

Isaiah Devotionals-C H Spurgeon

Spurgeon's Devotionals from Morning and Evening and Faith's Checkbook

ISAIAH 2

"Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord." —Isaiah 2:3

It is exceedingly beneficial to our souls to mount above this present evil world to something nobler and better. The cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches are apt to choke everything good within us, and we grow fretful, desponding, perhaps proud and carnal. It is well for us to cut down these thorns and briers, for heavenly seed sown among them is not likely to yield a harvest; and where shall we find a better sickle with which to cut them down than communion with God and the things of the kingdom? In the valleys of Switzerland many of the inhabitants are deformed, and all wear a sickly appearance, for the atmosphere is charged with miasma, and is close and stagnant; but up yonder, on the mountain, you find a hardy race, who breathe the clear fresh air as it blows from the virgin snows of the Alpine summits. It would be well if the dwellers in the valley could frequently leave their abodes among the marshes and the fever mists, and inhale the bracing element upon the hills. It is to such an exploit of climbing that I invite you this evening. May the Spirit of God assist us to leave the mists of fear and the fevers of anxiety, and all the ills which gather in this valley of earth, and to ascend the mountains of anticipated joy and blessedness. May God the Holy Spirit cut the cords that keep us here below, and assist us to mount! We sit too often like chained eagles fastened to the rock, only that, unlike the eagle, we begin to love our chain, and would, perhaps, if it came really to the test, be loath to have it snapped. May God now grant us grace, if we cannot escape from the chain as to our flesh, yet to do so as to our spirits; and leaving the body, like a servant, at the foot of the hill, may our soul, like Abraham, attain the top of the mountain, there to indulge in communion with the Most High.

World Concord

"And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" ([Isaiah 2:4](#)).

Oh, that these happy times were come! At present the nations are heavily armed and are inventing weapons more and more terrible, as if the chief end of man could only be answered by destroying myriads of his fellows. Yet peace will prevail one day; yes, and so prevail that the instruments of destruction shall be beaten into other shapes and used for better purposes. How will this come about? By trade? By civilization? By arbitration? We do not believe it. Past experience forbids our trusting to means so feeble. Peace will be established only by the reign of the Prince of Peace. He must teach the people by His Spirit, renew their hearts by His grace, and reign over them by His supreme power, and then will they cease to wound and kill. Man is a monster when once his blood is up, and only the LORD Jesus can turn this lion into a lamb. By changing man's heart, his bloodthirsty passions are removed. Let every reader of this book of promises offer special prayer today to the LORD and Giver of Peace that He would speedily put an end to war and establish concord over the whole world.

ISAIAH 3

"Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him."—Isaiah 3:10

It is well with the righteous ALWAYS. If it had said, "Say ye to the righteous, that it is well with him in his prosperity," we must have been thankful for so great a boon, for prosperity is an hour of peril, and it is a gift from heaven to be secured from its snares: or if it had been written, "It is well with him when under persecution," we must have been thankful for so sustaining an assurance, for persecution is hard to bear; but when no time is mentioned, all time is included. God's "shalls" must be understood always in their largest sense. From the beginning of the year to the end of the year, from the first gathering of evening shadows until the day-star shines, in all conditions and under all circumstances, it shall be well with the righteous. It is so well with him that we could not imagine it to be better, for he is well fed, he feeds upon the flesh and blood of Jesus; he is well clothed, he wears the imputed

righteousness of Christ; he is well housed, he dwells in God; he is well married, his soul is knit in bonds of marriage union to Christ; he is well provided for, for the Lord is his Shepherd; he is well endowed, for heaven is his inheritance. It is well with the righteous—well upon divine authority; the mouth of God speaks the comforting assurance. O beloved, if God declares that all is well, ten thousand devils may declare it to be ill, but we laugh them all to scorn. Blessed be God for a faith which enables us to believe God when the creatures contradict him. It is, says the Word, at all times well with thee, thou righteous one; then, beloved, if thou canst not see it, let God's word stand thee in stead of sight; yea, believe it on divine authority more confidently than if thine eyes and thy feelings told it to thee. Whom God blesses is blest indeed, and what his lip declares is truth most sure and steadfast.

ISAIAH 7

"Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."—Isaiah 7:14

Let us to-day go down to Bethlehem, and in company with wondering shepherds and adoring Magi, let us see him who was born King of the Jews, for we by faith can claim an interest in him, and can sing, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." Jesus is Jehovah incarnate, our Lord and our God, and yet our brother and friend; let us adore and admire. Let us notice at the very first glance his miraculous conception. It was a thing unheard of before, and unparalleled since, that a virgin should conceive and bear a Son. The first promise ran thus, "The seed of the woman," not the offspring of the man. Since venturous woman led the way in the sin which brought forth Paradise lost, she, and she alone, ushers in the Regainer of Paradise. Our Saviour, although truly man, was as to his human nature the Holy One of God. Let us reverently bow before the holy Child whose innocence restores to manhood its ancient glory; and let us pray that he may be formed in us, the hope of glory. Fail not to note his humble parentage. His mother has been described simply as "a virgin," not a princess, or prophetess, nor a matron of large estate. True the blood of kings ran in her veins; nor was her mind a weak and untaught one, for she could sing most sweetly a song of praise; but yet how humble her position, how poor the man to whom she stood affianced, and how miserable the accommodation afforded to the new-born King!

Immanuel, God with us in our nature, in our sorrow, in our lifework, in our punishment, in our grave, and now with us, or rather we with him, in resurrection, ascension, triumph, and Second Advent splendour.

ISAIAH 14

"Art thou become like unto us?"—Isaiah 14:10

What must be the apostate professor's doom when his naked soul appears before God? How will he bear that voice, "Depart, ye cursed; thou hast rejected me, and I reject thee; thou hast played the harlot, and departed from me: I also have banished thee for ever from my presence, and will not have mercy upon thee." What will be this wretch's shame at the last great day when, before assembled multitudes, the apostate shall be unmasked? See the profane, and sinners who never professed religion, lifting themselves up from their beds of fire to point at him. "There he is," says one, "will he preach the gospel in hell?" "There he is," says another, "he rebuked me for cursing, and was a hypocrite himself!" "Aha!" says another, "here comes a psalm-singing Methodist—one who was always at his meeting; he is the man who boasted of his being sure of everlasting life; and here he is!" No greater eagerness will ever be seen among Satanic tormentors, than in that day when devils drag the hypocrite's soul down to perdition. Bunyan pictures this with massive but awful grandeur of poetry when he speaks of the back-way to hell. Seven devils bound the wretch with nine cords, and dragged him from the road to heaven, in which he had professed to walk, and thrust him through the back-door into hell. Mind that back-way to hell, professors! "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith." Look well to your state; see whether you be in Christ or not. It is the easiest thing in the world to give a lenient verdict when oneself is to be tried; but O, be just and true here. Be just to all, but be rigorous to yourself. Remember if it be not a rock on which you build, when the house shall fall, great will be the fall of it. O may the Lord give you sincerity, constancy, and firmness; and in no day, however evil, may you be led to turn aside.

ISAIAH 21

"Watchman, what of the night?"—Isaiah 21:11

What enemies are abroad? Errors are a numerous horde, and new ones appear every hour: against what heresy am I to be on my guard? Sins creep from their lurking places when the darkness reigns; I must myself mount the watch-tower, and watch unto prayer.

Our heavenly Protector foresees all the attacks which are about to be made upon us, and when as yet the evil designed us is but in the desire of Satan, he prays for us that our faith fail not, when we are sifted as wheat. Continue O gracious Watchman, to forewarn us of our foes, and for Zion's sake hold not thy peace.

"Watchman, what of the night?" What weather is coming for the Church? Are the clouds lowering, or is it all clear and fair overhead? We must care for the Church of God with anxious love; and now that Popery and infidelity are both threatening, let us observe the signs of the times and prepare for conflict.

"Watchman, what of the night?" What stars are visible? What precious promises suit our present case? You sound the alarm, give us the consolation also. Christ, the polestar, is ever fixed in his place, and all the stars are secure in the right hand of their Lord.

But watchman, when comes the morning? The Bridegroom tarries. Are there no signs of his coming forth as the Sun of Righteousness? Has not the morning star arisen as the pledge of day? When will the day dawn, and the shadows flee away? O Jesus, if thou come not in person to thy waiting Church this day, yet come in Spirit to my sighing heart, and make it sing for joy.

"Now all the earth is bright and glad
With the fresh morn;
But all my heart is cold, and dark and sad:
Sun of the soul, let me behold thy dawn!
Come, Jesus, Lord,
O quickly come, according to thy word."

ISAIAH 26

"Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."—Isaiah 26:4

Seeing that we have such a God to trust to, let us rest upon him with all our weight; let us resolutely drive out all unbelief, and endeavour to get rid of doubts and fears, which so much mar our comfort; since there is no excuse for fear where God is the foundation of our trust. A loving parent would be sorely grieved if his child could not trust him; and how ungenerous, how unkind is our conduct when we put so little confidence in our heavenly Father who has never failed us, and who never will. It were well if doubting were banished from the household of God; but it is to be feared that old Unbelief is as nimble nowadays as when the psalmist asked, "Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Will he be favourable no more?" David had not made any very lengthy trial of the mighty sword of the giant Goliath, and yet he said, "There is none like it." He had tried it once in the hour of his youthful victory, and it had proved itself to be of the right metal, and therefore he praised it ever afterwards; even so should we speak well of our God, there is none like unto him in the heaven above or the earth beneath; "To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One." There is no rock like unto the rock of Jacob, our enemies themselves being judges. So far from suffering doubts to live in our hearts, we will take the whole detestable crew, as Elijah did the prophets of Baal, and slay them over the brook; and for a stream to kill them at, we will select the sacred torrent which wells forth from our Saviour's wounded side. We have been in many trials, but we have never yet been cast where we could not find in our God all that we needed. Let us then be encouraged to trust in the Lord for ever, assured that his ever lasting strength will be, as it has been, our succour and stay.

ISAIAH 27

Divine Cultivation

"I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: Lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day" [\[Isaiah 27:3\]](#).

When the LORD Himself speaks in His own proper person rather than through a prophet, the word has a peculiar weight to believing minds. It is Jehovah Himself who is the keeper of His own vineyard; He does not trust it to any other, but He makes it His own personal care. Are they not well kept whom God Himself keeps? We are to receive gracious watering, not only every day and every hour "but every moment." How we ought to grow! How fresh and fruitful every plant should be! What rich clusters the vines should bear! But disturbers come; little foxes and the boar. Therefore, the LORD Himself is our Guardian, and that at all hours, both "night and day." What, then, can harm us? Why are we afraid! He tends, He waters, He guards; what more do we need? Twice in this verse the LORD says, "I will." What truth, what power, what love, what immutability we find in the great "I will" of Jehovah! Who can resist His will? If He says "I will," what room is there for doubt? With an "I will" of God we can face all the hosts of sin, death, and hell. O

LORD, since Thou sayest, "I will keep thee," I reply, "I will praise Thee!"

ISAIAH 28

Know How to Wait

"He that believeth shall not make haste" ([Isaiah 28:16](#)).

He shall make haste to keep the LORD's commandments; but he shall not make haste in any impatient or improper sense. He shall not haste to run away, for he shall not be overcome with the fear which causes panic. When others are flying hither and thither as if their wits had failed them, the believer shall be quiet, calm, and deliberate, and so shall be able to act wisely in the hour of trial. He shall not haste in his expectations, craving his good things at once and on the spot, but he will wait God's time. Some are in a desperate hurry to have the bird in the hand, for they regard the LORD's promise as a bird in the bush, not likely to be theirs. Believers know how to wait. . He shall not haste by plunging into wrong or questionable action. Unbelief must be doing something, and thus it works its own undoing; but faith makes no more haste than good speed, and thus it is not forced to go back sorrowfully by the way which it followed heedlessly. How is it with me? Am I believing, and am I therefore keeping to the believer's peace, which is walking with God? Peace, fluttering spirit! Oh, rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him! Heart, see that thou do this at once!

ISAIAH 30

A Quiet Heart

"In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength" ([Isaiah 30:15](#)).

It is always weakness to be fretting and worrying, questioning and mis-trusting. What can we do if we wear ourselves to skin and bone? Can we gain anything by fearing and fuming? Do we not unfit ourselves for action and unhinge our minds for wise decision? We are sinking by our struggles when we might float by faith. Oh, for grace to be quiet! Why run from house to house to repeat the weary story which makes us more and more heart-sick as we tell it? Why even stay at home to cry out in agony because of wretched forebodings which may never be fulfilled? It would be well to keep a quiet tongue, but it would be far better if we had a quiet heart. Oh, to be still and know that Jehovah is God! Oh, for grace to be confident in God! The holy One of Israel must defend and deliver His own. He cannot run back from His solemn declarations. We may make sure that every word of His will stand though the mountains should depart. He deserves to be confided in; and if we would display confidence and consequent quietness, we might be as happy as the spirits before the throne. Come, my soul, return unto thy rest, and lean thy head upon the bosom of the LORD Jesus.

"Therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you." —Isaiah 30:18

God often DELAYS IN ANSWERING PRAYER. We have several instances of this in sacred Scripture. Jacob did not get the blessing from the angel until near the dawn of day—he had to wrestle all night for it. The poor woman of Syrophenicia was answered not a word for a long while. Paul besought the Lord thrice that "the thorn in the flesh" might be taken from him, and he received no assurance that it should be taken away, but instead thereof a promise that God's grace should be sufficient for him. If thou hast been knocking at the gate of mercy, and hast received no answer, shall I tell thee why the mighty Maker hath not opened the door and let thee in? Our Father has reasons peculiar to himself for thus keeping us waiting. Sometimes it is to show his power and his sovereignty, that men may know that Jehovah has a right to give or to withhold. More frequently the delay is for our profit. Thou art perhaps kept waiting in order that thy desires may be more fervent. God knows that delay will quicken and increase desire, and that if he keeps thee waiting thou wilt see thy necessity more clearly, and wilt seek more earnestly; and that thou wilt prize the mercy all the more for its long tarrying. There may also be something wrong in thee which has need to be removed, before the joy of the Lord is given. Perhaps thy views of the Gospel plan are confused, or thou mayest be placing some little reliance on thyself, instead of trusting simply and entirely to the Lord Jesus. Or, God makes thee tarry awhile that he may the more fully display the riches of his grace to thee at last. Thy prayers are all filed in heaven, and if not immediately answered they are certainly not forgotten, but in a little while shall be fulfilled to thy delight and satisfaction. Let not despair make thee silent, but continue instant in earnest supplication.

ISAIAH 31

Defended and Covered

"As birds flying, so will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem" ([Isaiah 31:5](#)).

With hurrying wing the mother bird hastens up to the protection of her young. She wastes no time upon the road when coming to supply them with food or guard them from danger. Thus as an eagle's wings will the LORD come for the defense of His chosen; yea, He will ride upon the wings of the wind. With outspread wing the mother covers her little ones in the nest. She hides them away by interposing her own body. The hen yields her own warmth to her chicks and makes her wings a house, in which they dwell at home. Thus doth Jehovah Himself become the protection of His elect. He Himself is their refuge, their abode, their all. As birds flying and birds covering (for the word means both), so will the LORD be unto us: and this He will be repeatedly and successfully. We shall be defended and preserved from all evil: the LORD who likens Himself to birds will not be like them in their feebleness, for He is Jehovah of hosts. Let this be our comfort, that almighty love will be swift to succor and sure to cover. The wing of God is more quick and more tender than the wing of a bird, and we will put our trust under its shadow henceforth and forever.

ISAIAH 32

The Safest Shelter

"And a Man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind and a covert from the tempest" ([Isaiah 32:2](#)).

Who this Man is we all know. Who could He be but the Second Man, the LORD from heaven, the man of sorrows, the Son of Man? What a hiding place He has been to His people! He bears the full force of the wind Himself, and so He shelters those who hide themselves in Him. We have thus escaped the wrath of God, and we shall thus escape the anger of men, the cares of this life, and the dread of death. Why do we stand in the wind when we may so readily and so surely get out of it by hiding behind our LORD? Let us this day run to Him and be at peace. Often the common wind of trouble rises in its force and becomes a tempest, sweeping everything before it. Things which looked firm and stable rock in the blast, and many and great are the falls among our carnal confidences. Our LORD Jesus, the glorious man, is a covert which is never blown down. In Him we mark the tempest sweeping by, but we ourselves rest in delightful serenity. This day let us just stow ourselves away in our hiding place and sit and sing under the protection of our Covert. Blessed Jesus! Blessed Jesus! How we love Thee! Well we may, for Thou art to us a shelter in the time of storm.

ISAIAH 33

God Himself Shall Work

"Now will I rise, saith the LORD; now will I be exalted; now will I lift up Myself" ([Isaiah 33:10](#)).

When the spoilers had made the land as waste as if devoured by locusts, and the warriors who had defended the country sat down and wept like women, then the LORD came to the rescue. When travelers ceased from the roads to Zion, and Bashan and Carmel were as vineyards from which the fruit has failed, then the LORD arose. God is exalted in the midst of an afflicted people, for they seek His face and trust Him. He is still more exalted when in answer to their cries He lifts up Himself to deliver them and overthrow their enemies. Is it a day of sorrow with us? Let us expect to see the LORD glorified in our deliverance. Are we drawn out in fervent prayer? Do we cry day and night unto Him? Then the set time for His grace is near. God will lift up Himself at the right season. He will arise when it will be most for the display of His glory. We wish for His glory more than we long for our own deliverance. Let the LORD be exalted, and our chief desire is obtained. LORD, help us in such a way that we may see that Thou Thyself art working. May we magnify Thee in our inmost souls. Make all around us to see how good and great a God Thou art.

High Places of Defense

"He shall dwell on high: his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure" ([Isaiah 33:16](#)).

The man to whom God has given grace to be of blameless life dwells in perfect security. He dwells on high, above the world, Out of gunshot of the enemy, and near to heaven. He has high aims and motives, and he finds high comforts and company. He rejoices in the mountains of eternal love, wherein he has his abode. He is defended by munitions of stupendous rock. The firmest things in the universe are the promises and purposes of the unchanging God, and these are the safeguard of the obedient believer. He is provided for by this great promise: "Bread shall be given him." As the enemy cannot climb the fort, nor break down the rampart, so the fortress cannot be captured by siege and famine. The LORD, who rained manna in the wilderness, will keep His people in good store even when they are surrounded by those who would starve them. But what if water should fail? That cannot be. "His waters shall be sure." There is a never-failing well within the impregnable fortress. The LORD sees that nothing is wanting. None can touch the citizen of the true Zion. However fierce the enemy, the LORD will preserve His chosen.

Broad Rivers Without Galleys

"But there the glorious LORD will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby" ([Isaiah 33:21](#)).

The LORD will be to us the greatest good without any of the drawbacks which seem necessarily to attend the best earthly things. If a city is favored with broad rivers, it is liable to be attacked by galleys with oars and other ships of war. But when the LORD represents the abundance of His bounty under this figure, He takes care expressly to shut out the fear which the metaphor might suggest. Blessed be His perfect love! LORD, if Thou send me wealth like broad rivers, do not let the galley with oars come up in the shape of worldliness or pride. If Thou grant me abundant health and happy spirits, do not let "the gallant ship" of carnal ease come sailing up the flowing flood. If I have success in holy service, broad as the German Rhine, yet let me never find the galley of self-conceit and self-confidence floating on the waves of my usefulness. Should I be so supremely happy as to enjoy the light of Thy countenance year after year, yet let me never despise Thy feeble saints, nor allow the vain notion of my own perfection to sail up the broad rivers of my full assurance. LORD, give me that blessing which maketh rich and neither addeth sorrow nor aideth sin.

ISAIAH 35

The King's Highway

"The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein" ([Isaiah 35:8](#)).

The way of holiness is so straight and plain that the simplest minds cannot go astray if they constantly follow it. The worldly wise have many twists and turns, and yet they make terrible blunders and generally miss their end. Worldly policy is a poor, shortsighted thing, and when men choose it as their road, it leads them over dark mountains. Gracious minds know no better than to do as the LORD bids them; but this keeps them in the King's highway and under royal protection. Let the reader never for a moment attempt to help himself out of a difficulty by a falsehood or by a questionable act; but let him keep in the middle of the high road of truth and integrity, and he will be following the best possible course. In our lives we must never practice circular sailing nor dream of shuffling. Be just and fear not (See [How To Handle Fear](#)), Follow Jesus and heed no evil consequences. If the worst of ills could be avoided by wrongdoing, we should, in the very attempt, have fallen into an evil worse than any other ill could be. God's way must be the very best way. Follow it though men think you a fool, and you will be truly wise. LORD, lead Thy servants in a plain path because of their enemies

ISAIAH 36

"Now on whom dost thou trust?"—Isaiah 36:5

Reader, this is an important question. Listen to the Christian's answer, and see if it is yours. "On whom dost thou trust?" "I trust," says the Christian, "in a triune God. I trust the Father, believing that he has chosen me from before the foundations of the world; I trust him to provide for me in providence, to teach me, to guide me, to correct me if need be, and to bring me home to his own house where the many mansions are. I trust the Son. Very God of very God is he—the man Christ Jesus. I trust in him to take away all my sins by his own sacrifice, and to adorn me with his perfect righteousness. I trust him to be my Intercessor, to present my prayers and desires before his Father's throne, and I trust him to be my Advocate at the last great day, to plead my cause, and to justify me. I trust him for what he is, for what he has done, and for what he has promised yet to do. And I trust the Holy Spirit—he has begun to save me from my inbred sins; I trust him to drive them all out; I trust him to curb my temper, to subdue my will, to enlighten

my understanding, to check my passions, to comfort my despondency, to help my weakness, to illuminate my darkness; I trust him to dwell in me as my life, to reign in me as my King, to sanctify me wholly, spirit, soul, and body, and then to take me up to dwell with the saints in light for ever.”

Oh, blessed trust! To trust him whose power will never be exhausted, whose love will never wane, whose kindness will never change, whose faithfulness will never fail, whose wisdom will never be nonplussed, and whose perfect goodness can never know a diminution! Happy art thou, reader, if this trust is thine! So trusting, thou shalt enjoy sweet peace now, and glory hereafter, and the foundation of thy trust shall never be removed.

ISAIAH 37

“The daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.” —Isaiah 37:22

Reassured by the Word of the Lord, the poor trembling citizens of Zion grew bold, and shook their heads at Sennacherib’s boastful threats. Strong faith enables the servants of God to look with calm contempt upon their most haughty foes. We know that our enemies are attempting impossibilities. They seek to destroy the eternal life, which cannot die while Jesus lives; to overthrow the citadel, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. They kick against the pricks to their own wounding, and rush upon the bosses of Jehovah’s buckler to their own hurt.

We know their weakness. What are they but men? And what is man but a worm? They roar and swell like waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame. When the Lord ariseth, they shall fly as chaff before the wind, and be consumed as crackling thorns. Their utter powerlessness to do damage to the cause of God and his truth, may make the weakest soldiers in Zion’s ranks laugh them to scorn.

Above all, we know that the Most High is with us, and when he dresses himself in arms, where are his enemies? If he cometh forth from his place, the potsherds of the earth will not long contend with their Maker. His rod of iron shall dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel, and their very remembrance shall perish from the earth. Away, then, all fears, the kingdom is safe in the King’s hands. Let us shout for joy, for the Lord reigneth, and his foes shall be as straw for the dunghill.

“As true as God’s own word is true;
Nor earth, nor hell, with all their crew,
Against us shall prevail.
A jest, and by-word, are they grown;
God is with us, we are his own,
Our victory cannot fail.”

ISAIAH 40

“The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.” —Isaiah 40:5

We anticipate the happy day when the whole world shall be converted to Christ; when the gods of the heathen shall be cast to the moles and the bats; when Romanism shall be exploded, and the crescent of Mohammed shall wane, never again to cast its baleful rays upon the nations; when kings shall bow down before the Prince of Peace, and all nations shall call their Redeemer blessed. Some despair of this. They look upon the world as a vessel breaking up and going to pieces, never to float again. We know that the world and all that is therein is one day to be burnt up, and afterwards we look for new heavens and for a new earth; but we cannot read our Bibles without the conviction that—

“Jesus shall reign where’er the sun
Does his successive journeys run.”

We are not discouraged by the length of his delays; we are not disheartened by the long period which he allots to the church in which to struggle with little success and much defeat. We believe that God will never suffer this world, which has once seen Christ’s blood shed upon it, to be always the devil’s stronghold. Christ came hither to deliver this world from the detested sway of the powers of darkness. What a shout shall that be when men and angels shall unite to cry “Hallelujah, hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!” What a satisfaction will it be in that day to have had a share in the fight, to have helped to break the arrows of the bow, and to have aided in winning the victory for our Lord! Happy are they who trust themselves with this conquering Lord, and who fight side by side with him, doing their little in his name and by his strength! How unhappy are those on the side of evil! It is a losing side,

and it is a matter wherein to lose is to lose and to be lost for ever. On whose side are you?

