

THE WEANED CHILD

NO. 1210

A SERMON
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 AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“My soul is even as a weaned child.”
Psalm 131:2.

I WAS once conversing with a very excellent aged minister and while we were talking about our attitude and feelings, he made the following confession—he said, “When I read that passage in the psalm, ‘My soul is even as a weaned child,’ I wish it were true of me, but I think I should have to make an alteration of one syllable, and then it would exactly describe me at times—‘My soul is even as a *weaning* rather than a weaned child,’ for,” said he, “with the infirmities of old age, I fear I get fretful and peevish and anxious. And when the day is over, I do not feel that I have been in so calm, resigned, and trustful a frame of mind as I could desire.” I suppose, dear brethren, that frequently we have to make the same confession. We wish we were like a weaned child, but we find ourselves neglecting to walk by faith and getting into the way of walking by the sight of our eyes. And then, we get like the *weaning* child which is fretting and worrying, and unrestful, and who causes trouble to those round about it and, most of all, trouble to itself. Weaning was one of the first real troubles that we met with after we came into this world and it was, at the time, a very terrible one to our little hearts. We got over it somehow or other. We do not remember, now, what a trial it was to us, but we may take it as a type of all troubles, for if we have faith in Him, who was our God from our mother’s breasts, as we got over the weaning and do not even remember it, so we shall get over *all* the troubles that are to come, and shall scarcely remember them for the joy that will follow. If, indeed, Dr. Watts is correct in saying that when we get to heaven we shall, “recount the labors of our feet,” then, I am quite sure that we shall only do it, as he says, “with transporting joy.” There, at least, we shall each one be as a weaned child.

It is a very happy condition of heart which is here indicated, and I shall speak about it with a desire to promote the increase of such a state of heart among believers, with the hope that many of us may reach it, and that all of us who *have* reached it may continue to say still, “My soul is even as a weaned child.”

I. First, let us think WHAT THE PSALMIST INTENDED BY THIS DESCRIPTION. We will begin by noticing the *context*, in order to understand him, and then, we will consider the *metaphor* in order, still further, to see what he literally meant.

First, look at the context and you will see that he intended that *pride had been subdued in him*, and driven out of him, for he commences the psalm with this, “Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor my eyes lofty.” We are all proud by nature, though there is not one among us that has anything to be proud of! It makes no difference what our condition is—we universally dream that we have something to glory about. The Lord Mayor is not a bit prouder in his gold chain than the beggar in his rags. Indeed, pride is a kind of weed that will grow on very poor soil quite as freely as in the best cultivated garden. Every man thinks more of himself than God thinks of him, for when a man is in his highest estate and at his best, he is nothing but dust, and the Lord knows his frame and remembers that he is just that and nothing better. Some poor creatures, however, indulge their pride, and let it run away with them as a wild horse with its rider. They cannot be trusted with a little money, but straightway, they hold their heads so high that one might think the stars in danger! They cannot be trusted with a little talent, but straightway, their genius is omnipotent, in their own opinion, and they themselves are to be treated like demi-gods. And if they are God’s servants, they cannot have a little success in the ministry or in the Sunday school without becoming quite unpleasant to those round about them, through their boastful ways and eagerness to talk of self. Scarcely can they have enjoyment, even of the presence of God, but what they begin to make an idol of their attainments and graces, and begin to say, “My mountain, *my* mountain, stands firm. I, *I* shall

never be moved.” Great *I* grow without any watering, for the soil of nature is muddy, and the rush of pride takes to it mightily! You need never be troubled about a man’s keeping up his opinion of himself—he will be pretty sure to do that—the force of nature usually runs in the direction of self-conceit.

This pride very often leads to haughtiness, domineering ways towards others, and contempt of them, as if they were not as good as we are. And if we see any errors and mistakes in them, we conclude that they are very foolish, and that we would act much better if we were in their position. If they act nobly and well, this same pride of ours leads us to pick holes in them, and to detract from their excellence. And if we cannot get up as high as they are, we try to pull them down to our own level. This is a base thing to do, but the proud man is always mean. Loftiness of looks and meanness of heart run with him, like a couple of hounds in a leash. The humble man is the truly great man! Because God’s gentleness has made him great, he is sure to be kept lowly before the Lord by the Holy Spirit. The proud man is really little—no, more—he is really *nothing*, even in the things in which he boasts himself.

