

SONGS IN THE NIGHT

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A SERMON
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AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

“But none says, Where is God my Maker, who gives songs in the night?”
Job 35:10.

ELIHU was a wise man, exceedingly wise, though not as wise as the all-wise Jehovah, who sees light in the clouds, and finds order in confusion; hence Elihu, being much puzzled at beholding Job so afflicted, cast about him to find the cause of it, and he very wisely hit upon one of the most likely reasons, although it did not happen to be the right one in Job's case. He said within himself, “Surely, if men are sorely tried and troubled, it is because, while they think about their troubles, and distress themselves about their fears, they do not say, ‘Where is God my Maker, who gives songs in the night?’” Elihu's reason is right in the majority of cases. The great cause of a Christian's distress, the reason of the depths of sorrow into which many believers are plunged, is simply this—that while they are looking about, on the right hand and on the left, to see how they may escape their troubles, they forget to look to the hills from where all real help comes; they do not say, “Where is God my Maker, who gives songs in the night?”

We shall, however, leave that inquiry, and dwell upon those sweet words, “God my Maker, who gives songs in the night.” The world has its night. It seems necessary that it should have one. The sun shines by day, and men go forth to their labors; but they grow weary, and nightfall comes on, like a sweet gift from heaven. The darkness draws the curtains, and shuts out the light, which might prevent our eyes from slumber; while the sweet, calm stillness of the night permits us to rest upon the bed of ease, and there forget awhile our cares, until the morning sun appears, and an angel puts his hand upon the curtain, opens it once again, touches our eyelids, and bids us rise, and proceed to the labors of the day. Night is one of the greatest blessings men enjoy; we have many reasons to thank God for it. Yet night is to many a gloomy season. There is “the pestilence that walks in darkness;” there is “the terror by night;” there is the dread of robbers and of fell disease, with all those fears that the timorous know when they have no light wherewith they can discern different objects. It is then they fancy that spiritual creatures walk the earth; though, if they knew rightly, they would find it to be true that—

*“Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep,”—*

and that at all times they are round about us, not more by night than by day. Night is the season of terror and alarm to most men; yet even night has its songs. Have you ever stood by the seaside at night, and heard the pebbles sing, and the waves chant God's praises? Or have you never risen from your bed, and thrown up the window of your chamber, and listened there? Listened to what? Silence—save now and then a murmuring sound, which seems sweet music then. And have you not fancied that you have heard the harps of gold playing in heaven? Did you not conceive that yon stars—those eyes of God, looking down on you, were also mouths of song, and that every star was singing God's glory, singing as it shone its mighty Maker's well-deserved praise? Night has its songs; we need not much poetry in our spirit to catch the song of night, and hear the spheres as they chant praises which are loud to the heart, though they are silent to the ear—the praises of the mighty God, who bears up the unpillared arch of heaven, and moves the stars in their courses.

Man, too, like the great world in which he lives, must have his night. For it is true that man is like the world around him; he is himself a little world; he resembles the world in almost everything; and if the world has its night, so has man. And many a night do we have—nights of sorrow, nights of persecution, nights of doubt, nights of bewilderment, nights of affliction, nights of anxiety, nights of ignorance,

nights of all kinds, which press upon our spirits, and terrify our souls. But blessed be God, the Christian man can say, "My God gives me songs in the night."

It is not necessary, I take it, to prove to you that Christian men have nights; for if you are Christians, you will find that *you* have them, and you will not need any proof, for nights will come quite often enough. I will, therefore, proceed at once to the subject; and notice, with regard to songs in the night, first, *their source*, God gives them; secondly, *their matter*—what do we sing about in the night? Thirdly, *their excellence*—they are hearty songs, and they are sweet ones; and fourthly, *their uses*, their benefits to ourselves and others.