“Get thee up into the high mountain.” —Isaiah 40:9

Each believer should be thirsting for God, for the living God, and longing to climb the hill of the Lord, and see him face to face. We ought not to rest content in the mists of the valley when the summit of Tabor awaits us. My soul thirsteth to drink deep of the cup which is reserved for those who reach the mountain's brow, and bathe their brows in heaven. How pure are the dews of the hills, how fresh is the mountain air, how rich the fare of the dwellers aloft, whose windows look into the New Jerusalem! Many saints are content to live like men in coal mines, who see not the sun; they eat dust like the serpent when they might taste the ambrosial meat of angels; they are content to wear the miner's garb when they might put on king's robes; tears mar their faces when they might anoint them with celestial oil. Satisfied I am that many a believer pines in a dungeon when he might walk on the palace roof, and view the goodly land and Lebanon. Rouse thee, O believer, from thy low condition! Cast away thy sloth, thy lethargy, thy coldness, or whatever interferes with thy chaste and pure love to Christ, thy soul's Husband. Make him the source, the centre, and the circumference of all thy soul's range of delight. What enchants thee into such folly as to remain in a pit when thou mayst sit on a throne? Live not in the lowlands of bondage now that mountain liberty is conferred upon thee. Rest no longer satisfied with thy dwarfish attainments, but press forward to things more sublime and heavenly. Aspire to a higher, a nobler, a fuller life. Upward to heaven! Nearer to God!

“When wilt thou come unto me, Lord?
Oh come, my Lord most dear!
Come near, come nearer, nearer still,
I'm blest when thou art near.”

“Get thee up into the high mountain.”—Isaiah 40:9

Our knowledge of Christ is somewhat like climbing one of our Welsh mountains. When you are at the base you see but little: the mountain itself appears to be but one-half as high as it really is. Confined in a little valley, you discover scarcely anything but the rippling brooks as they descend into the stream at the foot of the mountain. Climb the first rising knoll, and the valley lengthens and widens beneath your feet. Go higher, and you see the country for four or five miles round, and you are delighted with the widening prospect. Mount still, and the scene enlarges; till at last, when you are on the summit, and look east, west, north, and south, you see almost all England lying before you. Yonder is a forest in some distant county, perhaps two hundred miles away, and here the sea, and there a shining river and the smoking chimneys of a manufacturing town, or the masts of the ships in a busy port. All these things please and delight you, and you say, “I could not have imagined that so much could be seen at this elevation.” Now, the Christian life is of the same order. When we first believe in Christ we see but little of him. The higher we climb the more we discover of his beauties. But who has ever gained the summit? Who has known all the heights and depths of the love of Christ which passes knowledge? Paul, when grown old, sitting grey-haired, shivering in a dungeon in Rome, could say with greater emphasis than we can, “I know whom I have believed,” for each experience had been like the climbing of a hill, each trial had been like ascending another summit, and his death seemed like gaining the top of the mountain, from which he could see the whole of the faithfulness and the love of him to whom he had committed his soul. Get thee up, dear friend, into the high mountain.

He shall gather the lambs with his arm.”—Isaiah 40:11

Our good Shepherd has in his flock a variety of experiences, some are strong in the Lord, and others are weak in faith, but he is impartial in his care for all his sheep, and the weakest lamb is as dear to him as the most advanced of the flock. Lambs are wont to lag behind, prone to wander, and apt to grow weary, but from all the danger of these infirmities the Shepherd protects them with his arm of power. He finds new-born souls, like young lambs, ready to perish—he nourishes them till life becomes vigorous; he finds weak minds ready to faint and die—he consoles them and renews their strength. All the little ones he gathers, for it is not the will of our heavenly Father that one of them should perish. What a quick eye he must have to see them all! What a tender heart to care for them all! What a far-reaching and potent arm, to gather them all! In his lifetime on earth he was a great gatherer of the weaker sort, and now that he dwells in heaven, his loving heart yearns towards the meek and contrite, the timid and feeble, the fearful and fainting here below. How gently did he gather me to himself, to his truth, to his blood, to his love, to his church! With what effectual grace did he compel me to come to himself! Since my first conversion, how frequently has he restored me from my wanderings, and once again folded me within the circle of his everlasting arm! The best of all is, that he does it all himself personally, not delegating the task of love, but condescending himself to rescue and preserve his most unworthy servant. How shall I love him enough or serve him worthily? I would fain make his name great unto the ends of the earth, but what can my feebleness do for him? Great Shepherd, add to thy mercies this one other, a heart to love thee more truly as I ought.

"He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom." —Isaiah 40:11

Who is he of whom such gracious words are spoken? He is THE GOOD SHEPHERD. Why doth he carry the lambs in his bosom? Because He hath a tender heart, and any weakness at once melts his heart. The sighs, the ignorance, the feebleness of the little ones of his flock draw forth his compassion. It is his office, as a faithful High Priest, to consider the weak. Besides, he purchased them with blood, they are his property: he must and will care for that which cost him so dear. Then he is responsible for each lamb, bound by covenant engagements not to lose one. Moreover, they are all a part of his glory and reward.

But how may we understand the expression, "He will carry them"? Sometimes he carries them by not permitting them to endure much trial. Providence deals tenderly with them. Often they are "carried" by being filled with an unusual degree of love, so that they bear up and stand fast. Though their knowledge may not be deep, they have great sweetness in what they do know. Frequently he "carries" them by giving them a very simple faith, which takes the promise just as it stands, and believingly runs with every trouble straight to Jesus. The simplicity of their faith gives them an unusual degree of confidence, which carries them above the world.

"He carries the lambs in his bosom." Here is boundless affection. Would he put them in his bosom if he did not love them much? Here is tender nearness: so near are they, that they could not possibly be nearer. Here is hallowed familiarity: there are precious love-passages between Christ and his weak ones. Here is perfect safety: in his bosom who can hurt them? They must hurt the Shepherd first. Here is perfect rest and sweetest comfort. Surely we are not sufficiently sensible of the infinite tenderness of Jesus!

ISAIAH 41

"I will strengthen thee."—Isaiah 41:10

God has a strong reserve with which to discharge this engagement; for he is able to do all things. Believer, till thou canst drain dry the ocean of omnipotence, till thou canst break into pieces the towering mountains of almighty strength, thou never needest to fear. Think not that the strength of man shall ever be able to overcome the power of God. Whilst the earth's huge pillars stand, thou hast enough reason to abide firm in thy faith. The same God who directs the earth in its orbit, who feeds the burning furnace of the sun, and trims the lamps of heaven, has promised to supply thee with daily strength. While he is able to uphold the universe, dream not that he will prove unable to fulfil his own promises. Remember what he did in the days of old, in the former generations. Remember how he spake and it was done; how he commanded, and it stood fast. Shall he that created the world grow weary? He hangeth the world upon nothing; shall he who doth this be unable to support his children? Shall he be unfaithful to his word for want of power? Who is it that restrains the tempest? Doth not he ride upon the wings of the wind, and make the clouds his chariots, and hold the ocean in the hollow of his hand? How can he fail thee? When he has put such a faithful promise as this on record, wilt thou for a moment indulge the thought that he has outpromised himself, and gone beyond his power to fulfil? Ah, no! Thou canst doubt no longer.

O thou who art my God and my strength, I can believe that this promise shall be fulfilled, for the boundless reservoir of thy grace can never be exhausted, and the overflowing storehouse of thy strength can never be emptied by thy friends or rifled by thine enemies.

"Now let the feeble all be strong,
And make Jehovah's arm their song."

A Wonderful Guarantee

"I will strengthen thee" ([Isaiah 41:10](#)).

When called to serve or to suffer, we take stock of our strength, and we find it to be less than we thought and less than we need. But let not our heart sink within us while we have such a word as this to fall back upon, for it guarantees us all that we can possibly need. God has strength omnipotent; that strength He can communicate to us; and His promise is that He will do so. He will be the food of our souls and the health of our hearts; and thus He will give us strength. There is no telling how much power God can put into a man. When divine strength comes, human weakness is no more a hindrance. Do we not remember seasons of labor and trial in which we received such special strength that we wondered at ourselves? In the midst of danger we were calm, under bereavement we were resigned, in slander we were self-contained, and in sickness we were patient. The fact is that God gives unexpected strength when unusual trials come upon us, We rise out of our feeble selves. Cowards play the man, foolish ones have wisdom given them, and the silent receive in the self-same hour what they shall speak, My own weakness makes me shrink, but God's promise makes me brave. LORD, strengthen me "according to thy word."

Help from Without

"Yea, I will help thee" ([Isaiah 41:10](#)).

Yesterday's promise secured us strength for what we have to do, but this guarantees us aid in cases where we cannot act alone. The LORD says, "I will help thee." Strength within is supplemented by help without. God can raise us up allies in our warfare if so it seems good in His sight; and even if He does not send us human assistance, He Himself will be at our side, and this is better still. "Our August Ally" is better than legions of mortal helpers. His help is timely: He is a very present help in time of trouble. His help is very wise: He knows how to give each man help meet and fit for him. His help is most effectual, though vain is the help of man. His help is more than help, for He bears all the burden and supplies all the need. "The LORD is my helper, I will not fear what man can do unto me." Because He has already been our help, we feel confidence in Him for the present and the future. Our prayer is, "LORD, by thou my helper"; our experience is, "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities"; our expectation is, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, whence cometh my help"; and our song soon will be, "Thou, LORD, hast holden me."

Joyful Security

"I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness" ([Isaiah 41:10](#)).

Fear of falling is wholesome. To be venturesome is no sign of wisdom. Times come to us when we feel that we must go down unless we have a very special support. Here we have it. God's right hand is a grand thing to lean upon. Mind, it is not only His hand, though it keepeth heaven and earth in their places, but His right hand: His power united with skill, His power where it is most dexterous. Nay, this is not all; it is written, "I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." That hand which He uses to maintain His holiness and to execute His royal sentences -- this shall be stretched out to hold up His trusting ones. Fearful is our danger, but joyful is our security. The man whom God upholds, devils cannot throw down. Weak may be our feet, but almighty is God's right hand. Rough may be the road, but Omnipotence is our upholding. We may boldly go forward. We shall not fall. Let us lean continually where all things lean. God will not withdraw His strength, for His righteousness is there as well. He will be faithful to His promise, and faithful to His Son, and therefore faithful to us. How happy we ought to be! Are we not so?

I will help thee, saith the Lord."—Isaiah 41:14

This morning let us hear the Lord Jesus speak to each one of us: "I will help thee." "It is but a small thing for me, thy God, to help thee. Consider what I have done already. What! not help thee? Why, I bought thee with my blood. What! not help thee? I have died for thee; and if I have done the greater, will I not do the less? Help thee! It is the least thing I will ever do for thee; I have done more, and will do more. Before the world began I chose thee. I made the covenant for thee. I laid aside my glory and became a man for thee; I gave up my life for thee; and if I did all this, I will surely help thee now. In helping thee, I am giving thee what I have bought for thee already. If thou hadst need of a thousand times as much help, I would give it thee; thou requirest little compared with what I am ready to give. 'Tis much for thee to need, but it is nothing for me to bestow. 'Help thee?' Fear not! If there were an ant at the door of thy granary asking for help, it would not ruin thee to give him a handful of thy wheat; and thou art nothing but a tiny insect at the door of my all-sufficiency. 'I will help thee.' "

O my soul, is not this enough? Dost thou need more strength than the omnipotence of the United Trinity? Dost thou want more wisdom than exists in the Father, more love than displays itself in the Son, or more power than is manifest in the influences of the Spirit? Bring hither thine empty pitcher! Surely this well will fill it. Haste, gather up thy wants, and bring them here—thine emptiness, thy woes, thy needs. Behold, this river of God is full for thy supply; what canst thou desire beside? Go forth, my soul, in this thy might. The Eternal God is thine helper!

"Fear not, I am with thee, oh, be not dismay'd!
I, I am thy God, and will still give thee aid."

ISAIAH 42

Broken and Smoking

"A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench" ([Isaiah 42:3](#)).

Then I may reckon upon tender treatment from my LORD. Indeed, I feel myself to be at best as weak, as pliant, as worthless as a reed. Someone said, "I don't care a rush for you"; and the speech, though unkind, was not untrue. Alas! I am worse than a reed

when it grows by the river, for that at least can hold up its head. I am bruised -- sorely, sadly bruised. There is no music in me now; there is a rift which lets out all the melody. Ah, me! Yet Jesus will not break me; and if He will not, then I mind little what others try to do. O sweet and compassionate LORD, I nestle down beneath Thy protection and forget my bruises! Truly I am also fit to be likened to "the smoking flax," whose light is gone, and only its smoke remains. I fear I am rather a nuisance than a benefit. My fears tell me that the devil has blown out my light and left me an obnoxious smoke, and that my LORD will soon put an extinguisher upon one. Yet I perceive that though there were snuffers under the law, there were no extinguishers, and Jesus will not quench me; therefore, I am hopeful. LORD, kindle me anew and cause me to shine forth to Thy glory and to the extolling of Thy tenderness.

A Sure Guide

"I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not" ([Isaiah 42:16](#)).

Think of the infinitely glorious Jehovah acting as a Guide to the blind! What boundless condescension does this imply! A blind man cannot find a way which he does not know. Even when he knows the road, it is hard for him to traverse it; but a road which he has not known is quite out of the question for his unguided feet. Now, we are by nature blind as to the way of salvation, and yet the LORD leads us into it and brings us to Himself, and then opens our eyes. As to the future, we are all of us blind and cannot see an hour before us; but the LORD Jesus will lead us even to our journey's end. Blessed be His name! We cannot guess in which way deliverance can possibly come to us, but the LORD knows, and He will lead us till we shall have escaped every danger. Happy are those who place their hand in that of the great Guide and leave their way and themselves entirely with Him. He will bring them all the way; and when He has brought them home to glory and has opened their eyes to see the way by which He has led them, what a song of gratitude will they sing unto their great Benefactor! LORD, lead Thy poor blind child this day, for I know not my way!

