
JEHOVAH-ROPHI
A SERMON BY THE
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“I am the Lord that heals thee.” — Exodus 15:26.

WE shall consider this passage in its connection, for I have no doubt that the miracle at Marah was intended to be a very instructive illustration of the glorious title which is here claimed by the covenant God of Israel—“I am Jehovah-Rophi, the Lord that heals thee.” The illustration introduces the sermon of which this verse is the text. The healing of the bitter waters is the parable of which the line before us is the lesson.

How different is the Lord to his foes and to his friends. His presence is light to Israel and darkness to Egypt. Egypt only knew Jehovah as the Lord that plagued and destroyed those who refuse to obey him. Is not this the Lord’s memorial in Egypt that he cut Rahab and wounded the dragon? He overthrew their armies at the Red Sea, and drowned their hosts beneath the waves; but to his own people, in themselves but very little superior to the Egyptians, God is not the terrible avenger consuming his adversaries, but “Jehovah that heals thee.” Their mental and moral diseases were almost as great as those of the Egyptians whom the Lord cut off from before him, but he spared his chosen for his covenant sake. He bared the sword of justice against rebellious Pharaoh, and then he turned his tender, healing hand upon his own people, to exercise towards them the heavenly surgery of his grace. Israel knew him as the Lord that heals, and Egypt knew him as the Lord that smites. Let us adore the grace which makes so wide a difference, the sovereign grace which brings salvation unto Israel, and let us confess our own personal obligations to the mercy which has not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

Again, how differently does God deal with his own people from what we should have expected. He is a God of surprises; he does things which we looked not for. God deals with us not according to our conception of his ways, but according to his own wisdom and prudence: for as the heavens

are high above the earth so high are his thoughts above our thoughts. You would not have supposed that a people for whom God had given Egypt as a ransom would have been led into the wilderness of Shur; neither would you have guessed that a people so near to him that he cleft the sea and made them walk between two glassy walls dry shod, would have been left for three days without water. You naturally expect to see the chosen tribes brought right speedily into a condition of comfort; or, if there must be a journey ere they reach the land that flows with milk and honey, you look at once for the smitten rock and the flowing stream, the manna and the quails, and all things else which they can desire. How singular it seems that after having done such a great marvel for them the Lord should cause them to thirst beneath a burning sky, and that too when they were quite unprepared for it, being quite new to desert privations, having lived so long by the river of Egypt, where they drank of sweet water without limit. We read at other times, "You, Lord, did send a plenteous rain, whereby you did refresh your inheritance when it was weary"; but here we meet with no showers: no brooks gushed forth below, and no rain dropped from above. Three days without water is a severe trial when the burning sand is below and the blazing sky is above. Yet the Lord's people in some way or other are sure to be tried; theirs is no holiday parade, but a stern march by a way which flesh and blood would never have chosen.

The Egyptians found enough water, and even too much of it, for they were drowned in the sea, but the well-beloved Israelites had no water at all. So is it with the wicked man; he often has enough of wealth, and too much of it, till he is drowned in sensual delights and perishes in floods of prosperity. He has his portion in this life, and in that portion he is lost, like Pharaoh in the proud waters. Often the Lord's people are made to know the pinch of poverty; their lives are made wretched by sore bondage, and they faint for a morsel of bread: they drink from a bitter fountain, which fills their inward parts with gall and wormwood. They are afflicted very much, almost to the breaking of their hearts. One of them said, "All the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning." They lie at the rich man's gate full of sores, while the ungodly man is clothed in scarlet, and fares sumptuously every day. This is God's strange way of dealing with his own people. He himself has said, "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten." "He scourges every son whom he receives." Thus he made his people know that the wilderness was not their rest, nor their home: for they could not even find such a common necessary as water wherewith to quench their thirst. He made them understand that the promised brooks that flowed with

