



# THE NATIONAL PREACHER, And Village Pulpit.

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Vol. I.—New Series.]

FEBRUARY, 1858.

[No. II.—Whole No. 729.

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## SERMON IV.

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SHOW ME THY GLORY.

“I beseech thee, show me thy glory.”—EXODUS 33 : 18.

It was a singular, an unparalleled discipline by which God educated the legislator of his people. A foundling, yet nursed by his own doting mother, a daughter of Levi, passionate—as every Jewish mother has been—to give the unfading tincture of national faith to the infant soul. Cradled in courts, yet as little a courtier as the wildest, fiercest anchorite. Profound in all the learning of Egypt, yet turning to the desert and the mountains for lessons fitted to separate himself and his people by a gulf that should be impassable from all the rites and doctrines of the Pharaohs. And the resulting character is unlike that of all other founders, commanders, and legislators. In the fervor of patriotism slaying the oppressor of his brethren with his own hand, yet chronicled for coming ages as the meekest of mankind. A law-giver in a wilderness; a victorious general at the head of myriads

of slaves; destined from his birth to conduct a great migration, yet not beginning his march till fourscore years old. Inspiring all around him by predictions of a land flowing with milk and honey, yet dying on its threshold. Of a truth, the training and the history of this great prophet of the law are without a resemblance in the annals of men. All was a preparation for one mighty period in the developments of Providence and religion; and all had reference to a better Canaan, a spiritual country, a rest which remaineth for the people of God. That inward principle which craves the invisible, which longs for God, which pierces through external things of time, which looks forth on the infinite, which we denominate *faith*, was the ruling power in this prince and sage and seer. The intense suffering of a life-time of martyrdom was upheld by the vision of something beyond. By this, when he emerged from a youth spent among those monuments which are still the wonder and the reproach of learned toil, he cast the crown on the earth, and "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." No; he was the son of a Hebrew woman, "a daughter of Levi." Knowing that God was to be found in the way of cross-bearing, he chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." His eye looked down through the perspective of ages, and fastened on the great manifestation of God's glory, for which all his life and all his legislation and all his generalship were to be the prelude, and for which he embraced even poverty and vituperation, "esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." At fourscore years of age, keeping the flock of Jethro, as an exile, among the dark solitudes and barren ravines and frowning cliffs of Arabia, under the awful shadow of "Horeb, the mount of God," he there inquires for God.

Providence has chosen its rugged scenes, where internal heats have thrown up deep formations, to be in harmony with the great heavings of the soul, in its fluctuations and agonies of profound thought and emotion. Thus the Baptist was in the desert; thus the Son of Man was led into the wilderness. Travelers still with painful steps climb to these Arabian fastnesses and solitudes; for time, which changes all things, works little change in these iron elevations. It is a cluster of mountains, with piles of granite rocks, cut into dark valleys and gorges. Horeb and Sinai are eminences of the same chain; holding in its hollows that great plain of Rahah, one square mile in area, in which the nation was encamped before God. Here the solitary shepherd is startled by a voice which addresses him from a flame of fire. Called by name, he would approach, but receives the caution: "Draw not nigh hither; put off the shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." He is beginning to learn something of that power for which he has been so long seeking; beginning to comprehend

the destiny of his life. "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God." He receives his commission, and is brought still nearer, to hear the incommunicable name, I AM THAT I AM, or, more briefly, I AM, denoting self-existence, eternal, necessary existence; the Supreme; the Being of beings; *JEHOVAH*. At the burning bush, we may believe, was enkindled in Moses the desire to know God which is expressed in our text.

How solemn, how heart-subduing the discipline of succeeding events! His survey of the enslaved Hebrews, sinking under increasing burdens, is interrupted by renewed voices from above: "I am Jehovah—I have heard the groaning of the children of Israel—I have remembered my covenant." Then comes the conflict with the tyrant—the appeal to God—the river of blood—the invasion of multitudinous loathsome and abhorred creatures—pestilence on man and beast—tempests of thunder, hail, and fire—darkness that may be felt—the flight of a destroying angel, and the midnight cry over the first-born; each plague alternating with the relentings and the hardenings of a doomed king. At length the triumphant breaking forth of hundreds of thousands, in hot haste, pressed by pursuing columns, hemmed in by walls of nature, passing through an arm of the sea, and on their way in a march of forty years through a "waste howling wilderness." If outward circumstances can mould a human character to awful heroism and deep contemplation, we surely have them here.