ISAIAH 43

"Through," Not Engulfed

"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" ([Isaiah 43:2](#)).

Bridge there is none: we must go through the waters and feel the rush of the rivers. The presence of God in the flood is better than a ferryboat. Tried we must be, but triumphant we shall be; for Jehovah Himself, who is mightier than many waters, shall be with us. Whenever else He may be away from His people, the LORD will surely be with them in difficulties and dangers. The sorrows of life may rise to an extraordinary height, but the LORD is equal to every occasion. The enemies of God can put in our way dangers of their own making, namely, persecutions and cruel mockings, which are like a burning, fiery furnace. What then? We shall walk through the fires. God being with us, we shall not be burned; nay, not even the smell of fire shall remain upon us. Oh, the wonderful security of the heaven-born and heaven-bound pilgrim! Floods cannot drown him, nor fires burn him. Thy presence, O LORD, is the protection of Thy saints from the varied perils of the road. Behold, in faith I commit myself unto Thee, and my spirit enters into rest.

"Keep not back." —Isaiah 43:6

Although this message was sent to the south, and referred to the seed of Israel, it may profitably be a summons to ourselves. Backward we are naturally to all good things, and it is a lesson of grace to learn to go forward in the ways of God. Reader, are you unconverted, but do you desire to trust in the Lord Jesus? Then keep not back. Love invites you, the promises secure you success, the precious blood prepares the way. Let not sins or fears hinder you, but come to Jesus just as you are. Do you long to pray? Would you pour out your heart before the Lord? Keep not back. The mercy-seat is prepared for such as need mercy; a sinner's cries will prevail with God. You are invited, nay, you are commanded to pray, come therefore with boldness to the throne of grace.

Dear friend, are you already saved? Then keep not back from union with the Lord's people. Neglect not the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. You may be of a timid disposition, but you must strive against it, lest it lead you into disobedience. There is a sweet promise made to those who confess Christ—by no means miss it, lest you come under the condemnation of those who deny him. If you have talents keep not back from using them. Hoard not your wealth, waste not your time; let not your abilities rust or your influence be unused. Jesus kept not back, imitate him by being foremost in self-denials and self-sacrifices. Keep not back from close communion with God, from boldly appropriating covenant blessings, from advancing in the divine life, from prying into the precious mysteries of the love of Christ. Neither, beloved friend, be guilty of keeping others back by your coldness, harshness, or suspicions. For Jesus' sake go forward yourself, and encourage others to do the like. Hell and the leaguered bands of superstition and infidelity are forward to the fight. O soldiers of the cross, keep not back.

"Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money." —Isaiah 43:24

Worshippers at the temple were wont to bring presents of sweet perfumes to be burned upon the altar of God: but Israel, in the time of her backsliding, became ungenerous, and made but few votive offerings to her Lord: this was an evidence of coldness of heart towards God and his house. Reader, does this never occur with you? Might not the complaint of the text be occasionally, if not frequently, brought against you? Those who are poor in pocket, if rich in faith, will be accepted none the less because their gifts are small; but, poor reader, do you give in fair proportion to the Lord, or is the widow's mite kept back from the sacred treasury? The rich believer should be thankful for the talent entrusted to him, but should not forget his large responsibility, for where much is given much will be required; but, rich reader, are you mindful of your obligations, and rendering to the Lord according to the benefit received? Jesus gave his blood for us, what shall we give to him? We are his, and all that we have, for he has purchased us unto himself—can we act as if we were our own? O for more consecration! and to this end, O for more love! Blessed Jesus, how good it is of thee to accept our sweet cane bought with money! nothing is too costly as a tribute to thine unrivalled love, and yet thou dost receive with favour the smallest sincere token of affection! Thou dost receive our poor forget-me-nots and love-tokens as though they were intrinsically precious, though indeed they are but as the bunch of wild flowers which the child brings to its mother. Never may we grow niggardly towards thee, and from this hour never may we hear thee complain of us again for withholding the gifts of our love. We will give thee the first fruits of our increase, and pay thee tithes of all, and then we will confess "of thine own have we given thee."

ISAIAH 44

"I will pour water upon him that is thirsty."—Isaiah 44:3

When a believer has fallen into a low, sad state of feeling, he often tries to lift himself out of it by chastening himself with dark and doleful fears. Such is not the way to rise from the dust, but to continue in it. As well chain the eagle's wing to make it mount, as doubt in order to increase our grace. It is not the law, but the gospel which saves the seeking soul at first; and it is not a legal bondage, but gospel liberty which can restore the fainting believer afterwards. Slavish fear brings not back the backslider to God, but the sweet wooings of love allure him to Jesus' bosom. Are you this morning thirsting for the living God, and unhappy because you cannot find him to the delight of your heart? Have you lost the joy of religion, and is this your prayer, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation"? Are you conscious also that you are barren, like the dry ground; that you are not bringing forth the fruit unto God which he has a right to expect of you; that you are not so useful in the Church, or in the world, as your heart desires to be? Then here is exactly the promise which you need, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty." You shall receive the grace you so much require, and you shall have it to the utmost reach of your needs. Water refreshes the thirsty: you shall be refreshed; your desires shall be gratified. Water quickens sleeping vegetable life: your life shall be quickened by fresh grace. Water swells the buds and makes the fruits ripen; you shall have fructifying grace: you shall be made fruitful in the ways of God. Whatever good quality there is in divine grace, you shall enjoy it to the full. All the riches of divine grace you shall receive in plenty; you shall be as it were drenched with it: and as sometimes the meadows become flooded by the bursting rivers, and the fields are turned into pools, so shall you be—the thirsty land shall be springs of water.

Are the Children In?

"I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring" ([Isaiah 44:3](#)).

Our dear children have not the Spirit of God by nature, as we plainly see. We see much in them which makes us fear as to their future, and this drives us to agonizing prayer. When a son becomes specially perverse, we cry with Abraham, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before thee!" We would sooner see our daughters Hannahs than empresses. This verse should greatly encourage us. It follows upon the words, "Fear not, O Jacob, my servant," and it may well banish our fears. The LORD will give His Spirit; will give it plentifully, pouring it out; will give it effectually, so that it shall be a real and eternal blessing. Under this divine outpouring our children shall come forward, and "one shall say, I am the LORD's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob." This is one of those promises concerning which the LORD will be inquired of. Should we not, at set times, in a distinct manner, pray for our offspring? We cannot give them new hearts, but the Holy Spirit can; and He is easily to be entreated of. The great Father takes pleasure in the prayers of fathers and mothers. Have we any dear ones outside of the ark? Let us not rest till they are shut in with us by the LORD's own hand.

Not Forgotten

"Thou art My servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of Me" ([Isaiah 44:21](#)).

Our Jehovah cannot so forget His servants as to cease to love them. He chose them not for a time but forever. He knew what they would be when He called them into the divine family. He blots out their sins like a cloud; and we may be sure that He will not turn them out of doors for iniquities which He has blotted out. It would be blasphemy to imagine such a thing. He will not forget them so as to cease to think of them. One forgetful moment on the part of our God would be our ruin. Therefore He says, "Thou shalt not be forgotten of me," Men forget us; those whom we have benefited turn against us. We have no abiding place in the fickle hearts of men; but God will never forget one of His true servants. He binds Himself to us not by what we do for Him but by what He has done for us. We have been loved too long and bought at too great a price to be now forgotten. Jesus sees in us His soul's travail, and that He never can forget. The Father sees in us the spouse of His Son, and the Spirit sees in us His own effectual work. The LORD thinketh upon us. This day we shall be succored and sustained. Oh, that the LORD may never be forgotten of us!

"I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee."—Isaiah 44:22

Attentively observe THE INSTRUCTIVE SIMILITUDE: our sins are like a cloud. As clouds are of many shapes and shades, so are our transgressions. As clouds obscure the light of the sun, and darken the landscape beneath, so do our sins hide from us the light of Jehovah's face, and cause us to sit in the shadow of death. They are earth-born things, and rise from the miry places of our nature; and when so collected that their measure is full, they threaten us with storm and tempest. Alas! that, unlike clouds, our sins yield us no genial showers, but rather threaten to deluge us with a fiery flood of destruction. O ye black clouds of sin, how can it be fair weather with our souls while ye remain?

Let our joyful eye dwell upon THE NOTABLE ACT of divine mercy—"blotting out." God himself appears upon the scene, and in divine benignity, instead of manifesting his anger, reveals his grace: he at once and for ever effectually removes the mischief, not by blowing away the cloud, but by blotting it out from existence once for all. Against the justified man no sin remains, the great transaction of the cross has eternally removed his transgressions from him. On Calvary's summit the great deed, by which the sin of all the chosen was for ever put away, was completely and effectually performed.

Practically let us obey THE GRACIOUS COMMAND, "return unto me." Why should pardoned sinners live at a distance from their God? If we have been forgiven all our sins, let no legal fear withhold us from the boldest access to our Lord. Let backslidings be bemoaned, but let us not persevere in them. To the greatest possible nearness of communion with the Lord, let us, in the power of the Holy Spirit, strive mightily to return. O Lord, this night restore us!

ISAIAH 45

We Dare Not Doubt

"I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron" ([Isaiah 45:2](#))

This was for Cyrus; but it is evermore the heritage of all the LORD's own spiritual servants. Only let us go forward by faith, and our way will be cleared for us. Crooks and turns of human craft and satanic subtlety shall be straightened for us; we shall not need to track their devious windings. The gates of brass shall be broken, and the iron bars which fastened them shall be cut asunder. We shall not need the battering ram nor the crowbar: the LORD Himself will do the impossible for us, and the unexpected shall be a fact. Let us not sit down in coward fear. Let us press onward in the path of duty, for the LORD hath said it: "I will go before thee." Ours not to reason why; ours but to dare and dash forward. It is the LORD's work, and He will enable us to do it: all impediments must yield before Him. Hath He not said, "I will break in pieces the gates of brass"! What can hinder His purpose or balk His decrees? Those who serve God have infinite resources. The way is clear to faith though barred to human strength. When Jehovah says, "I will," as He does twice in this promise, we dare not doubt.

"I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain."—Isaiah 45:19

We may gain much solace by considering what God has not said. What he has said is inexpressibly full of comfort and delight; what he has not said is scarcely less rich in consolation. It was one of these "said nots" which preserved the kingdom of Israel in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, for "the Lord said not that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven." 2 Kings 14:27. In our text we have an assurance that God will answer prayer, because he hath "not said unto the seed of Israel, Seek ye me in vain." You who write bitter things against yourselves should remember that, let your doubts and fears say what they will, if God has not cut you off from mercy, there is no room for despair: even the voice of conscience is of little weight if it be not seconded by the voice of

God. What God has said, tremble at! But suffer not your vain imaginings to overwhelm you with despondency and sinful despair. Many timid persons have been vexed by the suspicion that there may be something in God's decree which shuts them out from hope, but here is a complete refutation to that troublesome fear, for no true seeker can be decreed to wrath. "I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth; I have not said," even in the secret of my unsearchable decree, "Seek ye me in vain." God has clearly revealed that he will hear the prayer of those who call upon him, and that declaration cannot be contravened. He has so firmly, so truthfully, so righteously spoken, that there can be no room for doubt. He does not reveal his mind in unintelligible words, but he speaks plainly and positively, "Ask, and ye shall receive." Believe, O trembler, this sure truth—that prayer must and shall be heard, and that never, even in the secrets of eternity, has the Lord said unto any living soul, "Seek ye me in vain."

The Outward, Upward Look

"Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else" ([Isaiah 45:22](#)).

This is a promise of promises. It lies at the foundation of our spiritual life. Salvation comes through a look at Him who is "a just God and a Saviour." How simple is the direction! "Look unto me." How reasonable is the requirement! Surely the creature should look to the Creator. We have looked elsewhere long enough; it is time that we look alone to Him who invites our expectation and promises to give us His salvation. Only a look! Will we not look at once? We are to bring nothing in ourselves but to look outward and upward to our LORD on His throne, whither He has gone up from the cross. A look requires no preparation, no violent effort: it needs neither wit nor wisdom, wealth nor strength. All that we need is in the LORD our God, and if we look to Him for everything, that everything shall be ours, and we shall be saved. Come, far-off ones, look hither! Ye ends of the earth, turn your eyes this way! As from the furthest regions men may see the sun and enjoy his light, so you who lie in death's borders at the very gates of hell may by a look receive the light of God, the life of heaven, the salvation of the LORD Jesus Christ, who is God and therefore able to save.

ISAIAH 46

He Will Carry Us Home

"And even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you" ([Isaiah 46:4](#)).

