not come from a religious environment or any ordinance of God’s house. It is something imparted by the blessed Spirit. David was given a new nature, a new heart and a new spirit. We are not told when, but it would seem it was in his early days. David was a man after God’s own heart. He had been given a heart that was after God’s own heart; a heart that longed for God, communed with God, waited upon God, learned of God and lived upon God. That was the new nature and the new heart. His soul had been redeemed from its fallen state by God taking possession of it by His Holy Spirit, and beginning to work a work of salvation within it. He still had his old nature: he still had that to complain over, mourn over, weep over, grieve over and repent over.

But there was now that in him which was a righteous principle. Some of us have had the privilege of worshipping in the United States and Canada from time to time. They sometimes sing out of the Dutch American Psalter a little hymn that begins like this: “I want a principle within.” It is a hymn which is speaking of the fear of the Lord. That is just what God gave to David; a principle within. What principle? The fear of the Lord, the beginning of wisdom. That made him a righteous man, a righteous shepherd boy. Yes, a humble occupation, but righteous in it. You may have a humble occupation, but are you righteous in it? Is God giving you grace for it? You may have a more notable occupation, but you need the same grace. You need the grace of righteousness in your daily life, and, above all, you need it in your soul. Without this righteous principle you will never mourn over sin. Without this righteous principle you will never hasten to the cross. Without this righteous principle you will never feel your need of the blood of Christ. Without this righteous principle you will never shelter beneath Calvary’s cross. Without this righteous principle you will never believe, repent, hope or love. It is so

vital and so essential. “Marvel not,” says the Lord Jesus Christ to Nicodemus, “that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.” It is essential and it is vital. You cannot be a righteous man without the new birth. Do remember that! O that it might be your burden this Sabbath morning, those of you who are born again, for the Lord to confirm it is so with you! And those of you who are *not* born again: may it be your anxious inquiry within: ‘ “Am I quickened by His Spirit?” If not, Lord, do quicken me. Leave me not to my fallen nature, which will drag me into an eternal misery of woe, a lost eternity.’ Here, then, is the first way in which David was righteous.

The second way in which David was righteous was this. That righteous, holy, pure principle within showed him his fallen state and stripped him of any hope he had in himself. It did what it did for Paul in the chapter we read in Philippians 3, where Paul could, in his unrighteous days, boast of so much so called ‘righteousness.’ “An Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.” One man said that Paul was sailing with seven gallant ships across life’s ocean, thinking they would get him safe to glory, until the Lord met with him and sunk them all. Then he had to swim, as it were, and cast himself on the mercy of Another, even our Lord Jesus Christ. Has God sunk your ships? It is a mercy if He has. You may be trying to sail to heaven in a denominational ship, or a family ship, or a ship you have made up yourself of various thoughts about religion. May God sink those ships and cause you, as a poor guilty sinner, to cast yourself on Jesus only: on His blood, on His righteousness, on His name, on His love, on His mercy and on His finished work. That is where Paul came to. “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.” He lost the riches he thought he had for Christ’s sake. It is a great mercy when we can do that, and when God strips us from those things and puts us in the first part of our text: “A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.” Paul was righteous in this respect: his righteousness now was the righteousness of Another, it was the obedience of Another, the perfection of Another and it was the holiness of Another. Here was his plea and here was his certificate for heaven.

“Upon a life I did not live,  
Upon a death I did not die;  
Another’s life; Another’s death,  
I hang my whole eternity.

And, although David lived before our Lord came, he was looking to the same blessed hope, the same blessed sacrifice and the same blessed substitute. Are you? Am I? How many righteous ones are there here then this Sabbath morning? Of whom it can be said: “This is the name wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness.”? It will spoil you for all the righteousness you thought you had. They will be stripped from you, as filthy rags. But, how pleasant it will be to be clothed in Christ’s obedience and washed with His blood! This is a righteous man, and there is no righteousness, to be found anywhere else, by which to clothe the sinner.