milk and honey were not in the wilderness, but must be found on the other side of Jordan, in the land which God had given to their fathers, and they must journey there with weary feet. "This is not your rest," was the lesson of their parched lips in the three days' march. You know what teaching there is in all this, for your experience answers to it. Do not marvel, beloved, if with all your joy over your vanquished sin, which shall be seen by you no more forever, you yet have to lament your present grievous want. The children of Israel cried, "What shall we drink?" This was a wretched sequel to "Sing unto the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously." Have you never made the same descent? If you are in poverty you are, no doubt, tempted to put that trinity of questions, "What shall we eat? What shall we drink? and wherewithal shall we be clothed?" You are not the first to whom this temptation has happened. Do not marvel at all if up from the triumph of the Red Sea, with a song in your mouth and a timbrel in your hand, you ascend into the great and terrible wilderness, and enter upon the land of drought. This way lies Canaan, and this way you must go. Through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom, and therefore let us set our minds to it.

By this grievous test the Lord was proving his people and causing them to see what was in their hearts. They would have known no wilderness without if there had not been a wilderness within, neither had there been a drought of water for their mouths if the Lord had not seen a drought of grace in their souls. We are fine birds till our feathers are ruffled, and then what a poor figure we cut! We are just a mass of diseases and a bundle of disorders, and unless grace prevents we are the sure prey of death. O Lord, we pray to be proved, but we little know what it means!

Let this suffice for an introduction, and then let our text come in with comfort to our hearts, "I am the Lord that heals thee." It was to illustrate this great name of God that the tribes were brought into so painful a condition; and indeed all the experience of a believer is meant to glorify God, that the believer himself may see more of God, and that the world outside may also behold the glory of the Lord. Therefore the Lord leads his people up and down in the wilderness, and therefore he makes them cry out because there is no water; all to make them behold his power, and his goodness, and his wisdom. Our lives are the canvas upon which the Lord paints his own character.

We shall try this morning to set forth before you, by the help of the divine Spirit, this grand character of God, that he is the God that heals us.

First, we shall notice the healing of our circumstances, dwelling upon that in order the better to set forth the greater fact, "I am the Lord that heals thee." Secondly, we shall remember the healing of our bodies which is here promised to obedient Israel, and we shall set forth that truth, in order to bring out our third point, which is the healing of our souls: "I am the Lord that heals thee"—not your circumstances only, nor your bodily diseases only, but yourself, your soul, your truest self; for there is the worst bitterness, there is the sorest disease, and there shall the grandest power of God be shown to you, and to all who know you.

I. THE GLORIOUS JEHOVAH SHOWS HIS HEALING POWER UPON OUR CIRCUMSTANCES. The fainting Israelites thought that when they came to Marah they should quench their thirst. Often enough the mirage had mocked them as it does all thirsty travellers: they thought that they saw before them flowing rivers and palm trees, but as they rushed forward they found nothing but sand, for the mirage was deluding them. At last, however, the waters of Marah were fairly within sight, and they were not a delusion: here was real water, and they were sure of it. No doubt they rushed forward helter-skelter, each man eager to drink, and what must have been their disappointment when they found that they could not endure it. A thirsty man will drink almost anything, but this water was so bitter that it was impossible for them to receive it. I do not read that they had murmured all the three days of their thirsty march, but this disappointment was too much for them. The relief which seemed so near was snatched away: the cup was dashed from their lips, and they began to murmur against Moses, and so in truth against God. Here was the proof of their imperfection: they were impatient and unbelieving. Have we not too often fallen into the same sin? Brethren, let your conscience answer! When you have felt a sharp affliction, and it has continued long, and you have been wearied out with it, you have at length seen a prospect of escape, but that prospect has completely failed you. What woe is this! When the friend you so surely relied upon tells you that he can do nothing; when the physician upon whom you put such reliance informs you that his medicine has not touched the malady, when the last expedient that you could adopt to save yourself from bankruptcy, the last arrow in your quiver has missed the mark—how your spirit has sunk within you in dire despair! Then your heart has begun to wound itself, like the scorpion, with its own sting. You have felt as if you were utterly spent and ready for the grave. The last trial was too much for you, you could bear up no longer. Happy have you been if under such conditions you have not been left to give way to murmuring against God.