The year is very old, and here is a promise for our aged friends; yes, and for us all, as age creeps over us. Let us live long enough, and we shall all have hoar hairs; therefore we may as well enjoy this promise by the foresight of faith. When we grow old our God will still be the I AM, abiding evermore the same. Hoar hairs tell of our decay, but He decayeth not. When we cannot carry a burden and can hardly carry ourselves, the LORD will carry us. Even as in our young days He carried us like lambs in His bosom, so will He in our years of infirmity He made us, and He will care for us. When we become a burden to our friends and a burden to ourselves, the LORD will not shake us off, but the rather He will take us up and carry and deliver us more fully than ever. In many cases the LORD give His servants a long and calm evening. They worked hard all day and wore themselves out in their Master's service, and so He said to them, "Now rest in anticipation of that eternal Sabbath which I have prepared for you." Let us not dread old age. Let us grow old graciously since the LORD Himself is with us in fullness of grace.

ISAIAH 48

"Yea, thou heardest not; yea, thou knewest not; yea, from that time that thine ear was not opened."—Isaiah 48:8

It is painful to remember that, in a certain degree, this accusation may be laid at the door of believers, who too often are in a measure spiritually insensible. We may well bewail ourselves that we do not hear the voice of God as we ought, "Yea, thou heardest not." There are gentle motions of the Holy Spirit in the soul which are unheeded by us: there are whisperings of divine command and of heavenly love which are alike unobserved by our leaden intellects. Alas! we have been carelessly ignorant—"Yea, thou knewest not." There are matters within which we ought to have seen, corruptions which have made headway unnoticed; sweet affections which are being blighted like flowers in the frost, untended by us; glimpses of the divine face which might be perceived if we did not wall up the windows of our soul. But we "have not known." As we think of it we are humbled in the deepest self-abasement. How must we adore the grace of God as we learn from the context that all this folly and ignorance, on our part, was foreknown by God, and, notwithstanding that foreknowledge, he yet has been pleased to deal with us in a way of mercy! Admire the marvellous sovereign grace which could have chosen us in the sight of all this! Wonder at the price that was paid for us when Christ knew what we should be! He who hung upon the cross foresaw us as unbelieving, backsliding, cold of heart, indifferent, careless, lax in prayer,

and yet he said, "I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour ... Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life!" O redemption, how wondrously resplendent dost thou shine when we think how black we are! O Holy Spirit, give us henceforth the hearing ear, the understanding heart!

Choice Men

"I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction" (Isaiah 48:10).

This has long been the motto fixed before our eye upon the wall of our bedroom, and in many ways it has also been written on our heart. It is no mean thing to be chosen of God (Jn 15:16, 19). God's choice makes chosen men choice men. Better to be the elect of God than the elect of a whole nation. So eminent is this privilege, that whatever drawback may be joined to it we very joyfully accept it, even as the Jew ate the bitter herbs for the sake of the Paschal Lamb (Ex 12:6, 7, 8). We choose the furnace, since God chooses us in it. We are chosen as an afflicted people (Ps 18:27-note) and not as a prosperous people, chosen not in the palace but in the furnace. In the furnace beauty is marred, fashion is destroyed, strength is melted, glory is consumed, and yet here eternal love reveals its secrets and declares its choice. So has it been in our case. In times of severest trial God has made to us our calling and election plain, and we have made it sure (2Pe 1:10KJV): then have we chosen the LORD to be our God, and He has shown that we are assuredly His chosen. Therefore, if today the furnace be heated seven times hotter, we will not dread it (Da 3:17, 18), for the glorious Son of God will walk with us amid the glowing coals (Da 3:19, 25).

"I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction."—Isaiah 48:10

Comfort thyself, tried believer, with this thought: God saith, "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." Does not the word come like a soft shower, assuaging the fury of the flame? Yea, is it not an asbestos armour, against which the heat hath no power? Let affliction come—God has chosen me. Poverty, thou mayst stride in at my door, but God is in the house already, and he has chosen me. Sickness, thou mayst intrude, but I have a balsam ready—God has chosen me. Whatever befalls me in this vale of tears, I know that he has "chosen" me. If, believer, thou requirest still greater comfort, remember that you have the Son of Man with you in the furnace. In that silent chamber of yours, there sitteth by your side One whom thou hast not seen, but whom thou lovest; and oftentimes when thou knowest it not, he makes all thy bed in thy affliction, and smooths thy pillow for thee. Thou art in poverty; but in that lovely house of thine the Lord of life and glory is a frequent visitor. He loves to come into these desolate places, that he may visit thee. Thy friend sticks closely to thee. Thou canst not see him, but thou mayst feel the pressure of his hands. Dost thou not hear his voice? Even in the valley of the shadow of death he says, "Fear not, I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God." Remember that noble speech of Caesar: "Fear not, thou carriest Caesar and all his fortune." Fear not, Christian; Jesus is with thee. In all thy fiery trials, his presence is both thy comfort and safety. He will never leave one whom he has chosen for his own. "Fear not, for I am with thee," is his sure word of promise to his chosen ones in the "furnace of affliction." Wilt thou not, then, take fast hold of Christ, and say

"Through floods and flames, if Jesus lead,
I'll follow where he goes."

ISAIAH 49

I will give thee for a covenant of the people."—Isaiah 49:8

Jesus Christ is himself the sum and substance of the covenant, and as one of its gifts. He is the property of every believer. Believer, canst thou estimate what thou hast gotten in Christ? "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Consider that word "God" and its infinity, and then meditate upon "perfect man" and all his beauty; for all that Christ, as God and man, ever had, or can have, is thine—out of pure free favour, passed over to thee to be thine entailed property forever. Our blessed Jesus, as God, is omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent. Will it not console you to know that all these great and glorious attributes are altogether yours? Has he power? That power is yours to support and strengthen you, to overcome your enemies, and to preserve you even to the end. Has he love? Well, there is not a drop of love in his heart which is not yours; you may dive into the immense ocean of his love, and you may say of it all, "It is mine." Hath he justice? It may seem a stern attribute, but even that is yours, for he will by his justice see to it that all which is promised to you in the covenant of grace shall be most certainly secured to you. And all that he has as perfect man is yours. As a perfect man the Father's delight was upon him. He stood accepted by the Most High. O believer, God's acceptance of Christ is thine acceptance; for knowest thou not that the love which the Father set on a perfect Christ, he sets on thee now? For all that Christ did is thine. That perfect righteousness which Jesus wrought out, when through his stainless life he kept the

law and made it honourable, is thine, and is imputed to thee. Christ is in the covenant.

"My God, I am thine—what a comfort divine!
What a blessing to know that the Saviour is mine!
In the heavenly Lamb thrice happy I am,
And my heart it doth dance at the sound of his name."

A Mountain Choir

"Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the LORD hath comforted His people, and will have mercy upon His afflicted" ([Isaiah 49:13](#)).

So sweet are the comforts of the LORD, that not only the saints themselves may sing of them, but even the heavens and the earth may take up the song. It takes something to make a mountain sing; and yet the prophet summons quite a choir of them. Lebanon, and Sirion, and the high hills of Bashan and Moab, He would set them all singing because of Jehovah's grace to His own Zion. May we not also make mountains of difficulty, and trial, and mystery, and labor become occasions for praise unto our God? "Break forth into singing, O mountains!" This word of promise, that our God will have mercy upon His afflicted, has a whole peal of bells connected with it. Hear their music -- "Sing!" "Be joyful!" "Break forth into singing." The LORD would have His people happy because of His unfailing love. He would not have us sad and doubtful; He claims horn us the worship of believing hearts. He cannot fail us: why should we sigh or sulk as if He would do so? Oh, for a well-tuned harp! Oh, for voices like those of the cherubim before the throne!

"Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands."—Isaiah 49:16

No doubt a part of the wonder which is concentrated in the word "Behold," is excited by the unbelieving lamentation of the preceding sentence. Zion said, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me." How amazed the divine mind seems to be at this wicked unbelief! What can be more astounding than the unfounded doubts and fears of God's favoured people? The Lord's loving word of rebuke should make us blush; he cries, "How can I have forgotten thee, when I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands? How dardest thou doubt my constant remembrance, when the memorial is set upon my very flesh?" O unbelief, how strange a marvel thou art! We know not which most to wonder at, the faithfulness of God or the unbelief of his people. He keeps his promise a thousand times, and yet the next trial makes us doubt him. He never faileth; he is never a dry well; he is never as a setting sun, a passing meteor, or a melting vapour; and yet we are as continually vexed with anxieties, molested with suspicions, and disturbed with fears, as if our God were the mirage of the desert. "Behold," is a word intended to excite admiration. Here, indeed, we have a theme for marvelling. Heaven and earth may well be astonished that rebels should obtain so great a nearness to the heart of infinite love as to be written upon the palms of his hands. "I have graven thee." It does not say, "Thy name." The name is there, but that is not all: "I have graven thee." See the fulness of this! I have graven thy person, thine image, thy case, thy circumstances, thy sins, thy temptations, thy weaknesses, thy wants, thy works; I have graven thee, everything about thee, all that concerns thee; I have put thee altogether there. Wilt thou ever say again that thy God hath forsaken thee when he has graven thee upon his own palms?

ISAIAH 50

Confidence Not Misplaced

"The LORD God will help me" ([Isaiah 50:7](#)).

These are in prophecy the words of Messiah in the day of His obedience unto death, when He gave His back to the smiters and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. He was confident in divine support and trusted in Jehovah. O my soul, thy sorrows are as the small dust of the balance compared with thy LORD's! Canst thou not believe that the LORD God will help thee? Thy LORD was in a peculiar position; for as the representative of sinful men -- their substitute and sacrifice -- it was needful that the Father should leave Him and cause Him to come under desertion of soul. No such necessity is laid upon thee: thou art not bound to cry, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" Did thy Savior even in such a case still rely upon God, and canst not thou? He died for thee and thus made it impossible that thou shouldst be left alone; wherefore, be of good cheer. In this day's labors or trials say, "The LORD God will help me." Go forth boldly. Set your face like a flint and resolve that no faintness or shamefacedness shall come near you. If God helps, who can hinder? If you are sure of omnipotent aid, what can be too heavy for you? Begin the day joyously, and let no shade of doubt come between thee and the eternal sunshine.

ISAIAH 51

"He will make her wilderness like Eden."—Isaiah 51:3

Methinks, I see in vision a howling wilderness, a great and terrible desert, like to the Sahara. I perceive nothing in it to relieve the eye, all around I am wearied with a vision of hot and arid sand, strewn with ten thousand bleaching skeletons of wretched men who have expired in anguish, having lost their way in the pitiless waste. What an appalling sight! How horrible! a sea of sand without a bound, and without an oasis, a cheerless graveyard for a race forlorn! But behold and wonder! Upon a sudden, upspringing from the scorching sand I see a plant of renown; and as it grows it buds, the bud expands—it is a rose, and at its side a lily bows its modest head; and, miracle of miracles! as the fragrance of those flowers is diffused the wilderness is transformed into a fruitful field, and all around it blossoms exceedingly, the glory of Lebanon is given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon. Call it not Sahara, call it Paradise. Speak not of it any longer as the valley of deathshade, for where the skeletons lay bleaching in the sun, behold a resurrection is proclaimed, and up spring the dead, a mighty army, full of life immortal. Jesus is that plant of renown, and his presence makes all things new. Nor is the wonder less in each individual's salvation. Yonder I behold you, dear reader, cast out, an infant, unswathed, unwashed, defiled with your own blood, left to be food for beasts of prey. But lo, a jewel has been thrown into your bosom by a divine hand, and for its sake you have been pitied and tended by divine providence, you are washed and cleansed from your defilement, you are adopted into heaven's family, the fair seal of love is upon your forehead, and the ring of faithfulness is on your hand—you are now a prince unto God, though once an orphan, cast away. O prize exceedingly the matchless power and grace which changes deserts into gardens, and makes the barren heart to sing for joy.

Men as Men; God as God

"I, even I, am He that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; and forgettest the LORD thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and host feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor?" ([Isaiah 51:12,13](#)).

Let the text itself be taken as the portion for today. There is no need to enlarge upon it. Trembling one, read it, believe it, feed on it, and plead it before the LORD. He whom you fear is only a man after all; while He who promises to comfort you is God, your Maker, and the creator of heaven and earth. Infinite comfort more than covers a very limited danger. "Where is the fury of the oppressor?" It is in the LORD's hand. It is only the fury of a dying creature; fury which will end as soon as the breath is gone from the nostril. Why, then, should we stand in awe of one who is as frail as ourselves? Let us not dishonor our God by making a god of puny man. We can make an idol of a man by rendering to him excessive fear as well as by paying him inordinate love. Let us treat men as men, and God as God; and then we shall go calmly on in the path of duty, fearing the LORD and fearing nobody else.