The third way in which David was a righteous man was this. The righteousness within him and the righteousness without him had caused him to take just one or two steps as a righteous man in this time state. He speaks of it later on: “The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD.” Friends, if you have the grace of God in your heart, so it will be with you. There will be steps taken because you are a righteous man. There will be things you leave because God has put this new principle in your heart. There will be pursuits you will have to lay down because God has, as it were, taken them away from you, rightly so, and given you something better for Christ’s sake. It may mean the loss of friends, it may even mean the loss of employment for Christ’s sake. We know not what it may mean as it unfolds. But, nonetheless, because David was a righteous man there were steps he took for Christ’s sake. One of them, of course, was the cause of God and of truth in the valley of Elah. The first book of Samuel is very wonderful, you ought to read it again. David was sent, by Jesse his father, to his brethren. Little did he realise that when his father sent him with those cheeses into the army that he would not be returning home. It was not by accident. No. God knew David would not return home. God was ordaining his steps. He was watching over the steps of this young shepherd lad to bring him to the notice of Saul, and, eventually, to the throne that God had ordained for him. You see how little things can sometimes have great consequences, as they did here.

So David goes to the army and finds his brethren. They were not very pleased to see him. They were jealous of him, even though they knew he was God’s anointed. That said something about their spirit. But nonetheless, what about David? He hears this great roar from Goliath, from across the other side of the valley, challenging just one man to come and fight with him. Everyone flees to their tents, including David’s brothers, and Saul. All hung back. Not one would go out and meet this champion. Why? Friends, they seemed to lack

this faith in exercise that God had given to his servant David. Could David bear to see the cause of God and of truth so reproached? Could he stand idle while the name of the Lord God of Israel was being put in the dirt by the Philistine enemies? No. 'I will go,' he says. 'You cannot go!' says Saul, 'you are only a stripling! You have not fought any battles, you do not know what warfare is!' 'O!' says David, 'I have a God who stands by me. I have a sling in my hand. And, what is more, the God whom I adore, the God of Israel who once delivered me from the paw of a bear and the mouth of a lion; He who delivered me then, will do the same again if I go out to meet this giant, the Philistine.'

So, eventually, we find him going out. But not with Saul's armour: he had not proved that. He went with that which he *had* proved. Dear friends, when you go to battle, take what you have proved; that which God has put in your hand to prove His faithfulness. David takes the sling and five stones with him. How the Philistine distained him! He had a spear, he had an armour bearer and he had a shield. It seemed a most unequal battle. The outcome seemed inevitable, according to all the laws of human warfare and strength. But, listen, dear friends. It was the invisible God, who stood by his servant David, which won the day. "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand;...And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD'S, and He will give you into our hands." You know the outcome. It is no wonder David wrote, twice he wrote in Psalm 46: "The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our Refuge. Selah." One of our hymns takes up the whole language, and asks a question. It is the language of a righteous man. Listen:

"By whom was David taught  
To aim the dreadful blow,  
When he Goliath fought,  
And laid the Gittite low?

No sword nor spear the stripling took,  
But chose a pebble from the brook.

'Twas Israel's God and King,  
Who sent him to the fight,  
Who gave him strength to sling  
And skill to aim aright;  
Ye feeble saints, your strength endures,  
Because young David's God is yours.

But unbelief, self-will,  
Self-righteousness, and pride,  
How often do they steal  
My weapon from my side!  
Yet David's Lord and Gideon's Friend,  
Will help His servant to the end."

*W. Cowper*

And He will. 'O,' says David, 'here is a righteous man; a privileged man. He has the work of God within him, the work of God for him, and he also has a God who stands by him.' Covet, dear friends, a place among the righteous. Baalam said: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" But he never wanted to live the life of the righteous. That is a solemn mark of hypocrisy; Pharisaism. Baalam did not want to live the life of the righteous. Yes, he wanted to be numbered with them when the great day came. He wanted to be found among them then, but he did not want to live the life of righteousness this side of the grave. 'No,' says Baalam, 'that is not for me. Let others live like that. I will repent right at the last minute, if needs be, to be found on the right side of things. But as for crucifying the flesh, mortifying the flesh and coming out of the camp: those things are not for me.' My dear friends, I tell you; if you have David's God and David's grace, you will have to live the life of the righteous, if you want to die the death of the righteous.

"A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked." Why does David say that? He says it because he proved it. What did he prove? David had to do with many men in his day. He saw many wicked men around him with their apparent strength, their apparent popularity, their apparent zeal and their apparent possessions. But, when he looked at what he had, though it was just a little as we may come to in a moment: he found that the little he had was far, far more to be desired than the many riches of the many wicked. What is wrong with the riches of the wicked? Let me tell you.