That which assured the faith of Moses, no doubt was the presence of that God whom he sought. Carrying with him the bones of Joseph, in token of faith that they should regain the place of his sepulchre, "he endured as seeing Him who is invisible." Their march was not without visible guidance. "The Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night; he took not away the pillar of the cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night from before the people." The smitten rock and the manna attested the same presence. When God gives victory, he builds an altar, calling it *Jehovah Nissi*, "the Lord my banner."

Amidst those mountains of which we have spoken, Moses is brought yet more near to the secret place of God's presence. Here, shut out from the great Gentile world, the chosen people are in a gloomy but divine sanctuary. All is preparation for an event nothing less than the coming down of Jehovah, in the sight of all, upon Mount Sinai. There are thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; and the smoke thereof ascends as the smoke of a furnace, and the voice of the trumpet waxes louder and louder,

and amidst an earthquake the Lord descends on the summit, and calls Moses to this fearful height. Here he receives the law of commandments; here God speaks to Moses "face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." Here is some sight of God's glory; but there is more to be desired, and more to be enjoyed. It is at a later day that we read: "And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. And the glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days; and the seventh day he called Moses out of the midst of the cloud. And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. And Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights." It may unquestionably be said, that God did here show him his glory; and yet there was more in reserve.

The heart of this holy man is presently rent by the idolatry of Aaron and the people; and in his burning indignation he breaks the tables of stone. Thus do exaltations and humblings checker the field of spiritual life. None but those who have learned to live for others; who have involved their happiness in the happiness of others; who have set God's honor above all, can properly sympathize with the mighty griefs which break forth in such a prayer as this; so full of self-devotion, disappointed hope, and adoring sorrow: "Oh! this people have sinned a great sin, and have made themselves gods of gold. Yet now (if thou wilt) forgive their sin! and if *not*—blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written!" Where can heathen antiquity show a semblance of such patriotism and such love! Her heroes are but babes compared with him, who here stands forth a living type of that great Mediator and Intercessor whom Moses beheld in the distance of ages, and who not merely invited, but underwent the stroke of justice which was due to his people.

These were preparations for nearer communion with heaven, in that temporary tabernacle which was without the camp. "All the people stood, every man at his tent-door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the tabernacle. And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses. And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle-door, and all the people rose up and worshiped, every man at his tent-door. And the Lord spake unto Moses, face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." This was honor not bestowed on other men, so far as we read. And it is expressly said, (Deut. 34 : 10 :) "There arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face." It was a special and electing condescension, centering upon his individual person, as Jehovah had said: "I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight." But Moses would

press still nearer. He felt himself inaugurated as the leader of that host; he heard God's promise: "My presence shall go up with thee, and I will give the rest." He was wrapt and encircled in the pillar of light and the pavilion of deity, till the very aspect of his countenance was transfigured; yet as God's gifts are from grace to grace, and from glory to glory, and as he who beholds most, would fain behold more, and he who drinks most deeply is most athirst, it is at this very moment of transcendent vision that he cries, *I beseech thee, show me thy glory!*

You would not have been invited, my brethren, to so long an array of circumstances, if each of these had not seemed necessary to bring our minds to the posture for duly measuring the magnitude of the request. It is the cry—not of an infant—not of a Gentile—not of a novice—not of a soul in darkness or comparative ignorance—but of one who had known peculiar revelations—who had been embosomed in the intimacy of divine communion—who was even now on an unapproachable height of adoring transport. Yet he exclaims, *I beseech thee, show me thy glory!* If there is a moment of life in which he will give utterance to the chiefest of wishes, and in which the ruling passion will burst into language, it is surely this; when summoned by God—when listening to words of favor—when raised to touch the scepter of majesty. Let us, therefore, mark well what he asks. He might have sought exemption from toils and speedy repose; he might have asked wide dominion, and kingly triumph; he might have asked immediate passage into Canaan, or immediate deliverance from the ills of earth; but no—"I beseech thee, show me thy GLORY." He will have nothing but *God*, yea, *having* him, he will have more of God. Looking a little into that heaven of light, he will look more deeply. And this is true, not of Moses only, but of all who ever tasted that the Lord is gracious. It was not rashness, it was not foolhardy pride; it was a soul thirsting for God—"for the living God"—for that infinite good which the ungodly disbelieve; and thirsting more intensely for what he had tasted. Such is the law of the *kingdom*: "To him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly." It is the law of *grace*: "The path of the just is as the shining light," glowing and glowing, till it reach its burning noon. It is the law of *glory*: "They go from strength to strength; every one of them in Zion appeareth before God."