"On mine arm shall they trust."—Isaiah 51:5

In seasons of severe trial, the Christian has nothing on earth that he can trust to, and is therefore compelled to cast himself on his God alone. When his vessel is on its beam-ends, and no human deliverance can avail, he must simply and entirely trust himself to the providence and care of God. Happy storm that wrecks a man on such a rock as this! O blessed hurricane that drives the soul to God and God alone! There is no getting at our God sometimes because of the multitude of our friends; but when a man is so poor, so friendless, so helpless that he has nowhere else to turn, he flies into his Father's arms, and is blessedly clasped therein! When he is burdened with troubles so pressing and so peculiar, that he cannot tell them to any but his God, he may be thankful for them; for he will learn more of his Lord then than at any other time. Oh, tempest-tossed believer, it is a happy trouble that drives thee to thy Father! Now that thou hast only thy God to trust to, see that thou puttest thy full confidence in him. Dishonour not thy Lord and Master by unworthy doubts and fears; but be strong in faith, giving glory to God. Show the world that thy God is worth ten thousand worlds to thee. Show rich men how rich thou art in thy poverty when the Lord God is thy helper. Show the strong man how strong thou art in thy weakness when underneath thee are the everlasting arms. Now is the time for feats of faith and valiant exploits. Be strong and very courageous, and the Lord thy God shall certainly, as surely as he built the heavens and the earth, glorify himself in thy weakness, and magnify his might in the midst of thy distress. The grandeur of the arch of heaven would be spoiled if the sky were supported by a single visible column, and your faith would lose its glory if it rested on anything discernible by the carnal eye. May the Holy Spirit give you to rest in Jesus this closing day of the month.

ISAIAH 53

"With his stripes we are healed." —Isaiah 53:5

Pilate delivered our Lord to the lictors to be scourged. The Roman scourge was a most dreadful instrument of torture. It was made of the sinews of oxen, and sharp bones were inter-twisted every here and there among the sinews; so that every time the lash came down these pieces of bone inflicted fearful laceration, and tore off the flesh from the bone. The Saviour was, no doubt, bound to the column, and thus beaten. He had been beaten before; but this of the Roman lictors was probably the most severe of his flagellations. My soul, stand here and weep over his poor stricken body.

Believer in Jesus, can you gaze upon him without tears, as he stands before you the mirror of agonizing love? He is at once fair as the lily for innocence, and red as the rose with the crimson of his own blood. As we feel the sure and blessed healing which his stripes have wrought in us, does not our heart melt at once with love and grief? If ever we have loved our Lord Jesus, surely we must feel that affection glowing now within our bosoms.

"See how the patient Jesus stands,
Insulted in his lowest case!
Sinners have bound the Almighty's hands,
And spit in their Creator's face.

With thorns his temples gor'd and gash'd
Send streams of blood from every part;
His back's with knotted scourges lash'd.
But sharper scourges tear his heart."

We would fain go to our chambers and weep; but since our business calls us away, we will first pray our Beloved to print the image of his bleeding self upon the tablets of our hearts all the day, and at nightfall we will return to commune with him, and sorrow that our sin should have cost him so dear.

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." —Isaiah 53:6

Here a confession of sin common to all the elect people of God. They have all fallen, and therefore, in common chorus, they all say, from the first who entered heaven to the last who shall enter there, "All we like sheep have gone astray." The confession, while thus unanimous, is also special and particular: "We have turned every one to his own way." There is a peculiar sinfulness about every one of the individuals; all are sinful, but each one with some special aggravation not found in his fellow. It is the mark of genuine repentance that while it naturally associates itself with other penitents, it also takes up a position of loneliness. "We have turned every one to his own way," is a confession that each man had sinned against light peculiar to himself, or sinned with an aggravation which he could not perceive in others. This confession is unreserved; there is not a word to detract from its force, nor a syllable by way of excuse. The confession is a giving up of all pleas of self-righteousness. It is the declaration of men who are consciously guilty—guilty with aggravations, guilty without excuse: they stand with their weapons of rebellion broken in pieces, and cry, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way." Yet we hear no dolorous wailings attending this confession of sin; for the next sentence makes it almost a song. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." It is the most grievous sentence of the three, but it overflows with comfort. Strange is it that where misery was concentrated mercy reigned; where sorrow reached her climax weary souls find rest. The Saviour bruised is the healing of bruised hearts. See how the lowliest penitence gives place to assured confidence through simply gazing at Christ on the cross!

Christ and His Children

"When Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed" ([Isaiah 53:10](#)).

Our LORD Jesus has not died in vain. His death was sacrificial: He died as our substitute, because death was the penalty of our sins. Because His substitution was accepted of God, He has saved those for whom He made His soul a sacrifice. By death He became like the corn of wheat which bringeth forth much fruit. There must be a succession of children unto Jesus; He is "the Father of the everlasting age." He shall say, "Behold, I and the children whom Thou hast given me." A man is honored in his sons, and Jesus hath His quiver full of these arrows of the mighty. A man is represented in his children, and so is the Christ in Christians. In his seed a man's life seems to be prolonged and extended; and so is the life of Jesus continued in believers. Jesus lives, for He sees His seed. He fixes His eye on us, He delights in us, He recognizes us as the fruit of His soul travail. Let us be glad that our LORD does not fail to enjoy the result of His dread sacrifice, and that He will never cease to feast His eyes upon the harvest of His death. Those eyes which once wept for us are now viewing us with pleasure. Yes, He looks upon those who are looking unto Him. Our eyes meet! What a joy is this!

“He was numbered with the transgressors.”—Isaiah 53:12

Why did Jesus suffer himself to be enrolled amongst sinners? This wonderful condescension was justified by many powerful reasons. In such a character he could the better become their advocate. In some trials there is an identification of the counsellor with the client, nor can they be looked upon in the eye of the law as apart from one another. Now, when the sinner is brought to the bar, Jesus appears there himself. He stands to answer the accusation. He points to his side, his hands, his feet, and challenges Justice to bring anything against the sinners whom he represents; he pleads his blood, and pleads so triumphantly, being numbered with them and having a part with them, that the Judge proclaims, “Let them go their way; deliver them from going down into the pit, for he hath found a ransom.” Our Lord Jesus was numbered with the transgressors in order that they might feel their hearts drawn towards him. Who can be afraid of one who is written in the same list with us? Surely we may come boldly to him, and confess our guilt. He who is numbered with us cannot condemn us. Was he not put down in the transgressor’s list that we might be written in the red roll of the saints? He was holy, and written among the holy; we were guilty, and numbered among the guilty; he transfers his name from yonder list to this black indictment, and our names are taken from the indictment and written in the roll of acceptance, for there is a complete transfer made between Jesus and his people. All our estate of misery and sin Jesus has taken; and all that Jesus has comes to us. His righteousness, his blood, and everything that he hath he gives us as our dowry. Rejoice, believer, in your union to him who was numbered among the transgressors; and prove that you are truly saved by being manifestly numbered with those who are new creatures in him.

ISAIAH 54

“Sing, O barren.”—Isaiah 54:1

Though we have brought forth some fruit unto Christ, and have a joyful hope that we are “plants of his own right hand planting,” yet there are times when we feel very barren. Prayer is lifeless, love is cold, faith is weak, each grace in the garden of our heart languishes and droops. We are like flowers in the hot sun, requiring the refreshing shower. In such a condition what are we to do? The text is addressed to us in just such a state. “Sing, O barren, break forth and cry aloud.” But what can I sing about? I cannot talk about the present, and even the past looks full of barrenness. Ah! I can sing of Jesus Christ. I can talk of visits which the Redeemer has aforesaid paid to me; or if not of these, I can magnify the great love wherewith he loved his people when he came from the heights of heaven for their redemption. I will go to the cross again. Come, my soul, heavy laden thou wast once, and thou didst lose thy burden there. Go to Calvary again. Perhaps that very cross which gave thee life may give thee fruitfulness. What is my barrenness? It is the platform for his fruit-creating power. What is my desolation? It is the black setting for the sapphire of his everlasting love. I will go in poverty, I will go in helplessness, I will go in all my shame and backsliding, I will tell him that I am still his child, and in confidence in his faithful heart, even I, the barren one, will sing and cry aloud.

Sing, believer, for it will cheer thine own heart, and the hearts of other desolate ones. Sing on, for now that thou art really ashamed of being barren, thou wilt be fruitful soon; now that God makes thee loath to be without fruit he will soon cover thee with clusters. The experience of our barrenness is painful, but the Lord’s visitations are delightful. A sense of our own poverty drives us to Christ, and that is where we need to be, for in him is our fruit found.

No Cause to Blush

“Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed” ([Isaiah 54.4](#)). (See [How To Handle Fear](#))

We shall not be ashamed of our faith. Carping critics may assail the Scriptures upon which we ground our belief, but every year the LORD will make it more and more clear that in His Book there is no error, no excess, and no omission. It is no discredit to be a simple believer; the faith which looks alone to Jesus is a crown of honor on any man’s head and better than a star on his breast. We shall not be ashamed of our hope. It shall be even as the LORD has said. We shall be fed, led, blest, and rested. Our LORD will come, and then the days of our mourning shall be ended. How we shall glory in the LORD who first gave us lively hope and then gave us that which we hoped for! We shall not be ashamed of our love. Jesus is to us the altogether lovely, and never, never, shall we have to blush because we have yielded our hearts to Him. The sight of our glorious Well-beloved will justify the most enthusiastic attachment to Him. None will blame the martyrs for dying for Him. When the enemies of Christ are clothed with everlasting contempt, the lovers of Jesus shall find themselves honored by all holy beings, because they chose the reproach of Christ rather than the treasures of Egypt.

“Thy Redeemer.” —Isaiah 54:5

Jesus, the Redeemer, is altogether ours and ours for ever. All the offices of Christ are held on our behalf. He is king for us, priest for us, and prophet for us. Whenever we read a new title of the Redeemer, let us appropriate him as ours under that name as much as under any other. The shepherd's staff, the father's rod, the captain's sword, the priest's mitre, the prince's sceptre, the prophet's mantle, all are ours. Jesus hath no dignity which he will not employ for our exaltation, and no prerogative which he will not exercise for our defence. His fulness of Godhead is our unfailing, inexhaustible treasure-house.

His manhood also, which he took upon him for us, is ours in all its perfection. To us our gracious Lord communicates the spotless virtue of a stainless character; to us he gives the meritorious efficacy of a devoted life; on us he bestows the reward procured by obedient submission and incessant service. He makes the unsullied garment of his life our covering beauty; the glittering virtues of his character our ornaments and jewels; and the superhuman meekness of his death our boast and glory. He bequeaths us his manger, from which to learn how God came down to man; and his Cross to teach us how man may go up to God. All his thoughts, emotions, actions, utterances, miracles, and intercessions, were for us. He trod the road of sorrow on our behalf, and hath made over to us as his heavenly legacy the full results of all the labours of his life. He is now as much ours as heretofore; and he blushes not to acknowledge himself "our Lord Jesus Christ," though he is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. Christ everywhere and every way is our Christ, for ever and ever most richly to enjoy. O my soul, by the power of the Holy Spirit! call him this morning, "thy Redeemer."

His Kindness and Covenant

"For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the Covenant of My Peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee" ([Isaiah 54:10](#)).

One of the most delightful qualities of divine love is its abiding character. The pillars of the earth may be moved out of their places, but the kindness and the covenant of our merciful Jehovah never depart from His people. How happy my soul feels in a firm belief of this inspired declaration! The year is almost over, and the years of my life are growing few, but time does not change my LORD. New lamps are taking the place of the old; perpetual change is on all things, but our LORD is the same. Force over turns the hills, but no conceivable power can affect the eternal God. Nothing in the past, the present, or the future can cause Jehovah to be unkind to me. My soul, rest in the eternal kindness of the LORD, who treats thee as one near of kin. Remember also the everlasting covenant. God is ever mindful of it—see that thou art mindful of it too. In Christ Jesus the glorious God has pledged Himself to thee to be thy God and to hold thee as one of His people. Kindness and covenant—dwell on these words as sure and lasting things which eternity itself shall not take from thee.

"And lay thy foundations with sapphires."—Isaiah 54:11

Not only that which is seen of the church of God, but that which is unseen, is fair and precious. Foundations are out of sight, and so long as they are firm it is not expected that they should be valuable; but in Jehovah's work everything is of a piece, nothing slurred, nothing mean. The deep foundations of the work of grace are as sapphires for preciousness, no human mind is able to measure their glory. We build upon the covenant of grace, which is firmer than adamant, and as enduring as jewels upon which age spends itself in vain. Sapphire foundations are eternal, and the covenant abides throughout the lifetime of the Almighty. Another foundation is the person of the Lord Jesus, which is clear and spotless, everlasting and beautiful as the sapphire; blending in one the deep blue of earth's ever rolling ocean and the azure of its all embracing sky. Once might our Lord have been likened to the ruby as he stood covered with his own blood, but now we see him radiant with the soft blue of love, love abounding, deep, eternal. Our eternal hopes are built upon the justice and the faithfulness of God, which are clear and cloudless as the sapphire. We are not saved by a compromise, by mercy defeating justice, or law suspending its operations; no, we defy the eagle's eye to detect a flaw in the groundwork of our confidence—our foundation is of sapphire, and will endure the fire.