These poor Israelites were in a very pitiable condition. There was the water before them, but its horrible flavour made them shrink from a second taste. Have you not experienced the same? You have obtained that which you thought would deliver you, but it has not availed you. You looked for light, and beheld darkness; for refreshment, and beheld an aggravated grief. The springs of earth are brackish until Jehovah heals them; they increase the thirst of the man who too eagerly drinks of them. "Cursed is he that trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm."

Now, dear friends, in answer to prayer God has often healed your bitter waters and made them sweet. I am about to appeal to your personal experience, you that are truly pilgrims under the guidance of your heavenly Lord. Has it not been so with you? I should have no difficulty in refreshing your memories about Marah, for very likely its bitterness is in your mouth even now, and you cannot forget your sorrow. But just now I wish to refresh your memories about what came of that sorrow. Did not God deliver you? Did he not, when you cried to him, come to your rescue? I appeal to facts, which may be stubborn things, but they are also rich encouragements.

Has not the Lord oftentimes made our bitter waters sweet by changing our circumstances altogether? When the poor in heart have been oppressed, God has taken away the oppressor, or else taken the heart away from the oppression. When you have been in great straits and could not see which way to steer, has not the Lord Jesus seemed to open before you a wider channel, or himself to steer your vessel through all the intricacies of the narrow river, and bring you where you would come? Have you not noticed in your lives that most remarkable changes have taken place at times when anguish took hold upon you? I can bear my witness, if you cannot, that the Lord has great healing power in the matter of our trials and griefs. He has changed my circumstances in providence, and in many ways altered the whole aspect of affairs.

On other occasions the Lord has not removed the circumstances, and yet he has turned sorrow into joy, for he has put into them a new ingredient, which has acted as an antidote to the acrid flavour of your affliction. You were not allowed to leave the shop, but there came a fresh manager, who shielded you from persecution: you were not permitted to quit your business, but there came a wonderful improvement in your trade, and this reconciled you to the long hours. You were not made to be perfectly healthy, but you were helped to a medicine which much relieved the sharpness of the pain; thus has your Marah been sweetened. Have you not

found it so? The weight of your affliction was exceeding great, but the Lord found a counterweight, and by placing a weight of holy joy in the other scale he lifted up your load, and its weight was virtually taken away. You have been at Marah, but even there you have been able to drink, for a something has been put into the waters of afflictive providence which has made them endurable.

And where this has not been done the Lord has by a heavenly art made your bitter waters sweet by giving you more satisfaction with the divine will, more submission, more acquiescence in what the Lord has ordained. After all, this is the most effectual remedy. If I cannot bring my circumstances to my mind, yet if God helps me to bring my mind to my circumstances the matter is made right. There is a degree of sweetness about pain, and poverty, and shame when once you feel, "The loving Lord ordained all this for me: my tribulation is of his appointing." Then the soul, feeling that the affliction comes from a Father's hand, accepts it, and kicks against the pricks no longer. Surely, then, the bitterness of life or of death will be past when the mind is subdued to the eternal will. These people said, "What shall we drink?" and they would have concluded that Moses was mocking them if he had answered, "You shall drink the bitter water." They would have said, "We cannot bear it; we remember the sweet water of the Nile; and we cannot endure this nauseous stuff." But Moses would have said, "Yes, you will drink that, and nothing else but that, and it will become to you all that you want." Even so, beloved, you may have quarrelled with your circumstances, and said, "I must have a change; I cannot longer bear this trial." Has not the Lord of his grace changed your mind, and so influenced your will that you have really found comfort in that which was uncomfortable, and content in that which made you discontented? Have you never said when under tribulation, "I could not have believed it: I am perfectly happy under my trial, and yet when I looked forward to it I dreaded it beyond measure. I said it would be the death of me, but now I find that by these things men live, and in all this is the life of my spirit." We exclaim with Jacob, "All these things are against me," but the Lord gives us more grace, and we see that all things work together for good, and we bless the Lord for his afflicting hand. So you see the Lord Jehovah heals our bitter waters, and makes our circumstances endurable to our sanctified minds.

