

until at last he held as captives nine hundred cities and a thousand fortresses.

And so the Christian can attain the final and complete triumph, whose mighty wave of glory will lift him up to the throne of God, only by successive victories, to-day over Pharaoh, to-morrow over Amalek; and though the crown is given only when the last foe lies dead on the Jordan's bank, the songs of triumph, bursting forth in the wilderness, will be an inspiration for to-morrow's battle and the prophecy of final triumph.

4. Then there is one more song I want to call your attention to, and that is the *song in the night-time*. Two men, with backs bleeding from every mangled vein, lay in a dungeon, with their feet fast in the torturing stocks, and with only a prospect of violent death before them on the morrow. And yet we read that these two men were *singing at midnight*. Now just look through that dungeon, and see if in its gloomy silence you can find any inspiration for singing; uncover those backs, and see if in that mangled flesh you can see any occasion for praise; lift up those heavy chains, examine those torturing stocks, put your hand gently on those swollen feet, and see if you find anything that would lead a man to sing praises. And yet at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises to God.

Well, naturally you may ask, "Were they mad, and was this singing the delirium which sometimes follows intense sorrow and pain?" No; it was intelligent singing, as intelligent as if the surroundings had been peaceful and propitious. Well, you may ask, "How can any one sing praises when there is nothing to praise God for?" The world says, be rich and sing; the world says, be successful and sing; enjoy physical health and sing; drink deep of the fountain of human friendship and love, and then you will feel like singing. But when it comes to be midnight, all the world can do is just to stand near you and give you its

poor solace of pity as the one thing it has to offer.

We draw the curtain, because the very sunlight seems to be an intrusion; we close the musical instrument because its sweetest tunes seem out of place; we clothe ourselves in sable robes, so as to let the world know how miserable we are. Why, in a city close to this, custom has made it nearly obligatory that the shutters should be closed a whole year and the crape hung on the door, as an advertisement to the world of the wretchedness of the family inside.

The time is coming some day, friends, when God's children will come under His rule and will be free from bondage to the world, and then Christians will walk and praise and sing as children, not of the darkness, but of the light. "At midnight Paul and Silas praised and sang praises to God." Who does not love music? And the richest music in this world, friends, is the music of the human voice. All the orchestras in this world cannot produce sounds as rich and as persuasive as the song bursting from human lips—lips that have been touched with an inward gladness—whether it be the fisherman of Naples, whose song keeps time with his oars, or the Tyrolese laborer filling the mountain caverns with his sweet echoes of harmony, or the English plow-boy singing as he drives his team, or the Highlander making the glens and moors of Scotland resound with his merry glee.

But the richest vocal music is the music that is perfumed with thoughts of God and thoughts of heaven, and the richest sacred music is the music at midnight. You open the history of the experience of God's children; the moment you have done so, you have touched a string that starts the sweetest music on earth. Why, hear Habakkuk: "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the field shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I