I. First, songs in the night—WHO IS THE AUTHOR OF THEM? "*God*," says the text, our "Maker, gives songs in the night."

Any man can sing in the day. When the cup is full, man draws inspiration from it; when wealth rolls in abundance around him, any man can sing to the praise of a God who gives a plenteous harvest, or sends home a loaded argosy. It is easy enough for an Aeolian harp to whisper music when the winds blow; the difficulty is for music to come when no wind blows. It is easy to sing when we can read the notes by daylight; but he is the skillful singer who can sing when there is not a ray of light by which to read—who sings from his heart, and not from a book that he can see, because he has no means of reading, save from that inward book of his own living spirit, from where notes of gratitude pour forth in songs of praise. No man can make a song in the night himself; he may attempt it, but he will find how difficult it is. It is not natural to sing in trouble, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name," for that is a daylight song. But it was a divine song which Habakkuk sang when in the night he said, "Although the fig tree shall not blossom," and so on, "yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." I think, on the banks of the Red Sea, any man could have made a song like that of Moses, "The horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea;" the difficulty would have been to compose a song before the Red Sea had been divided, and to sing it before Pharaoh's hosts had been drowned, while yet the darkness of doubt and fear was resting on Israel's hosts. Songs in the night come only from God; they are not in the power of man.

But what does the text mean, when it asserts that God gives songs in the night? We think we find two answers to the question. The first is, that usually in the night of a Christian's experience, *God is his only song*. If it is daylight in my heart, I can sing songs touching my graces, songs touching my sweet experiences, songs touching my duties, songs touching my labors; but let the night come, my graces appear to have withered; my evidences, though they are there, are hidden; now I have nothing left to sing of but my God. It is strange that, when God gives His children mercies, they generally set their hearts more on the mercies than on the Giver of them; but when the night comes, and He sweeps all the mercies away, then at once they each say, "Now, my God, I have nothing to sing of but You; I must come to You, and to You only. I had cisterns once; they were full of water; I drank from them then; but now the created streams are dry, sweet Lord, I drink no stream but Your own self, I drink from no fountain but from You." Yes, child of God, you know what I say; or if you do not understand it yet, you will do so by and by! It is in the night we sing of God and of God alone. Every string is tuned, and every power has its tribute of song, while we praise God, and nothing else. We can sacrifice to ourselves in daylight; we only sacrifice to God by night. We can sing high praises to ourselves when all is joyful; but we cannot sing praise to any but our God when circumstances are untoward, and providences appear adverse. God alone can furnish us with songs in the night.

And yet again, not only does God give the song in the night, because He is the only subject upon whom we can sing then, but because *He is the only One who inspires songs in the night*. Bring me a poor, melancholy, distressed child of God; I seek to tell him precious promises, and whisper to him sweet words of comfort; he listens not to me, he is like the deaf adder, he heeds not the voice of the charmer, charm he ever so wisely. Send him round to all the comforting divines and all the holy Barnabases who ever preached, and they will do very little with him; they will not be able to squeeze a song out of him, do what they may. He is drinking gall and wormwood; he says, "O Lord, I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping;" and comfort him as you may, it will be only a woeful note or two of mournful resignation that you will get from him; you will evoke no psalms of praise, no

hallelujahs, no joyful sonnets. But let God come to His child in the night, let Him whisper in his ear as he lies on his bed, and now you can see his eyes glisten in the night season. Do you not hear him say—

*“’Tis Paradise, if You are here;
If You depart, ’tis hell”?*

I could not have cheered him: it is God that has done it; for God “gives songs in the night.” It is marvelous, brethren, how one sweet word of God will make many songs for Christians. One word of God is like a piece of gold, the Christian is the gold-beater, and he can hammer that promise out for whole weeks. I can say myself I have lived on one promise for weeks, and wanted no other. I had just simply to hammer the promise out into gold leaf, and plate my whole existence with joy from it. The Christian gets his songs from God; God gives him inspiration, and teaches him how to sing: “God my Maker, who gives songs in the night.” So, then, poor Christian, you need not go pumping up your poor heart to make it glad. Go to your Maker, and ask Him to give you a song in the night, for you are a poor dry well. You have heard it said that, when a pump is dry, you must pour water down it first of all, and then you will get some up. So, Christian, when you are dry, go to your God, ask Him to pour some joy down you, and then you will get more joy up from your own heart. Do not go to this comforter or that, for you will find them “Job’s comforters.” After all; but go first and foremost to your Maker, for He is the great Composer of songs and Teacher of music, He it is who can teach you how to sing.

II. Thus we have dwelt upon the first point; now turn to the second. WHAT IS GENERALLY THE MATTER CONTAINED IN A SONG IN THE NIGHT? What do we sing about?