The Lord himself has laid the foundation of his people's hopes. It is matter for grave enquiry whether our hopes are built upon such a basis. Good works and ceremonies are not a foundation of sapphires, but of wood, hay, and stubble; neither are they laid by God, but by our own conceit. Foundations will all be tried ere long: woe unto him whose lofty tower shall come down with a crash, because based on a quicksand. He who is built on sapphires may await storm or fire with equanimity, for he shall abide the test.

"I will make thy windows of agates."—Isaiah 54:12

The church is most instructively symbolized by a building erected by heavenly power, and designed by divine skill. Such a spiritual house must not be dark, for the Israelites had light in their dwellings; there must therefore be windows to let the light in and to allow the inhabitants to gaze abroad. These windows are precious as agates: the ways in which the church beholds her Lord and heaven, and spiritual truth in general, are to be had in the highest esteem. Agates are not the most transparent of gems, they are but semi-

pellucid at the best:

“Our knowledge of that life is small,
Our eye of faith is dim.”

Faith is one of these precious agate windows, but alas! it is often so misty and beclouded, that we see but darkly, and mistake much that we do see. Yet if we cannot gaze through windows of diamonds and know even as we are known, it is a glorious thing to behold the altogether lovely One, even though the glass be hazy as the agate. Experience is another of these dim but precious windows, yielding to us a subdued religious light, in which we see the sufferings of the Man of Sorrows, through our own afflictions. Our weak eyes could not endure windows of transparent glass to let in the Master's glory, but when they are dimmed with weeping, the beams of the Sun of Righteousness are tempered, and shine through the windows of agate with a soft radiance inexpressibly soothing to tempted souls. Sanctification, as it conforms us to our Lord, is another agate window. Only as we become heavenly can we comprehend heavenly things. The pure in heart see a pure God. Those who are like Jesus see him as he is. Because we are so little like him, the window is but agate; because we are somewhat like him, it is agate. We thank God for what we have, and long for more. When shall we see God and Jesus, and heaven and truth, face to face?

Weapons Doomed to Fail

"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn" ([Isaiah 54:17](#)).

There is great clatter in the forges and smithies of the enemy. They are I making weapons wherewith to smite the saints. They could not even do as much as this if the LORD of saints did not allow them; for He has created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire. But see how busily they labor! How many swords and spears they fashion! It matters nothing, for on the blade of every weapon you may read this inscription: It shall not Prosper. But now listen to another noise: it is the strife of tongues. Tongues are more terrible instruments than can be made with hammers and anvils, and the evil which they inflict cuts deeper and spreads wider. What will become of us now? Slander, falsehood, insinuation, ridicule—these are poisoned arrows; how can we meet them? The LORD God promises us that, if we cannot silence them, we shall, at least, escape from being ruined by them. They condemn us for the moment, but we shall condemn them at last and forever. The mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped, and their falsehoods shall be turned to the honor of those good men who suffered by them.

No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper.”—Isaiah 54:17

This day is notable in English history for two great deliverances wrought by God for us. On this day the plot of the Papists to destroy our Houses of Parliament was discovered, 1605.

“While for our princes they prepare
In caverns deep a burning snare,
He shot from heaven a piercing ray,
And the dark treachery brought to day.”

And secondly—to-day is the anniversary of the landing of King William III, at Torbay, by which the hope of Popish ascendancy was quashed, and religious liberty was secured, 1688.

This day ought to be celebrated, not by the saturnalia of striplings, but by the songs of saints. Our Puritan forefathers most devoutly made it a special time of thanksgiving. There is extant a record of the annual sermons preached by Matthew Henry on this day. Our Protestant feeling, and our love of liberty, should make us regard its anniversary with holy gratitude. Let our hearts and lips exclaim, “We have heard with our ears, and our fathers have told us the wondrous things which thou didst in their day, and in the old time before them.” Thou hast made this nation the home of the gospel; and when the foe has risen against her, thou hast shielded her. Help us to offer repeated songs for repeated deliverances. Grant us more and more a hatred of Antichrist, and hasten on the day of her entire extinction. Till then and ever, we believe the promise, “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper.” Should it not be laid upon the heart of every lover of the gospel of Jesus on this day to plead for the overturning of false doctrines and the extension of divine truth? Would it not be well to search our own hearts, and turn out any of the Popish lumber of self-righteousness which may lie concealed therein?

Full of Song

"For you will go out with joy And be led forth with peace; The mountains and the hills will break forth into shouts of joy before you, And all the trees of the field will clap their hands." ([Isaiah 55:12](#)).

When sin is pardoned, our greatest sorrow is ended, and our truest pleasure begins. Such is the joy which the LORD bestows upon His reconciled ones, that it overflows and fills all nature with delight. The material world has latent music in it, and a renewed heart knows how to bring it out and make it vocal. Creation is the organ, and a gracious man finds out its keys, lays his hand thereon, and wakes the whole system of the universe to the harmony of praise. Mountains and hills, and other great objects, are, as it were, the bass of the chorus; while the trees of the wood, and all things that have life, take up the air of the melodious song. When God's Word is made to prosper among us and souls are saved, then everything seems full of song. When we hear the confessions of young believers and the testimonies of well-instructed saints, we are made so happy that we must praise the LORD, and then it seems as if rocks and hills and woods and fields echo our joy-notes and turn the world into an orchestra. LORD, on this happy May Day, lead me out into thy tuneful world as rich in praise as a lark in full song. (See Torrey's Topic on "[Joy](#)")

ISAIAH 57

What Is Painful Will End

"I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before Me, and the souls; which I have made" ([Isaiah 57:16](#)).

Our heavenly Father seeks our instruction, not our destruction. His contention with us has a kind intention toward us. He will not be always in arms against us. We think the LORD is long in His chastisements, but that is because we are short in our patience. His compassion endureth forever, but not His contention. The night may drag its weary length along, but it must in the end give place to cheerful day. As contention is only for a season, so the wrath which leads to it is only for a small moment. The LORD loves His chosen too well to be always angry with them. If He were to deal with us always as He does sometimes, we should faint outright and go down hopelessly to the gates of death. Courage, dear heart! The LORD will soon end His chiding. Bear up, for the LORD will bear you up and bear you through. He who made you knows how frail you are and how little you can bear. He will handle tenderly that which He has fashioned so delicately. Therefore, be not afraid because of the painful present, for it hastens to a happy future. He that smote you will heal you; His little wrath shall be followed by great mercies.

"Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed."—Jeremiah 17:14

"I have seen his ways, and will heal him."—Isaiah 57:18

It is the sole prerogative of God to remove spiritual disease. Natural disease may be instrumentally healed by men, but even then the honour is to be given to God who giveth virtue unto medicine, and bestoweth power unto the human frame to cast off disease. As for spiritual sicknesses, these remain with the great Physician alone; he claims it as his prerogative, "I kill and I make alive, I wound and I heal;" and one of the Lord's choice titles is Jehovah-Rophi, the Lord that healeth thee. "I will heal thee of thy wounds," is a promise which could not come from the lip of man, but only from the mouth of the eternal God. On this account the psalmist cried unto the Lord, "O Lord, heal me, for my bones are sore vexed," and again, "Heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee." For this, also, the godly praise the name of the Lord, saying, "He healeth all our diseases." He who made man can restore man; he who was at first the creator of our nature can new create it. What a transcendent comfort it is that in the person of Jesus "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily!" My soul, whatever thy disease may be, this great Physician can heal thee. If he be God, there can be no limit to his power. Come then with the blind eye of darkened understanding, come with the limping foot of wasted energy, come with the maimed hand of weak faith, the fever of an angry temper, or the ague of shivering despondency, come just as thou art, for he who is God can certainly restore thee of thy plague. None shall restrain the healing virtue which proceeds from Jesus our Lord. Legions of devils have been made to own the power of the beloved Physician, and never once has he been baffled. All his patients have been cured in the past and shall be in the future, and thou shalt be one among them, my friend, if thou wilt but rest thyself in him this night.

ISAIAH 58

Continual Guidance

"The LORD shall guide thee continually" ([Isaiah 58:11](#)).

What aileth thee? Hast thou lost thy way? Art thou entangled in a dark wood and canst thou not find thy paths? Stand still, and see the salvation of God. He knows the way, and He will direct thee in it if thou cry unto Him. Every day brings its own perplexity. How sweet to feel that the guidance of the LORD is continual! If we choose our own way or consult with flesh and blood we cast out the LORD's guidance; but if we abstain from self-will, then He will direct every step of our road, every hour of the day, and every day of the year, and every year of our life. If we will but be guided, we shall be guided. If we will commit our way unto the LORD, He will direct our course so that we shall not lose ourselves. But note to whom this promise is made. Read the previous verse: "If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry." We must feel for others and give them, not a few dry crusts, but such things as we ourselves would wish to receive. If we show a tender care for our fellow-creatures in the hour of their need, then will the LORD attend to our necessities and make Himself our continual Guide. Jesus is the Leader, not of misers, nor of those who oppress the poor, but of the kind and tenderhearted. Such persons are pilgrims who shall never miss their way.

"And the LORD shall guide thee continually."—Isaiah 58:11

"The Lord shall guide thee." Not an angel, but JEHOVAH shall guide thee. He said he would not go through the wilderness before his people, an angel should go before them to lead them in the way; but Moses said, "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." Christian, God has not left you in your earthly pilgrimage to an angel's guidance: he himself leads the van. You may not see the cloudy, fiery pillar, but Jehovah will never forsake you. Notice the word shall—"The Lord shall guide thee." How certain this makes it! How sure it is that God will not forsake us! His precious "shalls" and "wills" are better than men's oaths. "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Then observe the adverb continually. We are not merely to be guided sometimes, but we are to have a perpetual monitor; not occasionally to be left to our own understanding, and so to wander, but we are continually to hear the guiding voice of the Great Shepherd; and if we follow close at his heels, we shall not err, but be led by a right way to a city to dwell in. If you have to change your position in life; if you have to emigrate to distant shores; if it should happen that you are cast into poverty, or uplifted suddenly into a more responsible position than the one you now occupy; if you are thrown among strangers, or cast among foes, yet tremble not, for "the Lord shall guide thee continually." There are no dilemmas out of which you shall not be delivered if you live near to God, and your heart be kept warm with holy love. He goes not amiss who goes in the company of God. Like Enoch, walk with God, and you cannot mistake your road. You have infallible wisdom to direct you, immutable love to comfort you, and eternal power to defend you. "Jehovah"—mark the word—"Jehovah shall guide thee continually."

ISAIAH 59

"They weave the spider's web."—Isaiah 59:5

See the spider's web, and behold in it a most suggestive picture of the hypocrite's religion. It is meant to catch his prey: the spider fattens himself on flies, and the Pharisee has his reward. Foolish persons are easily entrapped by the loud professions of pretenders, and even the more judicious cannot always escape. Philip baptized Simon Magus, whose guileful declaration of faith was so soon exploded by the stern rebuke of Peter. Custom, reputation, praise, advancement, and other flies, are the small game which hypocrites take in their nets. A spider's web is a marvel of skill: look at it and admire the cunning hunter's wiles. Is not a deceiver's religion equally wonderful? How does he make so barefaced a lie appear to be a truth? How can he make his tinsel answer so well the purpose of gold? A spider's web comes all from the creature's own bowels. The bee gathers her wax from flowers, the spider sucks no flowers, and yet she spins out her material to any length. Even so hypocrites find their trust and hope within themselves; their anchor was forged on their own anvil, and their cable twisted by their own hands. They lay their own foundation, and hew out the pillars of their own house, disdaining to be debtors to the sovereign grace of God. But a spider's web is very frail. It is curiously wrought, but not enduringly manufactured. It is no match for the servant's broom, or the traveller's staff. The hypocrite needs no battery of Armstrongs to blow his hope to pieces, a mere puff of wind will do it. Hypocritical cobwebs will soon come down when the besom of destruction begins its purifying work. Which reminds us of one more thought, viz., that such cobwebs are not to be endured in the Lord's house: he will see to it that they and those who spin them shall be destroyed for ever. O my soul, be thou resting on something better than a spider's web. Be the Lord Jesus thine eternal hiding-place.

ISAIAH 60

God's Multiplication Table

"A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the LORD will hasten it in his time" ([Isaiah 60:22](#)).