Brethren, all this which you have experienced should be to you a proof of God's power to make everything that is bitter, sweet. The depravity of your nature will yet yield to the operations of his grace: the corruptions

that are within you will yet be subdued, and you shall enter into the fullest communion with God in Christ Jesus. I know you shall, because the Lord is unchangeable in power, and what he has done in one direction he can and will do in another. Your circumstances were so terrible, and yet God helped you; and now your sins, your inbred sins, which are so dreadful, he will help you against them, and give you power over them. You shall overcome the power of evil: by his grace you shall be sanctified, and you shall manifest the sweetness of holiness instead of the bitterness of self. Cannot you believe it? Does not God's power exhibited in providence around you prove that he has power enough to do great things within you by his grace? Moreover, should not this healing of your circumstances be to you a pledge that God will heal you as to your inner spirit? He that brought you through the sea and drowned your enemies will also drown your sins, till you shall sing, "The depths have covered them: there is not one of them left." He that turned your Marah into sweetness will yet turn all your sense of sin into a sense of pardon: all the bitterness of your regret and the sharpness of your repentance shall yet be turned into the joy of faith, and you shall be full of delight in the perfect reconciliation which comes by the precious blood of Christ. Sustaining providences are to the saints sure pledges of grace. The sweetened water is a picture of a sweetened nature: I had almost said it is a type of it. God binds himself by the gracious deliverances of his providence to give you equal deliverances of grace. It is joyous to say, "He is the Lord that healed my circumstances," but how much better to sing of his name as "The Lord that heals thee." Do not be contented till you reach to that; but do be confident that he who healed Marah will heal you; he that has helped you to rejoice in him in all your times of trouble will sustain you in all your struggles with sin, till you shall more sweetly and more loudly praise his blessed name.

II. Let us now proceed a step further. As we have spoken of God's healing our circumstances, so now we have to think of THE LORD'S HEALING OUR BODIES.

Why are diseases and pains left in the bodies of God's people? Our bodies are redeemed, for Christ has redeemed our entire manhood, but if Christ be in us the body is still dead because of sin, even though the spirit is alive because of righteousness. It is not till the resurrection that we shall enjoy the full result of the redemption of the body. Resurrection will accomplish for our bodies what regeneration has done for our souls. We were born again. Ay, but that divine work was exercised only upon our spiritual nature; our bodies were not born again: hence they still abide

under the liability of disease, decay, and death, though even these evils have been turned into blessings. This frail, sensitive, and earthly frame, which Paul calls "this vile body," grows weary and worn, and by-and-by it will fade away and die, unless the Lord shall come; and even if he should come this feeble fabric must be totally changed, for flesh and blood as they now are cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither can corruption dwell with incorruption. Even unto this day the body is under death because of sin, and is left so on purpose to remind us of the effects of sin, that we may feel within ourselves what sin has done, and may the better guess at what sin would have done if we had remained under it, for the pains of hell would have been ours forever. These griefs of body are meant, I say, to make us recollect what we owe to the redemption of our Lord Jesus, and so to keep us humble and grateful. Aches and pains are also sent to keep us on the wing for heaven, even as thorns in the nest drive the bird from its sloth. They make us long for the land where the inhabitant shall no longer say, I am sick.

Yet the Lord does heal our bodies. First he heals them by preventing sickness. A prevention is better than cure. The text says, "If you will diligently listen to the voice of the Lord your God, and do that which is right in his sight, and will give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon you, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that heals thee." It is concerning this selfsame healing Lord that we read, "You shall not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flies by day; nor for the pestilence that walks in darkness; nor for the destruction that wastes at noonday. A thousand shall fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come nigh you. Only with your eyes shall you behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because you have made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, your habitation; there shall no evil befall you, neither shall any plague come nigh your dwelling." Do we sufficiently praise God for guarding us from disease? I am afraid that his preserving care is often forgotten. Men will go thirty or forty years almost without an illness, and forget the Lord in consequence. That which should secure gratitude creates indifference. When we have been ill we come up to the house of the Lord and desire to return thanks because of our recovery; ought we not to give thanks when we are not ill, and do not need to be recovered? Should it not be to you healthy folk a daily cause of gratitude to God that he keeps away those pains which would keep you awake all night, and wards off those

sicknesses which would cause your beauty to consume away like the moth?

