

Horatius Bonar:

"He maketh his sun to rise."—Matthew 5:45.

Here is the true link between God and "nature" (as men call it), and between us and nature. Here is the divine claim to proprietorship, to lordship over "nature." All things are God's. No created thing is the proprietor of itself or of any other created thing. There is but one proprietor, one universal proprietor, one to whom all things belong in a way in which they cannot belong to any other, one whose proprietorship cannot be dissolved or sold; for it is an everlasting proprietorship resulting from the great truth that God is God, and that no creature is or can be God. He who says, "All souls are mine" (Ezekiel 18:4), says also, All things are mine. Creature hood is divine property. Hence the shepherd comes seeking his own lost property (Luke 15:4); the woman searches for her lost property (Luke 15:8). Heaven and earth are God's property; the Sun is "his sun"; far more his than ours. For,

(1.) He made it. May He not then claim it as his own? Is not creatorship the basis of the truest proprietorship? Yes, He made the sun. Is it not then his? Is not every ray of it,—morn, and noon, and eve,—all his?

(2.) He kindled it. It would appear that it was not lighted up, or at least for our earth, till the fourth day. Then He who made it, kindled it, and bade it shine for us. Is it not his sun? He commanded it to shine, and it shone.

(3.) He keeps it burning. It is not allowed to burn low or to go out. He supplies it with all that is needful, and says to it, Burn on, burn on. He leads it up each morning, and over the arch of noon, and down into the west. All this rising and setting, this daily shining and shading, this coming and departing, are his. It is his sun emphatically. Were it not for Him it would go out in obscure darkness.

(4.) He makes it do his work. It has done his work in ages past; it has shone in past generations, and is shining still. The same sun that shone on Adam, anti Noah, and Abraham, and Paul,—nay, and on Jesus the Christ of God,—shines on us, doing its work for us. Yes; the same sun in Europe as in Asia, in Palestine as in Scotland!

Let us see how it does God's work; how it has been doing this, and is doing so still. In this work we notice, mercy, miracle, type, judgment.

I. Mercy. Yes; God set his sun in the heaven for mercy; He makes it to arise on the evil and the good, to speak of his free love, and lead men to repentance.

(1.) It enlightens. What a world without the light of the sun. Herein is love.

(2.) It heals. There is health in the sunbeam as well as in the fresh air. The sun's rays are healing. Light is medicine.

(3.) It gladdens. Sunshine is joy. It gladdens all earth, poor and rich. It diffuses joy over hill and dale; in the hail and the chamber, in the hut and the palace.

(4.) It fructifies It makes all living things to grow and bring forth fruit. No sunshine, no life; no growth, no fruit. For man and beast, for herb and tree, for flower and leaf, sunshine brings growth and fruitfulness. Such is God's love in sunshine. Ah, yes, it is his sun! It does his work.

II. Miracle. It has been associated with miracle in past ages. We call to mind Joshua, Egypt, Hezekiah, the Crucifixion-darkness. God has used it for miracle; for the display of his power. He kindles or quenches, He sends it on its course, or arrests it, or makes it turn backward, all according to his pleasure. That sun is to us the memorial of the mighty power of God,—his miracle-working hand. By it, and in it, He doeth wonders (Psalms 19:4, 6). Praise Him then ye sun and moon, praise Him all ye stars of light (Psalms 148:3).

III. Type. God has made use of his sun and its light for types in many ways. It is the type of the inner light; of Him who is the light of the world, of the Sun of righteousness. It does God's work in serving as a type for such things as these. Let it thus do his work to us, and for us each day that it shines. Type of the true light, the light of heaven, the light of the soul, the light of Christ, how glorious art thou, O Sun!

IV. Judgment. It spoke of judgment to Egypt when for three days it was blotted out. It spake of judgment to

Judea and to earth, when for three hours it was shrouded, when Jesus was dying. But it specially is connected with judgment in the book of Revelation. It became black as sackcloth of hair (6:1-2); the third part was smitten (8:1-2); the fourth angel's vial was poured out on the sun, and it had power to scorch men with fire (16:8); an angel stood in the sun to summon all beasts and fowls to the great banquet of slaughtered kings and captains. These are some of the ways in which God has connected his sun with judgment.

Yes, it is his sun. Jesus has taught us the expression; let us not lose it. That little word means much.

It is his sun; then is it also ours; ours because his; made by him for us.

His sun; then it speaks to us of Him. It is a bright and golden link between Him and us.

His sun; then let us enjoy it as such; for it shines not by chance or by mere laws of nature. He who made it bids us enjoy it.

His sun; then let us learn his love; his love even in its radiance, much more in that light of which it is the type.

His sun; then let us love as He loves, and shine as He shines. Let us love the unthankful and the evil, doing good to all; and liking to bless and gladden all.

His sun; then it is Himself whom we behold; it is He who shines. We say, "it rains," as if chance or nothing were the author of the rain. So we speak too of sunlight; forgetting that it is God himself that is shining in every ray.