David could say, “My heart is not haughty.” His brother, Eliab, said that David was proud when he went down to carry his father’s present to his soldier brothers, but it was not so. His heart was content to be with the sheep—he was quite willing to follow the “ewes great with young.” When he was in Saul’s court, they thought him ambitious, but he was not so—he was quite satisfied to be a servant there, to fight the battles of Israel. The place of captain over a wandering band was forced upon him, but he would sooner have dwelt at home. And when he was king, he did not exalt himself. Absalom, when he was aspiring to the kingdom, was a far greater man to look at than his father David, for David walked in lowliness of spirit before the Lord. Whatever faults he had, he certainly had not the fault of vanity, or of being intoxicated in spirit with what God had done for him.

Now, it is a great blessing when the Spirit of God keeps us from being haughty and our looks from being lofty. We shall never be as a weaned child till it gets to that, for a weaned child thinks nothing of itself. It is but a little babe! Whatever consciousness it has at all about the matter, it is not conscious of any strength or any wisdom! It is entirely dependent upon its mother’s care. And blessed is that man who is brought to lie very low in his own spirit before the Lord, resting on the bosom of infinite love. After all, brethren, we are nobodies and we have come from a line of nobodies! The proudest peer of the realm may trace his pedigree as far as ever he likes, but he ought to remember that if his blood is blue, it must be very unhealthy to have such blood in one’s veins. The common ruddy blood of the peasant is, after all, far healthier. Big as men may account themselves to be on account of their ancestors, we all trace our line up to a gardener, who lost his place through stealing his Master’s fruit, and that is the farthest we can possibly go. Adam covers us all with disgrace, and under that disgrace we should all sit humbly down. Look into your own heart, and if you dare to be proud, you have never seen your heart at all. It is a mass of pollution. It is a den of filthiness. Apart from divine grace, your heart is a seething mass of putrefaction, and if God’s eternal Spirit were not to hold it in check, but to let your nature have its way—envy, lust, murder and every foul thing would come flying forth in your daily life! A sinner and yet proud! It is monstrous. As for children of God, how can *they* be proud? I fear we are all too much so. But what have we to be proud of? What have we that we have not received? How, then, can we boast? Are we dressed in the robe of Christ’s righteousness? We did not put a thread into it—it was all given us by the charity of Jesus. Are our garments white? We have washed them in the blood of the Lamb. Are we new creatures? We have been created anew by omnipotent power, or we should still be as we were. Are we holding on our way? It is God that enables us to persevere, or we should long ago have gone back. Have we been kept from the great transgression? Who has kept us? We certainly have not kept ourselves. There is nothing that we have of which we can say, “I did this and it is all my own,” except our faults and our sins, and over these we ought to blush. Yet, brethren, when the Lord favors us, especially in early life—though I do not know but what it is almost as much so with us who have got a little farther on—if you get a full sail and a favoring breeze, and the vessel scuds along before the wind, there is need of a great deal of ballast, or else there will soon be a tale to tell of a vessel that was upset and a sailor who was too venturesome, and was never heard of again! We have need continually to be kept lowly before God, for pride is the besetting sin of mankind. Oh, that God would give us to be as David was—not haughty, neither our eyes lofty.

This is the first help towards being as a weaned child.