But we see this healing hand of the Lord more conspicuously when, like Hezekiah, we have been sick, and have been restored. Sometimes we lie helpless and hopeless like dust ready to return to its fellow dust; we are incapable of exertion, and ready to be dissolved. Then if the Lord renews our youth and takes away our sickness, we do praise his name; and so we ought, for it is not the doctor, it is not the medicine,— these are but the outward means; it is the Lord who is the true Physician, and unto Jehovah-Rophi be the praise. “I am the Lord that heals thee.” Let those of us that have been laid aside, and have been again allowed to walk abroad, lift up our hearts and our voices in thanksgiving to the Lord who forgives all our iniquities, who heals all our diseases.

According to the analogy of the healing of Marah, the Lord does this by means: for he cast a tree into the water. Those who will use no medicine whatever certainly have no Scriptural warrant for their conduct. Even where cures are given to faith, yet the apostle says, “Is any sick? Let him send for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.” The anointing with oil was the proper medicine of the day, and possibly a great deal better medicine than some of the drugs which are used nowadays. To the use of this anointing the promise is given, “and the prayer of faith shall raise the sick.” Hezekiah was miraculously healed, but the Lord said, “take a lump of figs, and lay it upon the sore.” God could have spoken a word and turned Marah sweet, but he did not choose to do so: he would exercise the faith and obedience of his people by bidding them cast a tree into the waters. The use of means is not to hinder faith, but to try it. Still, it is the Lord who works the cure, and this is the point which is so often forgotten. Oh, come let us sing unto Jehovah who has said, “I am the Lord that heals thee.” Do not attribute to secondary means that which ought to be ascribed to God alone. His fresh air, and warm sun, or bracing wind, and refreshing showers do more for our healing than we dream of, or if medicine be used, it is he who gives virtue to the drugs, and so by his own Almighty hand works out our cure. As one who has felt his restoring hand, I will personally sing unto him who is the health of my countenance and my God.

Note this, that in every healing of which we are the subjects we have a pledge of the resurrection. Every time a man who is near the gates of death rises up again he enjoys a kind of rehearsal of that grand rising when

from beds of dust and silent clay the perfect saints shall rise at the trump of the archangel and the voice of God. We ought to gather from our restorations from serious and perilous sickness a proof that the God who brings us back from the gates of the grave can also bring us back from the grave itself whenever it shall be his time to do so.

This should also be a yet further proof to us that if he can heal our bodies the Lord can heal our souls. If this poor worm's flesh, which so readily decays, can be revived, so can the soul which is united to Christ and quickened with his life; and if the Almighty Lord can cast out evils from this poor dust and ashes, which must ultimately be dissolved, much more can he cast out all manner of evils from that immaterial spirit which is yet to shine in the brightness of the glory of God. Wherefore both from his healing your woes and from his healing your bodies, gather power to believe in the fact that he will heal your mental, moral, and spiritual diseases, and already lift up your hearts with joy as you sing of Jehovah-Rophi, "The Lord that heals THEE."

*"Sinners of old thou didst receive,
With comfortable words and kind,
Their sorrows cheer, their wants relieve,
Heal the diseased, and cure the blind,
And art thou not the Saviour still,
In every place and age the same?
Hast thou forgot thy gracious skill,
Or lost the virtue of thy name?
Faith in thy changeless name I have;
The good, the kind Physician, thou
Art able now our souls to save,
Art willing to restore them now.
Though eighteen hundred years are past
Since thou didst in the flesh appear,
Thy tender mercies ever last;
And still thy healing power is here!
Wouldst thou the body's health restore,
And not regard the sin-sick soul?
The sin-sick soul thou lov'st much more,
And surely thou shalt make it whole."*

The healing of Marah and the healing of the body are placed before the text, and they shed a light upon it. They place this name of the Lord in a golden frame and cause us to look upon it with the greater interest.