Why, I think, when we sing by night, there are three things we sing about. Either we sing about the day that is over, or about the night itself, or else about the morrow that is to come. Those are all sweet themes, when God our Maker gives us songs in the night. In the midst of the night, the most usual method is for Christians to sing about *the day that is over*. The man says, “It is night now, but I can remember when it was daylight. Neither moon nor stars appear at present, but I recollect when I saw the sun. I have no evidences just now, but there was a time when I could say, ‘I know that my Redeemer lives.’ I have my doubts and fears at this present moment, but it is not long since I could say with full assurance, ‘I know that He shed His blood for me.’ It may be darkness now, but I know the promises *were* sweet; I know I had blessed seasons in His house. I am quite sure of this, I used to enjoy myself in the ways of the Lord; and though now my path is strewn with thorns, I know it is the King’s highway. It was a way of pleasantness once; it will be a way of pleasantness again. ‘I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.’” Christian, perhaps the best song you can sing, to cheer you in the night, is the song of yesterday. Remember, it was not always night with you; night is a new thing to you. Once you had a glad heart and a buoyant spirit; once your eye was full of fire; once your foot was light; once you could sing for very joy and ecstasy of heart. Well, then, remember that God who made you sing yesterday has not left you in the night. He is not a daylight God who cannot know His children in darkness, but He loves you now as much as ever; though He has left you for a little while, it is to prove you, to make you trust Him better, and love and serve Him more. Let me tell you some of the sweet things of which a Christian may make a song when it is night with him.

If we are going to sing of the things of yesterday, let us begin with what God did for us in times past. My beloved brethren, you will find it a sweet subject for song at times to begin to sing of electing love and covenant mercies. When you yourself are low, it is well to sing of the Fountainhead of mercy, of that blessed decree wherein you were ordained unto eternal life, and of that glorious Man who undertook your redemption; of that solemn covenant signed, and sealed, and ratified, in all things ordered well; of that everlasting love which, before the hoary mountains were begotten, or before the aged hills were children, chose you, loved you securely, loved you fast, loved you well, loved you eternally. I tell you, believer, if you can go back to the years of eternity—if you can in your mind run back to that period before the everlasting hills were fashioned, or the fountains of the great deep were scooped out, and if you can see your God inscribing your name in His eternal Book—if you can read in His loving heart eternal thoughts of love to you, you will find this a charming means of giving you songs in the night. There are no songs like those which come from electing love, no sonnets like those that are dictated by meditations on discriminating mercy.

Think, Christian, of the eternal covenant, and you will get a song in the night. But if you have not a voice tuned to so high a key as that, let me suggest some other mercies you may sing of; they are the mercies you have experienced. What, man! Can you not sing a little of that blessed hour when Jesus met you when a blind slave you were sporting with death, and He saw you, and said, "Come, poor slave, come with Me"? Can you not sing of that rapturous moment when He snapped your fetters, dashed your chains to the earth, and said, "I am the Breaker; I am come to break your chains, and set you free"? Though you are ever so gloomy now, can you forget that happy morning when, in the house of God, your voice was loud, almost as a seraph's voice, in praise, for you could sing, "I am forgiven! I am forgiven; a monument of grace, a sinner saved by blood"? Go back, man; sing of that moment, and then you will have a song in the night. Or, if you have almost forgotten that, then surely you have some precious milestone along the road of life that is not quite overgrown with moss, on which you can read some happy inscription of God's mercy towards you. What! Did you ever have a sickness like that which you are suffering now, and did He not raise you up from it? Were you never poor before, and did He not supply your needs? Were you never in straits before, and did He not deliver you? Come, man! I beseech you, go to the river of your experience, and pull up a few bulrushes, and weave them into an ark, wherein your infant faith may float safely on the stream. I bid you not forget what God has done for you. What! Have you buried your diary? I beseech you, man; turn over the book of your remembrance. Can you not see some sweet hill Mizar? Can you not think of some blessed hour when the Lord met with you at Hermon? Have you never been on the Delectable Mountains? Have you never been fetched from the den of lions? Have you never escaped the jaw of the lion, and the claws of the bear? No, O man, I know you have! Go back, then, a little way, to the mercies of the past; and though it is dark now, light up the lamps of yesterday, and they shall glitter through the darkness, and you shall find that God has given you a song in the night.