Works for the LORD often begin on a small scale, and they are none the worse for this. Feebleness educates faith, brings God near, and wins glory for His name. Prize promises of increase! Mustard seed is the smallest among seeds, and yet it becomes a treelike plant, with branches which lodge the birds of heaven. We may begin with one, and that "a little one," and yet it will "become a thousand." The LORD is great at the multiplication table. How often did He say to His lone servant, "I will multiply thee!" Trust in the LORD, ye ones and twos; for He will be in the midst of you if you are gathered in His name. "A small one." What can be more despicable in the eyes of those who count heads and weigh forces! Yet this is the nucleus of a great nation. Only one star shines out at first in the evening, but soon the sky is crowded with countless lights. Nor need we think the prospect of increase to be remote, for the promise is, "I Jehovah will hasten it in his time." There will be no premature haste, like that which we see at excited meetings; it will be all in due time, but yet there will be no delay. When the LORD hastens, His speed is glorious.

ISAIAH 61

Set Apart

"Ye shall be named the priests of the LORD" ([Isaiah 61:6](#)).

This literal promise to Israel belongs spiritually to the seed after the Spirit, namely, to all believers. If we live up to our privileges, we shall live unto God so clearly and distinctly that men shall see that we are set apart for holy service and shall name us the priests of the LORD. We may work or trade as others do, and yet we may be solely and wholly the ministering servants of God. Our one occupation shall be to present the perpetual sacrifice of prayer, and praise, and testimony, and self-consecration to the living God by Jesus Christ. This being our one aim, we may leave distracting concerns to those who have no higher calling. "Let the dead bury their dead." It is written, "Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vine-dressers," They may manage politics, puzzle out financial problems, discuss science, and settle the last new quibbles of criticism; but we will give ourselves unto such service as becomes those who, like the LORD Jesus, are ordained to a perpetual priesthood. Accepting this honorable promise as involving a sacred duty, let us put on the vestments of holiness and minister before the LORD all day long.

ISAIAH 62

Never Alone

"Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken" ([Isaiah 62:4](#)).

"Forsaken" is a dreary word. It sounds like a knell. It is the record of I sharpest sorrows and the prophecy of direst ills. An abyss of misery yawns in that word forsaken. Forsaken by one who pledges his honor! Forsaken by a friend so long tried and trusted! Forsaken by a dear relative! Forsaken by father and mother! Forsaken by all! This is woe indeed, and yet it may be patiently born if the LORD will take us up. But what must it be to feel forsaken of God? Think of that bitterest of cries, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Have we ever in any degree tasted the wormwood and the gall of "forsaken" in that sense? If so, let us beseech our LORD to save us from any repetition of so unspeakable a sorrow. Oh, that such darkness may never return! Men in malice said of a saint, "God hath forsaken him; persecute and take him." But it was always false. The LORD's loving favor shall compel our cruel foes to eat their own words or, at least, to hold their tongues. The reverse of all this is that superlative word Hephzibah "the LORD delighteth in thee." This turns weeping into dancing. Let those who dreamed that they were forsaken hear the LORD say, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

"Thou shalt be called, Sought out." —Isaiah 62:12

The surpassing grace of God is seen very clearly in that we were not only sought, but sought out. Men seek for a thing which is lost upon the floor of the house, but in such a case there is only seeking, not seeking out. The loss is more perplexing and the search more persevering when a thing is sought out. We were mingled with the mire: we were as when some precious piece of gold falls into the sewer, and men gather out and carefully inspect a mass of abominable filth, and continue to stir and rake, and search among the heap until the treasure is found. Or, to use another figure, we were lost in a labyrinth; we wandered hither and thither, and when mercy came after us with the gospel, it did not find us at the first coming, it had to search for us and seek us out; for we as lost sheep were so desperately lost, and had wandered into such a strange country, that it did not seem possible that even the Good

Shepherd should track our devious roamings. Glory be to unconquerable grace, we were sought out! No gloom could hide us, no filthiness could conceal us, we were found and brought home. Glory be to infinite love, God the Holy Spirit restored us!

The lives of some of God's people, if they could be written would fill us with holy astonishment. Strange and marvellous are the ways which God used in their case to find his own. Blessed be his name, he never relinquishes the search until the chosen are sought out effectually. They are not a people sought to-day and cast away to-morrow. Almightyness and wisdom combined will make no failures, they shall be called, "Sought out!" That any should be sought out is matchless grace, but that we should be sought out is grace beyond degree! We can find no reason for it but God's own sovereign love, and can only lift up our heart in wonder, and praise the Lord that this night we wear the name of "Sought out."

ISAIAH 63

"Mighty to save."—Isaiah 63:1

By the words "to save" we understand the whole of the great work of salvation, from the first holy desire onward to complete sanctification. The words are multum in parvo: indeed, here is all mercy in one word. Christ is not only "mighty to save" those who repent, but he is able to make men repent. He will carry those to heaven who believe; but he is, moreover, mighty to give men new hearts and to work faith in them. He is mighty to make the man who hates holiness love it, and to constrain the despiser of his name to bend the knee before him. Nay, this is not all the meaning, for the divine power is equally seen in the after-work. The life of a believer is a series of miracles wrought by "the Mighty God." The bush burns, but is not consumed. He is mighty to keep his people holy after he has made them so, and to preserve them in his fear and love until he consummates their spiritual existence in heaven. Christ's might doth not lie in making a believer and then leaving him to shift for himself; but he who begins the good work carries it on; he who imparts the first germ of life in the dead soul, prolongs the divine existence, and strengthens it until it bursts asunder every bond of sin, and the soul leaps from earth, perfected in glory. Believer, here is encouragement. Art thou praying for some beloved one? Oh, give not up thy prayers, for Christ is "mighty to save." You are powerless to reclaim the rebel, but your Lord is Almighty. Lay hold on that mighty arm, and rouse it to put forth its strength. Does your own case trouble you? Fear not, for his strength is sufficient for you. Whether to begin with others, or to carry on the work in you, Jesus is "mighty to save;" the best proof of which lies in the fact that he has saved you. What a thousand mercies that you have not found him mighty to destroy!

"I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us."—Isaiah 63:7

And canst thou not do this? Are there no mercies which thou hast experienced? What though thou art gloomy now, canst thou forget that blessed hour when Jesus met thee, and said, "Come unto me"? Canst thou not remember that rapturous moment when he snapped thy fetters, dashed thy chains to the earth, and said, "I came to break thy bonds and set thee free"? Or if the love of thine espousals be forgotten, there must surely be some precious milestone along the road of life not quite grown over with moss, on which thou canst read a happy memorial of his mercy towards thee? What, didst thou never have a sickness like that which thou art suffering now, and did he not restore thee? Wert thou never poor before, and did he not supply thy wants? Wast thou never in straits before, and did he not deliver thee? Arise, go to the river of thine experience, and pull up a few bulrushes, and plait them into an ark, wherein thine infant-faith may float safely on the stream. Forget not what thy God has done for thee; turn over the book of thy remembrance, and consider the days of old. Canst thou not remember the hill Mizar? Did the Lord never meet with thee at Hermon? Hast thou never climbed the Delectable Mountains? Hast thou never been helped in time of need? Nay, I know thou hast. Go back, then, a little way to the choice mercies of yesterday, and though all may be dark now, light up the lamps of the past, they shall glitter through the darkness, and thou shalt trust in the Lord till the day break and the shadows flee away. "Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses, for they have been ever of old."

ISAIAH 64

"We are all as an unclean thing."—Isaiah 64:6

The believer is a new creature, he belongs to a holy generation and a peculiar people—the Spirit of God is in him, and in all respects he is far removed from the natural man; but for all that the Christian is a sinner still. He is so from the imperfection of his nature, and will continue so to the end of his earthly life. The black fingers of sin leave smuts upon our fairest robes. Sin mars our repentance, ere the great Potter has finished it, upon the wheel. Selfishness defiles our tears, and unbelief tampers with our faith.

The best thing we ever did apart from the merit of Jesus only swelled the number of our sins; for when we have been most pure in our own sight, yet, like the heavens, we are not pure in God's sight; and as he charged his angels with folly, much more must he charge us with it, even in our most angelic frames of mind. The song which thrills to heaven, and seeks to emulate seraphic strains, hath human discords in it. The prayer which moves the arm of God is still a bruised and battered prayer, and only moves that arm because the sinless One, the great Mediator, has stepped in to take away the sin of our supplication. The most golden faith or the purest degree of sanctification to which a Christian ever attained on earth, has still so much alloy in it as to be only worthy of the flames, in itself considered. Every night we look in the glass we see a sinner, and had need confess, "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Oh, how precious the blood of Christ to such hearts as ours! How priceless a gift is his perfect righteousness! And how bright the hope of perfect holiness hereafter! Even now, though sin dwells in us, its power is broken. It has no dominion; it is a broken-backed snake; we are in bitter conflict with it, but it is with a vanquished foe that we have to deal. Yet a little while and we shall enter victoriously into the city where nothing defileth.

ISAIAH 65

"The voice of weeping shall be no more heard."—Isaiah 65:19

The glorified weep no more, for all outward causes of grief are gone. There are no broken friendships, nor blighted prospects in heaven. Poverty, famine, peril, persecution, and slander, are unknown there. No pain distresses, no thought of death or bereavement saddens. They weep no more, for they are perfectly sanctified. No "evil heart of unbelief" prompts them to depart from the living God; they are without fault before his throne, and are fully conformed to his image. Well may they cease to mourn who have ceased to sin. They weep no more, because all fear of change is past. They know that they are eternally secure. Sin is shut out, and they are shut in. They dwell within a city which shall never be stormed; they bask in a sun which shall never set; they drink of a river which shall never dry; they pluck fruit from a tree which shall never wither. Countless cycles may revolve, but eternity shall not be exhausted, and while eternity endures, their immortality and blessedness shall co-exist with it. They are for ever with the Lord. They weep no more, because every desire is fulfilled. They cannot wish for anything which they have not in possession. Eye and ear, heart and hand, judgment, imagination, hope, desire, will, all the faculties, are completely satisfied; and imperfect as our present ideas are of the things which God hath prepared for them that love him, yet we know enough, by the revelation of the Spirit, that the saints above are supremely blessed. The joy of Christ, which is an infinite fulness of delight, is in them. They bathe themselves in the bottomless, shoreless sea of infinite beatitude. That same joyful rest remains for us. It may not be far distant. Ere long the weeping willow shall be exchanged for the palm-branch of victory, and sorrow's dewdrops will be transformed into the pearls of everlasting bliss. "Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

Before and During the Call

"It shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear" ([Isaiah 65:24](#)).

Quick work this! The LORD hears us before we call and often answers us in the same speedy manner. Foreseeing our needs and our prayers, He so arranges providence that before the need actually arises He has supplied it, before the trial assails us He has armed us against it. This is the promptitude of omniscience, and we have often seen it exercised. Before we dreamed of the affliction which was coming, the strong consolation which was to sustain us under it had arrived. What a prayer-answering God we have! The second clause suggests the telephone. Though God be in heaven and we upon earth, yet He makes our word, like His own word, to travel very swiftly, When we pray aright we speak into the ear of God. Our gracious Mediator presents our petitions at once, and the great Father hears them and smiles upon them. Grand praying this! Who would not be much in prayer when he knows that he has the ear of the King of kings? This day I will pray in faith, not only believing that I shall be heard, but that I am heard; not only that I shall be answered, but that I have the answer already. Holy Spirit, help me in this!

ISAIAH 66

Joy for the Cast-Out

"Hear the Word of the LORD, ye that tremble at His guard; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for My Name's sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified: but He shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed" ([Isaiah 66:5](#)).

Possibly this text may not apply to one in a thousand of the readers of this little book of promises; but the LORD cheers that one in such words as these. Let us pray for all such as are cast out wrongfully by the society which they love. May the LORD appear to

their joy! The text applies to truly gracious men who tremble at the word of the LORD. These were hated of their brethren and at length cast out because of their fidelity and their holiness. This must have been very bitter to them; and all the more so because their casting out was done in the name of religion, and professedly with the view of glorifying God. How much is done for the devil in the name of God! The use of the name of Jehovah to add venom to the bite of the old serpent is an instance of his subtlety. The appearing of the LORD for them is the hope of His persecuted people. He appears as the advocate and defender of His elect; and when He does so it means a clear deliverance for the God-fearing and shame for their oppressors. O LORD, fulfill this word to those whom men are deriding!

Tender Comfort

"As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you" ([Isaiah 66:13](#)).

A mother's comfort! Ah, this is tenderness itself. How she enters into her child's grief! How she presses him to her bosom and tries to take all his sorrow into her own heart! He can tell her all, and she will sympathize as nobody else can. Of all comforters the child loves best his mother, and even full-grown men have found it so. Does Jehovah condescend to act the mother's part? This is goodness indeed. We readily perceive how He is a father; but will He be as a mother also? Does not this invite us to holy familiarity, to unreserved confidence, to sacred rest? When God Himself becomes "the Comforter," no anguish can long abide. Let us tell out our trouble, even though sobs and sighs should become our readiest utterance. He will not despise us for our tears; our mother did not. He will consider our weakness as she did, and He will put away our faults, only in a surer, safer way than our mother could do. We will not try to bear our grief alone; that would be unkind to one so gentle and so kind. Let us begin the day with our loving God, and wherefore should we not finish it in the same company, since mothers weary not of their children?