III. Now we come to THE HEALING OF OUR SOULS. The Lord our God will heal our spirits, and he will do it in somewhat the same manner as that in which he healed Marah. How was that? First, he made the people know how bitter Marah was. There was no healing for that water till they had tasted it and discovered that it was too brackish to be endured; but after they knew its bitterness then the Lord made it sweet to them. So is it with your sin, my brother. It must become more and more bitter to you. You will have to cry out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" You will have to feel that you cannot live upon anything that is within yourself. The creature must be made distasteful to you, and all trusts that come of it; for God's way is first to kill, and then to make alive; first to wound, and then to heal. He begins by making Marah to be Marah, and afterwards he makes it sweet.

What next? The next thing was there was prayer offered. I do not know whether any of the people possessed faith in God, but if so, they had a prayerless faith, and God does not work in answer to prayerless faith. "Oh," says one, "I am perfectly sanctified." How do you know? "Because I believe I am." That will never do. Is a man rich because he believes he is? Will sickness vanish if I believe myself to be well? Some even think it useless to pray because they feel sure of having the blessing. That putting aside of prayer is a dangerous piece of business altogether. If there is not the cry to God for the blessing, ay, and the daily cry for keeping and for sanctification, the mercy will not come. Again, I say, healing comes not to a prayerless faith. You may believe what you like, but God will only hear you when you pray. Faith must pour itself out in prayer before the blessing will be poured into the soul. Moses cried, and he obtained the blessing: the people did not cry, and they would have been in an evil case had it not been for Moses. We must come to crying and praying before we shall receive sanctification, which is the making whole of our spirits.

Marah became sweet through the introduction of something outside of itself—a tree, I know not of what kind. The rabbis say that it was a bitter tree, and naturally tended to make the water more bitter still. However that may be, I cannot imagine any tree in all the world, bitter or sweet, which could have power to sweeten such a quantity of water as must have been at Marah. The transaction was miraculous, and the tree was used merely

as the instrument, and no further. But I do know a tree which, if put into the soul, will sweeten all its thoughts and desires: and Jesus knew that tree, that tree on which he died and shed his blood as a victim for our sin. If the merit of the cross be imputed to us, and the spirit of the cross be introduced into our nature; if we trust the Lord Jesus, and rest upon him; ay, if we become cross-bearers, and our soul is crucified to the world, then we shall find a marvellous change of our entire nature. Where once we were full of vice, the Crucified One will make us full of virtue; and where once we were bitter towards God, we shall be sweet to him, and even Christ will be refreshed as he drinks of our love, as he drinks of our trust, as he drinks of our joy in him. Where all was acrid, sharp, and poisonous, everything shall become pure, delicious, and refreshing. We must first experience a sense of bitterness, then cry out to the Lord in prayer, and then yield an obedient faith which puts the unlikely tree into the stream, and then the divine power shall be put forth upon us by him who says, "I am the Lord that heals thee."

The inner healing is set forth as in a picture in the sweetening of the bitter pools of Marah. I know I am right in saying so, because we are told of Moses, "There he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them."

Again, the task of turning Marah sweet was a very difficult one. No human power could have achieved it: and even so the task of changing our nature is not only difficult, but impossible to us. We must be born again, not of the will of man, nor of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God. There was no turning Marah sweet by any means within the reach of Moses or the myriads that came up with him out of Egypt. This wonder must come from Jehovah's hand. So is the change of our nature a thing beyond all human might. Who can make his own heart clean? God must work this marvel. We must be born again from above, or else we shall remain in the gall of bitterness even unto the end.

But yet the work was very easy to God. How simple a thing it was just to take a tree and cast it into the bitter water and find it sweet at once. Even so it is an easy thing to God to make us a new heart and a right spirit, and so to incline us to everything that is right and good. What a blessing is this! If I had to make myself holy I must despair; and if I had to make myself perfect and keep myself, it would never be done; but the Lord Jehovah can do it, and has already begun to do it. Things which I once hated I now love: all things have become new. Simple faith in Jesus Christ, the putting of the cross into the stream, does it all, and does it at once, too, and does it so

effectually that there is no return of the bitterness, but the heart remains sweet and pure before the living God.

The task was completely accomplished. The people came and drank of Marah just as freely as they afterwards drank of Elim or of the water that leaped from the smitten rock. So God can and will complete in us the change of our nature. Paul said, "I am persuaded that he that has begun a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ." The Lord has not begun to sweeten us a little with the intent of leaving us in a half healed condition, but he will continue the process till we are without trace of defilement, made pure and right in his sight.