"Yes!" says one, "but you know that, when we are in the dark, we cannot see the mercies that God has given us. It is all very well for you to talk to us thus, but we cannot get hold of them." I remember an old experiential Christian speaking about the great pillars of our faith; he was a sailor, and we were on board ship, and there were sundry huge posts on the shore, to which the vessels were usually fastened by throwing a cable over them. After I had told him a great many promises, he said, "I know they are good promises, but I cannot get near enough to shore to throw my cable around them; that is the difficulty." Now, it often happens that God's past mercies and loving kindnesses would be good sure posts to hold on to, but we have not faith enough to throw our cable around them, so we go slipping down the stream of unbelief, because we cannot stop ourselves by our former mercies.

I will, however, give you something over which I think you can throw your cable. If God has never been kind to you, one thing you surely know, and that is, He has been kind to others. Come, now; if you are in ever so great straits, surely there have been others in greater straits. What! Are you lower down than poor Jonah was when he went to the bottom of the mountains? Are you worse off than your Master when He had nowhere to lay His head? What! Do you conceive yourself to be the worst of the worst? Look at Job there, scraping himself with a potsherd, and sitting on a dunghill. Are you as low as he? Yet Job rose up, and was richer than before; and out of the depths Jonah came, and preached the Word; and our Savior Jesus has mounted to His throne. O Christian, only think of what God has done for others! If you cannot recollect that He has done anything for you, yet remember, I beseech you, what His usual rule is, and do not judge hard of my God. You remember when Benhadad was overcome and fled, his servants said to him, "Behold now, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings; let us, I pray you, put on sackcloth on our loins, and ropes upon our heads, and go out to the king of Israel: perhaps he will save your life. So they girded sackcloth on their loins, put ropes on their heads, and said, Your servant Benhadad says, I pray you, let me live." What said the king? "Is he yet alive? He is my brother." And truly, poor soul, if you had never had a merciful God, yet others have had; the King of kings is merciful; go and try Him. If you are ever so low in your troubles, look to the hills, from where comes your help. Others have had help from there, and so may you. Up might start hundreds of God's children, and show us their hands full of comforts and mercies; and they could say, "The Lord gave us these without money and without price; and why should He not give to you also, seeing that you too are the King's son?" Thus, Christian, you may get a song in the night out of other people, if you

cannot get a song from yourself. Never be ashamed of taking a leaf out of another man's experience book. If you can find no good leaf in your own, tear one out of someone else's; if you have no cause to be grateful to God in darkness, or cannot find cause in your own experience, go to someone else, and, if you can, harp God's praise in the dark, and like the nightingale, sing His praises sweetly when all the world has gone to rest; sing in the night of the mercies of yesterday.

But I think, beloved, there is never so dark a night but there is something to sing about, even *concerning that night*; for there is one thing I am sure we can sing about, let the night be ever so dark, and that is, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, and because His compassions fail not." If we cannot sing very loudly, yet we can sing a little low tune, something like this, "He has not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." "Oh!" says one, "I do not know where I shall get my dinner tomorrow; I am a poor wretch." So you may be, my dear friend; but you are not as poor as you deserve to be. Do not be mightily offended about that; if you are, you are no child of God, for the child of God acknowledges that he has no right to the least of God's mercies, but that they come through the channel of grace alone. As long as I am out of hell, I have no right to grumble; and if I were in hell, I should have no right to complain, for I felt, when convinced of sin, that never creature deserved to go there more than I did. We have no cause to murmur; we can lift up our hands, and say, "Night! You are dark, but you might have been darker. I am poor, but if I could not have been poorer, I might have been sick. I am poor and sick, yet I have some friends left; my lot cannot be so bad but it might have been worse." Therefore, Christian, you will always have one thing to sing about, "Lord, I thank You it is not all darkness!" Besides, however dark the night is, there is always a star or moon. There is scarcely a night that we have, but there are just one or two little lamps burning in the sky, and however dark it may be, I think you may find some little comfort, some little joy, some little mercy left, and some little promise to cheer your spirit. The stars are not put out, are they? No, if you cannot see them, they are there; but I think one or two must be shining on you, therefore give God a song in the night. If you have only one star, bless God for that one, and perhaps He will make it two; and if you have only two stars, bless God twice for the two stars, and perhaps He will make them four. Try, then, if you cannot find a song in the night.