First of all, they are gained dishonestly. You say, ‘What do you mean by that? Don’t they live honest lives?’ Well, some of them do, up to a point. We are not condemning all, as it were, in that respect. There is no doubt that some do live moral lives here below. But, dear friends, if they are trusting in their morality, trusting in their good works and trusting their so-called uprightness to be their certificate for heaven; that is no better than “the riches of many wicked.” The Lord Jesus Christ spoke to a man who had the same kind of life. He came running to the Lord Jesus (you cannot but commend him for it) “What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” The Lord Jesus Christ reminded him of the commandments, and repeated several of them to him. ‘O,’ says the young man, ‘I have done all these.’ What a commendable thing this was! Surely this was a man on his way to heaven! Surely if ever a man was out-stripping the rest, this young man was! But, the Lord Jesus, who knows the hearts of all, touched the corrupt spot in that man’s heart: covetousness. He says: “One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.” He went away sad. Why was he sad? Because he saw he could not be among the righteous, as our text describes, while He was still clinging on to the riches that were an idol to him. Friends, “Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” He went away sad because he had great possessions. They were an idol to him. His bank balance, his house and his land: O, how much they meant to him! In the end they meant more to him than his soul and more to him than a precious Christ. You say, ‘Well, that is not my idol.’ I hope it is not. But, dare you say you have not got an idol?

“The dearest idol I have known,  
Whate’er that idol be;  
Help me to tear it from Thy throne,  
And worship only Thee.”

*W. Cowper*

The righteous man in our text has had those idols torn from the throne. It is a painful work and a humiliating work. It is a work that will cost your flesh a lot, because the flesh will not like it. Nonetheless, what a mercy it is to be stripped of those riches that hinder our souls, and that are a stumbling block to us on our way to glory!

Again. The riches of many wicked are only temporary. When all is said and done, the richest man in England, this Sabbath morning, will have to

leave all his riches behind one day. Although you may read in his obituary that he left so many millions, what good will it do him? He has left it! He has not carried it beyond the grave! It is no good to him in eternity! No. Dear friends, if God has given you riches, use them for His honour and glory this side of the grave. That is why He has given them to you. Remember, these are only temporary things. “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” How many are determined to get to the top in their career? That is a good thing in one way. Do not mistake me: it is right to be diligent, it is right to use the talents God has given us and the gifts He has given us in that respect, as long as it is in a sanctified way. But for what purpose are you doing it? And when you have attained that purpose, do you think that will be perfect happiness? You will have to leave it all, sooner or later. Even our queen (probably fairly soon), will have to lay down her crown and be buried in the earth at the end of her days, just as you and I will be. It all has to be left. “The riches of many wicked.”

Again. Remember this: that which the righteous man hath is rightly attained, rightly obtained, and will not be taken from him. What the Lord said to Martha was this: “Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.” The righteous man hath that which shall not be taken from him. What will not be taken from him? The work of grace that is begun in his heart. What will not be taken from him? The Holy Spirit which began the good work. What will not be taken from him? His interest in the blood of Christ. What will not be taken from him? Those exceedingly great and precious promises that the Holy Ghost has written in his heart. What will not be taken from him? Union with Christ. What will not be taken from him? His place among the dear people of God, and a place in the Lamb’s book of life. That will never be taken from him:

“Once in Him, in Him for ever;  
Thus the eternal covenant stands.”

*J. Kent*

I think Jacob could have given Esau every lamb he had, every sheep he had, every camel he had and all the oxen he had when he had finished wrestling with the Angel that memorable night. He could have given them all up quite happily. He was so full of the blessing of the Lord, so full of the love of God, and so full of the grace and mercy of salvation. Friends, he could have left *everything* for Christ’s sake that morning. “A little that a righteous man

hath is better than the riches of many wicked.” You say: ‘Why is it only a little? Surely there are vast resources for the child of God!’ Indeed there are; they are immeasurable and they are infinite. But friends, God very wisely keeps His people dependant. Look at it like this. Just suppose a young lad, of say, ten years old, came into a vast inheritance. Perhaps several million pounds were left to him by some relative who had gone before. Now, if his parents were wise, they would say: ‘You cannot have access to that until you are of age. You will not know how to spend it.’ They would be wise if they just gave him, out of that inheritance, only what he needed as he grew up. Well, dear friends, God deals with His children like that here below. He knows that we would abuse an excess, so He keeps us dependant. So, for the most part, we live our life like this: “A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.” The inheritance is all ours: “For all things are yours;...And ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s.” What a vast inheritance it is! But, God gives it just as we need it in our hearts and in our lives this side of the grave to keep us dependant, and to keep us coming back time and time again, as the righteous must do. This is the description of the righteous: “The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.”