And next, he tells us that *he was not ambitious*—“Neither do I exercise myself in great matters.” He was a shepherd. He did not need to go and fight Goliath, but when he did do it, it was because his nation needed him. He said, “Is there not a cause?” Otherwise, he had kept in the background still. When he went into the cave of Adullam, he never lifted a hand to become king. He might have struck his enemy several times, and with one stroke have ended the warfare and seized the throne, but he would not lift a hand against the Lord’s anointed, for, like a weaned child, he was not ambitious. He was willing to go where God would put him, but he was not seeking after great things. Now, dear brethren, we shall never be as a weaned child if we have high notions of what we ought to be and large desires for self. If we are great men in our own esteem, of course we ought to have great things for ourselves. But if we know ourselves, and are brought into a true condition of mind, we shall avoid those “vaulting ambitions which leap over themselves.” For instance, we shall not be hankering after great possessions. “Having food and raiment,” we shall be “therewith content.” If God adds to our store of the comforts of life, we shall be grateful. We shall be diligent in business, but we shall not be greedy and miserly. “While others stretch their arms, like seas, to grasp in all the shore,” we shall be content with far less things, for we know that greed after earthly riches brings with it slackness of desire as to true riches. The more hungry a man is after this world, the less he pines after the treasures of the world to come. We shall not be covetous, if we are like a weaned child. Neither shall we sigh for position and influence—whoever heard of a weaned child doing that? Let it lie in its parent’s bosom and it is content, and so shall we be in the bosom of our God. Yet some Christian men seem as if they could not pull unless they are the fore horses of the team. They cannot work with others, but must have the chief place, contrary to the word of the apostle who says, “My brethren, be you not many masters, lest you receive the greater condemnation.” Blessed is that servant who is quite content with that position which his master appoints him—glad to unloose the laces of his Lord’s shoes—glad to wash the saints’ feet—glad to engage in sweeping a crossing for the king’s servants. Let us do anything for Jesus, counting it the highest honor even to be a doormat inside the church of God, if we might be such a thing as that, for the saints even to remove the filthiness from themselves upon us, so long as we may but be of some use to them, and bring some glory to God. You remember the word of Jeremiah to Baruch? Baruch had been writing the roll for the prophet, and straightway Baruch thought he was somebody. He had been writing the word of the Lord, had he not? But the prophet said to him, “Seek you great things for yourself? Seek them not.” And so says the mind of the Spirit to us all. Do not desire to occupy positions of eminence and prominence, but let your soul be as a weaned child—not exercising itself in great matters.

Very often we seek after great approval. We want to do great deeds that people will talk about, and especially some famous work which everybody will admire. This is human nature, for the love of approval is rooted in us. As the old rhyme puts it—

*“The proud to gain it, toils on toils endures.
The modest shun it but to make it sure.”*

But that man has arrived at the right position who has become, “careless, himself a dying man, of dying man’s esteem.” It is he who judges what is right before God and does it caring neither for public nor private opinion in the matter, to whom it is no more concern what people may say of an action which his conscience commends than what tune the north wind whistles as it blows over the Alps! He who is the slave of man’s opinions is a slave, indeed. I would sooner go to some barbarous climate where yet the slave whip would fall upon my shoulders, and the cruel fetter would chain me to the floor, than live in dread of such a thing as I myself, and tremble with fear of offending this man and the other by doing what I believe to be right. He who fears God needs fear no one else. But he who reaches that point has undergone a painful weaning, and had it not been for that he would not be able to say, “My soul is even as a weaned child.”

Frequently, too, we exercise ourselves in great matters by having a high ambition to do something very wonderful in the church. This is why so very little is done! The great destroyer of *good* works is the ambition to do *great* works! A little thing can be done by a Christian brother well; but if it strikes him, “I will organize a society to do it and a committee, a secretary, a president, and a vice-president,” (it being

well known that nothing can be done till you get a committee, a president and all that kind of thing), the brother soon hampers himself, and his work ends in resolutions and reports, and nothing more. But the brother who says, “Here is a district which nobody visits. I will do what I can in it”—he is probably the man who will get another to help him, and another and the work will be done. The young man who is quite content to begin with preaching in a little room in a village to a dozen is the man who will win souls. The other brother, who does not begin preaching till he can preach to five thousand, will never do anything—he never can. I read of a king who always wanted to take the second step first, but he was not a Solomon. There are many such about, not kings but common people, who do not want to do the first thing, the thing they can do, the thing which God calls them to do, the thing they ought to do. No, but they must do something great. Oh, dear brother, if your soul ever gets to be as it ought, you will feel, “The least thing that I can do, I shall be glad to do. The very poorest and meanest form of Christian service, as men think it, is better than I deserve.” It is a great honor to be allowed to unloose the laces of my Lord’s shoes! A young man, who once had a small charge once, and only about two hundred hearers, complained to an old minister that he wished he could move somewhere else. But the old one said, “Do not be in a hurry, brother. The responsibility of 200 souls is quite heavy a load enough for most of us to carry.” And so it is. We need not be so eager to load ourselves with more. He is the best draftsman, not who draws the largest, but the most perfect circle. If the circle is perfect, nobody finds fault with it because it is not large. Fill your sphere, brother, and be content with it. If God shall move you to another, be glad to be moved. If He moves you to a smaller, be as willing to go to a less prominent place as to one that is more so. Have no will about it. Be a weaned child that has given up fretting, crying, worrying, and leaves its mother to do just what seems good in her sight. When we are thoroughly weaned, it is well with us—pride is gone, and ambition is gone, too. We shall need much nursing by one who is wiser and gentler than the best mother before we shall be quite weaned of these two dearly beloved sins.