But, beloved, there is another thing of which we can sing yet more sweetly; and that is, we can sing of *the day that is to come*. Often do I cheer myself with the thought of the coming of the Lord. We preach now, perhaps, with little success; "The kingdoms of this world" have not yet "become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ." We are laboring, but we do not see the fruit of our labor. Well, what then? We shall not always labor in vain, or spend our strength for nothing. A day is coming when every minister of Christ shall speak with unction, when all the servants of God shall preach with power, and when colossal systems of heathenism shall tumble from their pedestals, and mighty, gigantic delusions shall be scattered to the winds. The shout shall be heard, "Alleluia! Alleluia! The Lord God Omnipotent reigns." For that day do I look; it is to the bright horizon of Christ's second coming that I turn my eyes. My anxious expectation is that the blessed Sun of righteousness will soon arise with healing in His wings, that the oppressed shall be righted, that despotism shall be cut down, that liberty shall be established, that peace shall be made lasting, and that the glorious liberty of the children of God shall be extended throughout the known world. Christian! If it is night with you, think of tomorrow; cheer up your heart with the thought of the coming of your Lord. Be patient, for you know who has said, "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

One thought more upon that point. There is another sweet tomorrow of which we hope to sing in the night. Soon, beloved, you and I shall lie on our dying bed, and we shall not lack a song in the night then; and I do not know where we shall get that song, if we do not get it from the tomorrow. Kneeling by the bed of an apparently dying saint recently, I said, "Well, sister, the Lord has been very precious to you; you can rejoice in His covenant mercies, and His past loving kindnesses." She put out her hand, and said, "Ah, sir! Do not talk about them now; I want the sinner's Savior as much now as ever; it is not a saint's Savior I want, it is still a sinner's Savior that I need, for I am a sinner still." I found that I could not comfort her with the past; so I reminded her of the golden streets, of the gates of pearl, of the walls of jasper, of the harps of gold, of the songs of bliss, and then her eyes glistened; she said, "Yes, I shall be there soon; I shall see them by and by;" and then she seemed so glad. Ah, believer, you may always

cheer yourself with that thought! Your head may be crowned with thorny troubles now, but it shall wear a starry crown presently; your hand may be filled with cares, it shall grasp a harp soon, a harp full of music. Your garments may be soiled with dust now; they shall be white by and by. Wait a little longer. Ah, beloved! How despicable our troubles and trials will seem when we look back upon them! Looking at them here in the prospect, they seem immense; but when we get to heaven, they will seem to us just nothing at all; we shall talk to one another about them in heaven, and find all the more to converse about, according as we have suffered more here below. Let us go on, therefore; and if the night is ever so dark, remember there is not a night that shall not have a morning; and that morning is to come by and by. When sinners are lost in darkness, *we* shall lift up our eyes in everlasting light. Surely I need not dwell longer on this thought. There is matter enough for songs in the night in the past, the present, and the future.

III. And now I want to tell you, very briefly, WHAT ARE THE EXCELLENCES OF SONGS IN THE NIGHT ABOVE ALL OTHER SONGS.

In the first place, when you hear a man singing a song in the night—I mean in the night of trouble—you may be quite sure it is a *heartly one*. Many of you sing very heartily now; I wonder whether you would sing as loudly if there were a stake or two in Smithfield for all of you who dared to do it. If you sang under pain and penalty, that would show your heart to be in your song. We can all sing very nicely indeed when everybody else sings; it is the easiest thing in the world to open our mouth, and let the words come out; but when the devil puts his hand over our mouth, can we sing then? Can you say, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him”? That is hearty singing; that is real song that springs up in the night.

Again, the song we sing in the night will be *lasting*. Many songs we hear our fellow creatures singing will not do to sing by and by. They can sing now rollicking drinking songs; but they will not sing them when they come to die. No; but the Christian who can sing in the night, will not have to leave off his song; he may keep on singing it forever. He may put his foot in Jordan’s stream, and continue his melody; he may wade through it, and keep on singing still until he is landed safe in heaven; and when he is there, there need not be a pause in his strain, but in a nobler, sweeter song he may still continue singing the Savior’s power to save.

Again, the songs we warble in the night are those that show we have *real faith in God*. Many men have just enough faith to trust God as far as providence goes as they think right; but true faith can sing when its possessors cannot see; it can take hold of God when they cannot discern Him.