There is a sense in which the infinite Majesty can not be seen: it was not the sense of the prophet's request. The essence of God is eternally secret. His depths are unfathomable. His fires are consuming. Yet we are made for God, and in his image; and eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what God hath prepared for them that love him. The partial accomplishment of the desire (in the context) explains its intent. The servant of God desired to *see him*. He had form-

erly asked his *name*, on this very Horeb, which darkly towers above the camp: he would more fully apprehend his *nature*. The *glory* of God is the *character* of God. The *glory* of God is *God in manifestation*; it is the *outshining* of God; the radiance from infinite and inscrutable darkness. He would *know God*; not merely *that* he is; which contents many; but *what* he is. Show me thy *glory*, that is, show me thine *attributes*. "I have been led by thee, in wonderful events and demonstrations of power and judgment, such as no man ever saw; *now*, in this favored hour, when the world is shut out, let the awful secret break forth into disclosure. Oh! unvail thy face—hide no longer thy perfections—show me thy *glory*!"

Do you remember, my brethren, that night of wrestling prayer at Peniel, where the great ancestor of the nation prevailed with God, till the divine angel cried, "Let me go, for the day breaketh!" On that signal occasion *Jacob*, now named *ISRAEL*, thus addressed his God: "Tell me, I pray thee, thy *name*. And He said, Wherefore is it that thou askest after my name? and He blessed him there." The blessing of Moses was greater; his desire was perhaps more urgent. The time was come for a great manifestation. There is a notable diversity in the methods of God's communications, even to his most favored servants. It is usually in solitude. Call to mind the sublime terrors of that evening (Gen. 15) when Jehovah foreshowed to the father of the faithful this very deliverance of his progeny which he is now accomplishing by the hand of Moses. It is the hour of sacrifice. "And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and lo! a horror of great darkness fell upon him. And God said, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall be afflicted four hundred years; and that nation I will judge." Call to mind what befell *Elijah*, the *Tishbite*, in this very mountain. (1 Kings 19: 8.) He is lodging in a cave in "Horeb, the mount of God." He is called forth upon the mount. "And behold the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. And it was so when *Elijah* heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went and stood in the entering in of the cave." There is something awful in every approach of the Most High to an earthly worm; and the presence would be consuming but for the gentle supports of grace. Yet this presence and these communications are what make the believer's heaven. What above all things he desires, is *God*. The best of creatures, yea, all creatures, in their utmost sum, lead him up to God. Whatever is beautiful or sublime or good in

creation, is but a drop from that fountain, a beam from that sun ; existing in the Great Supreme, eminently, infinitely, and eternally. God is not the sum of mind and matter, as the pantheist impiously dreams ; he is personally and immutably distinct from all that he has made. Yet whatever is great or good, or tending to happiness in the creature, is the shadow : of which the reality is on high. God is, therefore, the true portion ; and we should bless and praise him with humble, unutterable thanks, that he has chosen to frame a creature with capacity for so great a joy. He who hath God hath all things. He is the ultimate rest and centre towards which the rational creature tends ; and torn from which it is in darkness, despair, and death. To see God, in any good degree, is to see infinite beauty in its source and consummation : primeval excellence, of which all that transports us here, in the most rapt ecstasy of our most blissful moment in life, is but a broken reflection, being infinitely less like God than the sparkle of the morning dew-drop is like the glorious sun of heaven. All that Moses, all that Elijah, all that Isaiah saw, is but a gleam of day let into the chink of "the soul's dark cottage : " yet there is nothing so bright on earth.

The most wonderful thought of all is, that in our fallen state there should be any communication between heaven and earth ; that God should be in any degree apprehended by man. It is our chief privilege. There is a revelation of the Infinite Good. The medium is various ; and not now to be largely discussed ; as by creation—by conscience—by prophecy—by miracle—by the Word—by the Spirit—by the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet by whatever means it is the same satisfying portion, the Chief Good—it is God. And when the beauty of his presence shines forth, it is the *glory of God*. The way in which the soul enjoys this infinite good is in the first instance *by knowledge*. In conformity with our intellectual nature, which is itself a part of the divine image, we receive God by knowing him. He comes into our reason. As the flower expands its colored petals to receive the light, so the reason opens to the knowledge of God. This knowledge is not merely a means to an end. Knowledge in general has a glory beyond any thing instrumental. We were *made* that we might know. But above all, the knowledge of God is a substantive, ultimate good : carrying with it in its very nature, an indescribable self-satisfaction. It is inseparably joined, in gracious souls, with the enjoyment of God as a portion ; the other powers of the soul being subdued into a holy conformity, and the sanctified affections resting in that which is revealed. Hence the sight of God is heaven. That is a low and ignoble view of the happiness of a Christian, which makes it consist in any thing confined to self, or to the pardon and reward of self. The more God is beheld, the more are all selfish and