Next, David tells us *he was not intrusive*—“Neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.” I have seen many men always vexed and troubled because they would exercise themselves in things too high for them. These things too high for them have been many, but I will mention only a few. They have expected to comprehend everything, and have never been satisfied because many truths are far above and out of their reach. Especially they have expected to know all the deep things of God—the doctrine of election, and how predestination coincides with the free agency of man, and how God orders everything, and yet man is responsible—just as responsible as if there had been no foreknowledge and no foreordination. It is folly to hope to know these “things too high for us.” Here is a little child that has just come off its mother’s knee and it expects to understand a book on trigonometry, and cries because it cannot? And here is another little child that has been down to the sea, and is fretting and kicking in its nurse’s arms because it cannot get the Atlantic into the hollow of its hand. Well, it will have to kick, that will be the end of it. But it is fretting itself for nothing, without any real use or need for its crying, because a little child’s palm cannot hold an ocean. Yet a child might sooner hold the Atlantic and Pacific in its two hands, without spilling a drop, than you and I will ever be able to hold all the revealed truth of God within the compass of our narrow minds. We cannot know everything, and we cannot understand even half what we know! I have given up wanting to understand. As far as I can, I am content with believing all that I see in God’s word. People say, “But you contradict yourself.” I dare say I do, but I never contradict God to my knowledge, nor yet the Bible. If I do, may my Lord forgive me. Do not believe me for a minute if I speak contrary to God’s word, in order to appear consistent. The sin of being inconsistent with my poor fallible self does not trouble me a tenth as much as the dread of being inconsistent with what I find in God’s word! Some want to shape the Scriptures to their creed, and they get a very nice square creed, too, and trim the Bible most dexterously. It is wonderful how they do it. But I would rather have a crooked creed and a straight Bible, than I would try to twist the Bible round to suit what I believe. “Neither do I exercise myself,” says the psalmist, “with things too high for me,” and I think we do well to keep very much in that line. “Oh, but really, one ought to be acquainted with all the phrases of modern doubt.” Yes, and how many hours in a day ought a man give to that kind of thing? Twenty-five out of the 24 would hardly be sufficient, for the phrases of modern thought are innumerable—and every fool who sets himself up as a philosopher sets up a new scheme. Am I to spend my time

in going about to knock his card-houses over? Not I! I have something else to do, and so has every Christian minister. He has real doubts to deal with, which vex true hearts! He has anxieties to relieve in converted souls, and in minds that are pining after the truth and the right. He has these to meet, without everlastingly tilting at windmills, and running all over the country to put down every scarecrow which learned simpletons may set up. We shall soon defile ourselves if we work day after day in the common sewers of skepticism!

Brethren, there is a certain highway of truth in which you and I, like wayfaring men and women, feel ourselves safe—let us travel thereon! There are some things that we do know, because we have experienced them—some doctrines which nobody can beat out of us, because we have tasted them and handled them. Well, if we can go further, well and good. But to my mind, we are foolish to go further and fare worse. If a man has reached the Land's End [the westernmost point of England], and some great genius should tell him to walk on farther than Old England reaches, and ridicule him because he will not go a step in advance into the fog which conceals an awful plunge—I think, upon the whole—he may be content to put up with the ridicule. Put your foot down, brother, and see whether there is anything under it. Check whether there is a good text or two underneath—whether there is a little personal experience underneath, and, if you do not find it, let the advanced thinkers go alone—you had better keep on the rock. “Prove all things”—do not run after their novelties till you have proved them. But what you have proved hold fast. Be conservative in God's truth, and radical too, by keeping to the root of the matter. Hold fast what you know, and live mainly upon the simplicities of the gospel, for, after all, the food of the soul does not lie in controversial points—it lies in points which we will never have controverted, for, “Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh.” There is the food of the soul where there is no controversy in any devout Christian spirit! Exercise yourself, then, in the plainer matters, and do not imbibe the notion that you must read all the quarterlies and master, “The Contemporary Review,” and the like, or else you will be a nobody. Be content to be just such a nobody as a weaned child is, and say, “I exercise not myself in great matters or in things too high for me.”