Songs in the night, too, prove that we have *true courage*. Many sing by day, who are silent by night, they are afraid of thieves and robbers; but the Christian who sings in the night proves himself to be a courageous character. It is the bold Christian who can sing God’s sonnets in the darkness.

He, who can sing songs in the night, proves also that he has *true love to Christ*. It is not love to Christ merely to praise Him while everybody else praises Him; to walk arm in arm with Him when He has the crown on His head is no great thing to do. To walk with Christ in rags, is something more. To believe in Christ when He is shrouded in darkness, to stick hard and fast by the Savior when all men speak ill of Him, and forsake Him—that proves true faith and love. He, who sings a song to Christ in the night, sings the best song in all the world, for he sings from the heart.

IV. I will not dwell further on the excellences of night songs, but just, in the last place, SHOW YOU THEIR USE.

Well, beloved, it is very useful to sing in the night of our troubles, first, *because it will cheer ourselves*. When some of you were boys, living in the country, and had some distance to go alone at night, do you not remember how you whistled and sang to keep your courage up? Well, what we do in the natural world, we ought to do in the spiritual. There is nothing like singing to keep up our spirits. When we have been in trouble, we have often thought ourselves to be well near overwhelmed with difficulty; so we have said, “Let us have a song.” We have begun to sing; and we have proved the truth of what Martin Luther says, “The devil cannot stand singing, he does not like music.” It was so in King Saul’s day; an evil spirit rested on him, but when David played his harp, the evil spirit left him. This is usually the case; and if we can begin to sing, we shall remove our fears. I like to hear servants sometimes humming a tune at their work; I love to hear a plowman in the country singing as he goes along with his horses.

Why not? You say he has no time to praise God; but if he can sing a song, surely he can sing a psalm, it will take no more time. Singing is the best thing to purge ourselves of evil thoughts. Keep your mouth full of songs, and you will often keep your heart full of praises; keep on singing as long as you can, you will find it a good method of driving away your fears.

Sing in trouble, again, *because God loves to hear His people sing in the night*. At no time does God love His children's singing so well as when He has hidden His face from them, and they are all in darkness. "Ah!" says God, "that is true faith that can make them sing praises when I do not appear to them; I know there is faith in them, that makes them lift up their hearts, even when I seem to withhold from them all My tender mercies and all My compassions." Sing then, Christian, for singing pleases God. In heaven we read that the angels are employed in singing, be you employed in the same way; for by no better means can you gratify the Almighty One of Israel, who stoops from His high throne to observe us poor, feeble creatures of a day.

Sing, again, for another reason; *because it will cheer your companions*. If any of them are in the valley and in the darkness with you, it will be a great help to comfort them. John Bunyan tells us that, as Christian was going through the valley, he found it a dreadful place; horrible demons and hobgoblins were all about him, and poor Christian thought he must perish for certain; but just when his doubts were the strongest, he heard a sweet voice; he listened to it, and he heard a man in front of him singing, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." Now, that man did not know who was near him, but he was unwittingly cheering a pilgrim behind. Christian, when you are in trouble, sing; you do not know who is near you. Sing! Perhaps you will get a good companion by it. Sing! Perhaps there will be another heart cheered by your song. There is some broken spirit, it may be, that will be bound up by your sonnets. Sing! There is some poor distressed brother, perhaps, shut up in the Castle of Despair, who, like King Richard, will hear your song inside the walls, and sing to you again, and you may be the means of getting him ransomed and released. Sing, Christian, wherever you go; try, if you can, to wash your face every morning in a bath of praise. When you go down from your chamber, never look on man till you have first looked on your God; and when you have looked on Him, seek to come down with a face beaming with joy—carry a smile, for you will cheer up many a poor, wayworn pilgrim by it. And when you fast, Christian, when you have an aching heart, do not appear to men to fast, appear cheerful and happy; anoint your head, and wash your face; be happy for your brother's sake; it will tend to cheer him up, and help them through the valley.