So, the righteous have to keep going back to the Lord for wisdom, for strength, for grace, for mercy, for forgiveness, for help, for patience and for meekness. David had to, and that is how you and I will have to live, if we are among the righteous in our text this Sabbath morning. God does not keep you on short supplies; He keeps you on sufficient supplies. “A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.”

Just look then, for a moment, at “the little” that I hope some of you have this Sabbath morning locked up in your heart as a witness that you are on the right side of our text. You may long for more, you may wish you had greater views of Christ and a deeper knowledge of His love and mercy: do go on to plead and to pray for that. “Covet earnestly the best gifts.” But, let us see if you have anything that the righteous man has.

First of all, have you a little life? When I say ‘life,’ I mean *the life of the soul* wrought by the Holy Ghost. Is there any life in your soul this morning? Are there any breathings after Christ, any exercise of your soul towards the things of God, any longing for communion and any waiting upon Him for mercy? Is there life in your reading of God’s holy Word? Is there life there? Coming to God’s house: is there life in your soul as you are worshipping Him

here this Sabbath morning? True, you want more. We *do* want more, but is there a little life there? Is there a little leaning towards Christ this Sabbath morning? Bless God for it if there is, because there was a time when you were dead to these things. You had no interest in the things of God; either the Word of God, the people of God or the gospel of God. The name of Christ meant nothing to you. Oh! Bless God if there has been a change. “A little that a righteous man hath,” a little life.

Secondly. A little light: that is a mercy isn't it? I like what one of our hymns says:

“Some small glimmering light I have,  
Yet too dark to see my way;  
Jesus' presence still I crave;  
When, O when will it be day?”

W. Gadsby

Just a little light. But you want more. Plead for it, and the Sun of Righteousness will arise with more light. He has promised to do so. But, dear friends, a little light is a wonderful mercy. A little light to see ourselves as God sees us, a little light to know ourselves as sinners needing mercy, a little light to know where to flee for that mercy, a little light to know there is a place where God deals with sinners graciously: Calvary. Bless God for a little light, in that respect.

Then, a little faith. True, we want stronger faith; covet it, and pray for it. But, some of the things God has done for little faith is wonderful. It was little faith in Peter when he began to sink and cried: “Lord, save me.” The Lord Jesus said: “O thou of little faith.” But that little faith brought forth the arm of the incarnate, omnipotent Son of God. He caught him and brought him safely into the boat. So, although Peter was lovingly rebuked for his weak faith; and that strengthens faith when God rebukes us like that, nonetheless it was little faith that obtained the blessing. And you may feel this Sabbath morning to have such a little faith. You have to come in with that man of whom we read: “Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.” But, be thankful for a grain of living faith. The Lord Jesus Christ said: “If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.” Oh! Little faith is a great mercy; especially a little faith in the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, that atonement made for sinners. The great point is that little faith touches a great

God, great mercy, great grace and a great gospel; little faith has access to it. Bless God for it. The “little that a righteous man hath is better,” in this respect, “than the riches of many wicked.”

Again, a little love. We haven’t got much love for Christ, if we have any at all.

“Lord, it is my chief complaint,  
That my love is cold and faint;  
Yet I love Thee and adore;  
O for grace to love Thee more!”

*W. Cowper*

Is there a little love in your heart for Christ this Sabbath morning? Enough love to make you say: “Oh that I knew where I might find Him!” “Oh! When wilt Thou come unto me? When wilt Thou speak a word of comfort to my poor soul?” A little love in the soul will make a soul long like that. Bless God if it does.

And then a little hope. It is a dreadful thing to have no hope. Those who are without Christ, this Sabbath morning, have no hope. The Word of God says: “ye were without Christ,” and therefore without hope. How many are without hope here this Sabbath morning, I wonder? You are like a ship on the sea without an anchor. ‘Oh!’ you say, ‘It’s quite calm! It’s quite safe! I’ll get to the other side, I don’t need an anchor!’ How do you know? The storm of death might be just round the corner. It would be utter folly for a ship to sail without an anchor. It would be the height of imprudence. Yet how many *are* sailing across the sea of life without an anchor; without Christ! But, the child of God has a little hope in a precious Christ. He cannot always speak of the full assurance. He cannot always rise to the great heights of experience and say, undoubtingly: “I know whom I have believed.” Yet, what a mercy if you are not without hope. Perhaps your hope rests on this:

“Did Jesus once upon me shine?  
Then Jesus is forever mine.”