individual regards absorbed and utterly drowned in the mighty object—the *glory of the Lord*.

Even though enveloped in the cloud of light, Moses was intense in his desire to possess more of God: "I beseech thee, show me thy glory!" These are words of entreaty—of irrepressible desire. True grace still produces the same aspirations. Faith still presses towards the inner sanctuary. The needle, which has been divinely touched, still trembles towards the pole, and never rests but in its meridian. No one trait of our common Christianity is more universal than the desire to know more of God. It is increased with every communication, and is often strongest when the heart is breaking upon a dying-bed. As men differ in their mental structure, capacity, and training, so this desire varies, but it is in all. If the Christian taxes his powers in contemplation, it is that he may know more of God. If he kneels long with upturned soul at the throne of grace, it is to know more of God. If he meditates day and night in the law, it is to know more of God. If he longs for heaven, it is that he may there know more of God. It is the language, not so much of Moses as of the Church, *I beseech thee, show me thy glory!*

Nor did God despise his request, nor turn away his prayer from him, as we shall presently see. Though flesh and blood could not endure a direct sight; though the full-orbed splendor would be death; yet God has merciful methods of revelation. "And he said, I will make all my *goodness* pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of Jehovah before thee." "Thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me and live. And the Lord said, Behold there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock. And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by." Blessed words! of glorious condescension and fatherly promise! How he subdues and mitigates his insufferable fires, and hangs a cloud over his dazzling throne, while with his own hand he makes a covert and a hiding-place for the shrinking but longing and aspiring creature, that even when it can not sustain the vision of his face, it may catch a glimpse of the retiring divinity and hear the music of that greatest, gentlest, loveliest name!

It was on the next morning that the Lord descended in the cloud, and "stood with him there," on the neighboring summit of Sinai, and proclaimed the name of Jehovah. And oh! remark, beloved brethren, how, in the music that issues even from that penal and judicial mountain, the attributes of goodness, grace, and compassion strike the leading chord and claim the precedence, and how terror is but a transient discord resolved into the harmonious whole: "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping



mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation." Thus did he hear the glorious name; thus did God make all his goodness "pass before him." Can we believe it to have been a mere hearing of the ear? Can we believe it to have been a mere apprehension of the intellect? After so august a preparative, and so importunate a prayer, it could be nothing less than an efficacious manifestation to the *experience*, such knowledge as brings fruition to the soul, an antepast of future joy.

That which more nearly concerns us, is, that what Moses prayed for and enjoyed, is prayed for and enjoyed by all the children of God in their measure. Without these external symbols they truly see that glory, and see it more and more. By God's blessing on the exertions of the mind, occupying itself about God; by the effusion of the Holy Ghost revealing the things of God; by light shed down on the Scriptures; by the high communion of devotional acts, in public and private ordinances; and above all, by the great Revealer, the Lord Jesus Christ—infinite grace continues to manifest this glory.

Brethren, I would not take fancy for revelation; but I can never be made to believe that Moses knew nothing of Christ. Abram saw His day, and rejoiced; yet Abram's oracle was less distinct than that of his descendant. This Moses, who was forty days and nights with God—who was embosomed in his cloudy mansion—who beheld the pattern of every typical vessel on the mount—who spake to God face to face—who, from the cleft of the rock, beheld "all his goodness"—who predicted the great prophet Messiah—who cried, "*Show me thy glory*"—how is it to be imagined that he had no glimpse of the antitype—HIM of whom he and all the prophets did write—Him whom every altar and every bleeding victim betokened—Him who is in every deed the manifestative glory of Jehovah? "*Show me thy glory*," sounds in Gospel ears like, "Show me thy CHRIST." "The law was given by Moses; but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Yes; Moses also saw his day, and rejoiced; and longed for the vision of Him, in whom "dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." The exodus from Egypt was pledge of another greater exodus. Methinks I behold a fulfillment of his yearning petition fifteen centuries later, when, on another mountain, as the Son of Man prayed, "the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening; and, behold! there talked with him two men, who were Moses and Elijah; who appeared in glory, and spake of His *exodus* which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." Yes; Moses has beheld that glory in a better world. For when a cloud received the Lord at his ascension, and while the disciples looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, "be-