The same evil comes up in another form when we want to know all the reasons of divine Providence—why this affliction was sent and why that? Why father died—why those two children that we loved so well were taken from us? Why we do not prosper in our various enterprises? Why? Why? Why? Ah, when we begin asking, “Why? Why? Why?” what an endless task we have before us! If we become like a weaned child, we shall not ask, “Why?” but just believe that in our heavenly Father's dispensations there is a wisdom too deep for us to fathom, a goodness veiled but certain.

We exercise ourselves in things too high for us, too, when we begin considering the results of duty and hesitate to do it. A man's course is quite clear in the word of God, but he says, “If I do that, how am I to provide for my family? If I do that, shall I not be throwing out a sphere of usefulness? I know it would be right to do it. My conscience tells me that I ought—but other people manage somehow to make notches in their conscience, and they are evidently very useful where they are.” Ah, my dear brother, pray God to lead you in a plain path, and remember, you have nothing to do with results, except to receive them as tests of your faithfulness. Results must always be left with God. For if the result of doing right would be that you lost your life, your Master tells you that you must hate even your own life also, or else you cannot be His disciple. You will get helped if you can trust, but if, for the sake of this or that, you do wrong—I do not mind how you put it—you are doing evil that good may come, and you are grieving the Spirit of God! Your mind will never get to be like a weaned child. It is not the childlike spirit to try to excuse yourself for maintaining a false position. The childlike spirit is to do what our heavenly Father tells us, because He tells us, and leave the consequences with Him.

Thus I have said enough, perhaps too much, about the connection.

Now, *from the simile itself*, we gather that the condition of heart of which David spoke was this—that he was like one who was *able to give up his natural food*, which seemed to him absolutely necessary, and which he greatly enjoyed. The weaned babe has given up what it loved. By nature, we hang on the breasts of this world, and only sovereign grace can wean us from it. But when we give up self-righteousness, self-confidence, the love of the world, the desire of self-aggrandizement, when we give

up trusting in man, trusting in ceremonies, trusting in anything but God, then has our soul become like a weaned child. It has given up what nature feeds upon that it may feed upon the bread of heaven.

It means, next, that he had at last *conquered his desires*, his longings, his pinings. The weaning child has his desires strong upon him and he frets. But the weaned child is content, his desires lie still. And the child of God, when sufficient grace has come, feels no desires for that which once delighted him. He submits himself so completely to his Father's will that, if he is to do without, he does without. Paul said he had learned in whatever state he was *therewith* to be content. There was another lesson which Paul had learned, but he does not tell us so. I have no doubt he had learned in whatsoever state *therewithout* to be content, which is a good deal more. To be content to be without, as well as to be with, is a high attainment. Not to have and to be as happy in not having as if one had all he desired is well. Oh, blessed state to be in! Not merely taken away from the breasts of earth, but taught no longer to wish for them.

Now, a weaned child is *entirely dependent upon its mother*. It knows nothing about how it is to be fed. It could not feed itself, and it must die if deprived of the care of another. But it rests quietly, free from even a trace of anxiety. I find that the Hebrew gives the idea of a child lying in its mother's bosom, perfectly satisfied. And David puts it something like this, O my Lord, "my soul lies in Your bosom like a child that has done with crying and fretting, and is weaned altogether." Oh, happy man who so depends upon God that he leaves all his concerns with the God of love, and sings sweetly in confidence in God!

Thus I have tried to describe the state which the psalmist intended by being "as a weaned child."

II. And now, secondly, **WHAT IS THE EXCELLENCE OF THIS CONDITION?** Why is it desirable to be even as a weaned child? It is excellent in every way. You will know it best by attaining to it, for when you are weaned, your desires will no longer worry you. Curb desire, and you have struck at the root of half your sorrow! He smarts not under poverty who has learned to be content. He frets not under affliction who is submissive to the Father's will, and lays aside his own. When your desires are held within bounds, your temptations to rebel are ended. You wanted this and you wanted that, and so you quarreled with God, and your Lord and you were seldom on good terms. He did not choose to pamper you, and you wanted that He should, and so you fretted like a weaning child. Now you leave it to His will, and you have peace. The strife is over. Your soul is quieted, and behaves itself becomingly. Now, also, your resentments against those who injured you are gone. You were angry with a certain person, but your irritability has ended with your weaning—you see that God sent him to do this which has troubled you, and you accept his hard words and cruel actions as from God, and you are angry no more. You do not kick and struggle now against your condition and position, and you no longer murmur and complain from day to day as if you were hardly dealt with. No, if God chooses to better your circumstances you will be glad. If He does not, you just take it as you find it, for you could not blame His providence. You give your thoughts to something better than the things of earth, for you now resolve as David did in the 132nd Psalm, which is very remarkable as following the psalm which contains our text, because there he goes on to declare that he will build for the Lord of hosts. When your own business is all right, and you are weaned from all fretting, worrying, and self-seeking, then you are free to undertake the Lord's business. He has done for you what you want, and now you want to do something *for Him*. You have sought the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all other things have been added to you, so that you are as happy as the days are long in June. Look at the birds in the winter. When there is not a leaf on the boughs they sit and sing. And in the early spring, when still the winter's cold is lingering, they pour out their very choicest songs—and yet there is not a lark or thrush among them that has an hour's provision in store. Not one among them has house or barn, or gathers anything, and yet, according to Martin Luther's interpretation of their song, they sing—