This work is one which greatly glorifies God. If the change of Marah's water made the people praise God, much more will the change of nature make us adore him for ever and ever. We are going to be exalted, brethren, by-and-by, to the highest place in the universe next to God. Man, poor, sinful man, is to be so changed as to be able to stand side by side with Christ, who has for that very purpose taken upon himself human nature. We are to be above the angels. The highest seraphim shall be less privileged than the heirs of salvation. Now, the tendency to pride would be very strong upon us, only that we shall always recollect what we used to be, and what power it was that has made us what we are. This will make it safe for God to glorify his people. There will be no fear of our sullyng God's honour, or setting ourselves up in opposition to him, as did Lucifer of old. It shall never be said of any spirit washed in the precious blood of Jesus, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O son of the morning!" for the process through which we shall pass in turning our bitterness to sweetness will fill us with perpetual adoration, and with constant reverence of the unspeakably mighty grace of God. Will it not be so, brethren? Do not your impulses even now lead you to feel that, when you gain your promised crowns, the first thing you will joyfully do will be to cast them at the feet of Jesus, and say, "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto your name be glory for ever and ever." That sweetened Marah was all of God; our renewed nature shall be all of God. We shall not be able to take the slightest particle of credit to ourselves, nor shall we wish to do so. Brethren, the Lord will do it; he will be sure to do it because it will glorify his name. Let us draw comfort from this fact: there will be no interfering with the Lord by a rival claimant to honour, no idolatry in us taking away part of his praises; therefore he will do it, and change our bitterness into perfect sweetness. Blessed be his name, he can do it: nothing will baffle the skill of "the Lord that heals thee." Whenever I am cast down under a sense of corruption, I always like to get

a hold of this divine name, "The Lord that heals thee." "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." "Faithful is he that has called you, who also will do it," says the apostle. He has not undertaken what he will fail to perform. Jehovah that made heaven and earth has undertaken to make us perfect, and effectually to heal us: therefore, let us be confident that it will assuredly be accomplished, and we shall be presented without spot before God.

He who heals us is a God so glorious that he will certainly perform the work. There is none like the Omnipotent One! He is able to subdue all things unto himself. His wisdom, power, and grace can so work upon us that where sin abounded grace shall much more abound.

*"Thou canst o'ercome this heart of mine;
Thou wilt victorious prove;
For everlasting strength is thine,
And everlasting love.
Thy powerful Spirit shall subdue
Unconquerable sin;
Cleanse this foul heart, and make it new,
And write thy law within."*

He is a God who loves us so, and makes us so precious in his sight, that he gave Egypt for our ransom, Ethiopia and Sheba for us. A God so loving will surely perfect that which concerns us. Moreover, a God so fond of purity, a God who hates sin so intensely, and who loves righteousness so fervently will surely cleanse the blood of his own children. He must and will make his own family pure. "This people have I formed for myself: they shall show forth my praise." The devil cannot hinder that decree. "They shall," says God, and they shall, too, whatever shall stand in their way. They must and they shall show forth God's praise.

Now, as you have believed in God for your justification and found it in Christ, so believe in God for your sanctification, that he will work in you to will and to do according to his good pleasure; that he will exterminate in you the very roots of sin; that he will make you like himself, without taint or speck, and that, as surely as you are trusting in Christ, you shall be whiter than snow, pure as the infinite Jehovah, and you shall stand with his Firstborn, accepted in the Beloved. My soul seems to grasp this, and to hold it all the more firmly because the Lord has turned my bitter circumstances into sweetness, and he has healed the sickness of my body.

Because of these former mercies I know that he will heal the sickness of my spirit, and I shall be whole, that is to say holy, without spot or trace of sin, and so shall I be for ever with the Lord. "Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

Brethren, if the Lord has taken you into his hospital and healed you, do not forget other sick folk. Freely ye have received, freely give. Give today to the hospitals in which so many of the poor are cared for and succoured. Do it for Jesus' sake, and may the Lord accept your offerings.