hold, two *men* stood by them in white apparel." I assert not that these men were Moses and Elias; but let us not doubt that Moses welcomed his returning Lord to that sanctuary where they "sing the song of Moses and the Lamb." For, to Moses, and to all saints, the hour of death is the hour of revelation, when God shows them his glory. What though the venerable hero and prophet stopped short of the earthly Canaan? What though God said to him, "I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither." The passage was brief from Pisgah to heaven; and in that sweet moment, when God's finger closed his eyes, and when (according to the beautiful dream of the rabbins) God's lips *kissed away* his dissolving soul, he opened his spiritual vision on the consummation of his prayer, "*I beseech thee, show me thy glory.*" It is this beatific vision which is the charm of Paradise. A greater than Moses prayed, not for himself, but us: "Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." Of the clearness and plenitude of that vision, it is written: "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. For now I see through a glass," in an enigma, "but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know, even as also I am known." He who prays, "show me thy glory," prays for death and heaven. In *that* world vision will be possession. Here I gladly borrow the words of a Puritan divine: "How unspeakably pleasant, to a holy soul, will such a perpetual acknowledgment of God be! when the perpetuation of its being shall be nothing else than a perpetuation of this acknowledgment; when every renewed aspiration, every motion, every pulse of the glorified soul shall be but a repetition of it; when it shall find itself, in the eternity of life, that everlasting state of life which it now possesses, to be nothing else than an everlasting testimony that *God is God*. 'He is so; for I am, I live, I have the power to love him; none of which could otherwise be.' When, among the innumerable myriads of the heavenly host, this shall be the mutual alternate testimony of each to all the rest throughout eternity—will not this be bliss? When each shall feel continually, the fresh illapses and incomes of God, the power and sweetness of divine influences, the enlivening vigor of that vital breath, and find in themselves that they live and are sustained; and are yet as secure, touching the continuance of this state of life, as if every one were a god to himself; and did each one possess an entire godhead!"

But we must come down from the lofty plain of Horeb, to the ordinary path of life. Yet let our prayer be, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory!" Let us, like Enoch, *walk with God*. "The proper study of mankind, is"—God. Be this the great aspiration of our life; sanctifying our common walks, and hover-

ing over our daily duties as the cloudy, fiery column over the camp of Israel. Alas for those who have no heart, no longing, no taste for this amazing good! "God is not in all their thoughts." Their eyes are holden; for the pure in heart shall see God. How great must be the change within, before you can be fit for that heaven, of which it is the chief glory that there God is seen! Such thoughts should awaken earnest consideration. What! can he be in a right or in a safe state, who turns away with distaste from the greatest, best, and holiest of all conceivable objects! Oh! bewail that carnal mind which discerneth not the things of the Spirit of God! Repent of that madness, in which you seek happiness every where but at its source! "Acquaint now thyself with God, and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto thee." For, if ye believe, ye shall see the glory of God.

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## S E R M O N V.

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### THE SCRIPTURES BETTER THAN WEALTH.\*

"For the law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver."

PSALM 119: 72.

But two weeks have passed since our country was brimful of exultation. Our land rejoiced over its possession of liberty, and over the perils, sacrifices, and successes of our fathers in asserting it. From the Atlantic to the Pacific, and far over the seas and in the strange lands and islands, whither our citizens have wandered and where they have met, there have been demonstrations, quiet or vociferous, in larger gatherings or in smaller bands—but demonstrations which together were of immense costliness, to express the national estimate of Independence and Freedom. To some, this liberty seems opposed to *law*. To them liberty is the privilege of doing all that we may like, whether this be good or bad. Liberty in their vocabulary is license. But a little reflection shows that without law there can be no real liberty. Unless there be some settled standard of common right, some bulwark in statute and tribunal for the privileges of the feeble and the few against the incursions of the many and the mighty, some safeguard for inexperience and weakness, against the invasions of fraud and the encroachments of rapacity, there would be for the masses no true, practical freedom. Every man would hold his property and his home, and his life even, but by the tenure of the strong arm

\* Preached soon after the Fourth of July, 1857.