*W. Hammond*

You thank God for it: just one in-shining, just one kiss of His dear mouth, just one touch of His love. “A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.”

Look at it like this. Have you one sentence written in your heart by the Holy Ghost that you can call yours? Just one part of God's holy Word, midst all its hundreds of thousands of words that you can say: 'Now, that is mine, because the Lord spoke it to me. He gave it to me, and He wrote it in my heart.' "A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked." Your certificate, in your eyes, may be very faint in some respects. But if God has written it: it will stand you in good stead when you get to the Celestial City gates. But it must be *your* certificate. Yes, I once went to the airport with the wrong passport. I was not allowed to go through. No substitute! It had to be mine.

Now, dear friends, if you were called to pass through the Celestial City gates this Sabbath morning or this Sabbath night, would you have the passport? Would you have the "little that a righteous man hath" to carry you safely through? Or would you be like Ignorance, who fumbled in his bosom for that he knew he did not have. Even there he pretended to be that which he was not. "A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked."

But there is another aspect to this, isn't there? Sometimes God keeps His people, even in providence, it seems on just enough. Elijah had bread and flesh brought to him day and night by the ravens. Later on he lived in the widow woman's house, with just a handful of meal and a drop of oil every day to sustain them. But, that was better than all Ahab had in his palace. Why? Because, dear friends, he was so evidently living on the bounty of the hand of God. And I do believe our forefathers – you go back to the days of Gadsby and Kershaw when poverty was so intense and God's dear people had to literally pray for their next meal: and they knew when it came where it came from – I do believe they had closer walk with God than we do in our day of affluence. Now we just take it for granted that the next meal will be there, and hardly thank God enough for it. Oh, dear friends! May we be thankful, and let us not complain or grumble about the providence God gives us. "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." You have heard me speak of that old Scots lady who was giving thanks for her meal when her minister walked down the street. He heard her giving thanks. All she had was a cup of cold water and a dry crust. When she saw him, she said: 'I've got all this, and Christ!' It is the 'and Christ,' that makes it right, however little your store may be. 'And Christ:' that is everything. If you have

not got these two words: ‘and Christ,’ you are the poorest man on the face of the earth. You are! “A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.” Do you believe it this morning? I wonder.

It comes to mind of the true account of a very poor, godly man who worked on the estate of a very rich landowner in the 19th century. One night, that rich landowner had a dream, which was repeated three times. ‘The richest man in this area is going to die tonight.’ He woke up sweating! He knew *he* was the richest man; he had *far* more riches than those around him. He knew it, and he gloried in it! Each time he woke up, he woke his wife and said: ‘I’m going to die! I am the richest man, and this dream tells me that I’m going to die tonight!’ He wasn’t ready! Well, he got through the night, and thought it must have just been a hallucination. But, as he sat at breakfast, there came a knock at the door. In came one of his servants, who said: ‘Do you know that poor, godly man who use to mend your walls? He died last night.’ ‘Oh,’ said the rich man, ‘now I know the meaning of my dream. *He* was the richest man, not me.’ Well, dear friends, how many are there here this Sabbath morning who are in our text in the right way? “A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.”

Now, I say this in conclusion. I do not know why I have to say this, but there may be one here this Sabbath morning who is tempted to walk in a wrong path to gain more riches. It is so tempting. You say: ‘Well, the world do it, my friends do it.’ Listen to what I have to say this Sabbath morning. God is watching. He can burn up that prospect you have in a moment, however fair it may seem. Just remember the advice a prophet gave to King Amaziah in the Old Testament. The king was given some money to hire an army. It was an ungodly army. God said that King Amaziah was to send that ungodly army home. They were not to go out with the godly. King Amaziah said: “But what shall we do for the hundred talents which I have given to the army of Israel?” The prophet said: “The LORD is able to give thee much more than this.” “Them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.” Sinner, do listen this Sabbath morning, I exhort you in the name of the God, who I hope has put me in this pulpit, do listen: “The LORD is able to give thee much more than this.” Lay down that wrong pathway, whatever it is. I know not. I throw no stones. I don’t know why I have to say this, but lay it down and turn from it. Remember: “Them that honour Me I will honour,” because “a little that a righteous man hath is better

than the riches of many wicked.”

*Amen.*