One more reason and I know it will be a good one for you. Try and sing in the night, Christian, *for that is one of the best arguments in all the world in favor of your religion*. Our divines nowadays spend a great deal of time in trying to prove the truth of Christianity to those who disbelieve it; I would like to have seen Paul trying that plan. Elymas the sorcerer withstood him; how did Paul treat him? He said, "O full of all subtlety and all mischief, you child of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" That is about all the politeness such men ought to have when they deny God's truth; we start with this assumption, that the Bible is God's Word, but we are not going to prove God's Word. If you do not believe it, we will bid you "Good-bye;" we will not argue with you. Religion is not a thing merely for your intellect to prove the greatness of your own talent; it is a thing that demands your faith. As a messenger of heaven, I demand that faith; if you do not choose to give it, on your own head be your doom. O Christian, instead of disputing, let me tell you how to prove your religion! Live it out! Live it out! Give the external as well as the internal evidence; give the external evidence of your own life. You are sick; there is your neighbor, who laughs at religion, let him come into your house. When he was sick, he said, "Oh! Send for the doctor;" and there he was fretting, and fuming, and making all manner of noises. When you are sick, send for him; tell him that you are resigned to the Lord's will, that you will kiss the chastening rod, that you will take the cup, and drink it, because your Father gives it. You need not make a boast of this, or it will lose all its power; but do it because you cannot help doing it. Your neighbor will say, "There is something in such a religion as that." And when you come to the borders of the grave (he was there once, and you heard how he shrieked, and how frightened he was), give him your hand, and say to him, "Ah! I have a Christ who is with me now; I have a religion that will make me sing in the night." Let him hear how you can sing, "Victory, victory, victory," through Him that loved you. I tell you, we may preach fifty thousand sermons to prove the

gospel, but we shall not prove it half as well as you will through singing in the night. Keep a cheerful face, keep a happy heart, keep a contented spirit, keep your eye bright, and your heart aloft, and you will prove Christianity better than all the Butlers and all the wise men who ever lived. Give them the “analogy” of a holy life, and then you will prove religion to them; give them the “evidences” of internal piety, developed externally, and you will give the best possible proof of Christianity. Try and sing songs in the night, for they are so rare that, if you can sing them, you will honor your God, and bless your friends.

I have been all this while addressing the children of God, and now there is a sad turn that this subject must take; just a word or so, and then I have done. There is a night coming, in which there will be no songs of joy—a night when a song shall be sung, of which misery shall be the subject, set to the music of wailing and gnashing of teeth; there is a night coming when woe, unutterable woe, shall be the theme of an awful, terrific *miserere*. There is a night coming for the poor soul, and unless he repents, it will be a night wherein he will have to sigh, and cry, and moan, and groan forever. I hope I shall never preach a sermon without speaking to the ungodly, for oh, how I love them! Swearer, your mouth is black with oaths now; and if you die, you must go on blaspheming throughout eternity, and be punished for it throughout eternity! But listen to me, blasphemer! Do you repent? Do you feel yourself to have sinned against God? Do you feel a desire to be saved? Listen you! You may be saved; you may be saved. There is another; she has sinned against God enormously, and she blushes even now while I mention her case; do you repent of your sin? Then there is pardon for you; remember Him who said, “Go, and sin no more.” Drunkard! But a little while ago you were reeling down the street, and now you repent. Drunkard, there is hope for you. “Well,” you say, “what shall I do to be saved?” Let me again tell you the old way of salvation; it is, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” We can get no further than that, do what we will; this is the sum and substance of the gospel. “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” So says the Savior Himself. Do you ask, “What is it to believe?” Am I to tell you again? I cannot tell you except that it is to look to Christ. Do you see the Savior there? He is hanging on the cross; there are His dear hands, pierced with nails, fastened to a tree, as if they were waiting for your tardy footsteps, because you would not come. Do you see His dear head there? It is hanging on His breast, as if He would lean over, and kiss your poor soul. Do you see His blood, gushing from His head, His hands, His feet, His side? It is running after you, because He well knew that you would never run after Him. Sinner, to be saved, all you have to do is to look at that Man! Can you not do it now? “No,” you say, “I do not believe that will save me.” Ah, my poor friend, try it, I beseech you, try it; and if you do not succeed, when you have tried it, I will be bondsman for my Lord—here, take me, bind me, and I will suffer your doom for you. This I will venture to say; if you cast yourself on Christ, and He deserts you, I will be willing to go halves with you in all your misery and woe; for He will never do it; never, never, NEVER!—

*“No sinner was ever empty sent back,
Who came seeking mercy for Jesus’ sake.”*

I beseech you, therefore, try Him, and you shall not try Him in vain; but you shall find Him “able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him;” and you shall be saved now, and saved forever.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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