*“Mortal, cease from toil and sorrow,
God provides for the morrow.”*

Happy is the man who comes to that condition! God bring us there.

When we are weaned we have got rid of the ground of future troubles and disappointments. We do not get weaned all at once from everything. One person here has been weaned from confidence in riches, but perhaps his heart, his affectionate heart, is clinging to some human love, some mortal joy. Well,

brother, well, sister, remember that where your treasure is your heart will go, and if that treasure is taken away your heart must ache. If we trust in an arm of flesh, we make a rod for our own backs. You never lean upon a man or woman either, and steal away from simple trust in God, but what you are preparing for yourself a trial. It may be in the treachery of the one you trusted. It certainly will be, if you live long enough, in the death of that beloved one. “Dust to dust,” and, “ashes to ashes,” will be the end of all earthly joy. If a building leans upon a buttress, if that buttress is taken away it must be weakened. But if it can stand alone, upon its own foundation, then it stands firmly. The man who depends alone upon his God, and whose expectation is from Him, has not half the occasions for trouble that he has who is leaning here and leaning there, and leaning in fifty places. For each earthly prop will be the cause or occasion of distress at some time or other.

III. I have very much to say on this point, but my time is gone. I will only close with the last inquiry, which is this—**IS THIS STATE ATTAINABLE?** *Certainly.* David said, “My soul is even as a weaned child.” He did not say that he hoped it would be so. We can surely get where David got, for he was a man of like passions with ourselves. No attainment in grace is to be viewed as the monopoly of one man or one age. In fact, we have more advantages than the psalmist, for he lived under a much more poverty-stricken dispensation than we do. Now the gates of heaven are set wide open, and the treasure-houses and the granaries of our heavenly Joseph are free to all Israel. And, if we are at all straitened, it certainly cannot be in the Lord. He does not stint us. Did David say, “My soul is even as a weaned child”? Then no believer here ought to be content till he can say, “By the grace of God I am brought into that same condition.” This sacred weanedness of heart is possible under any circumstances. The poor have often attained it. I saw this week a poor woman, entirely dependent upon what was given to her by others, confined to her chamber, needing to be lifted from her bed, racked with rheumatic pain, and yet as happy as an angel. She was joying and rejoicing in the Lord, and one of her greatest pleasures was to sit on the side of the bed for an hour, when her pain was not so bad but what she could sit up, and get through a chapter or two. And then her heart took to itself wings, and soared up to heaven. Her soul was as a weaned child, she had no anxieties and no fretfulness. Those who attended her said that such a thing as a murmur never escaped her. Hear this, you poor ones! Well, and you who are better off may get there in the midst of riches, for David was a king, and yet he did not suffer his worldly wealth to canker his spirit. He was as a weaned child, though dwelling in a palace. He could get at the breast of worldly pleasures, and yet he was weaned from it. A man may be in this condition when he is tossed to and fro, and troubled. Business men are apt to say, “It is all very well for you ministers to talk about calm and peace of mind. But if you had to sell flour and bread, or measure out drapery, or look after a lot of clerks, or go into a large factory and see after a pack of work-girls, you would find it very difficult.” My dear friends, look at David’s life. How tossed about he was! What cares, what trials, what changes, what singular reversals of condition, and yet for all that, his soul was even as a weaned child! Do you think the religion of Jesus Christ was meant to be kept under a glass case, and that it would make good people of us if we were locked up in a cloister? No, it is a practical everyday religion, meant for you that have factories, and you that have bakeries, and you that have shops. The religion which cannot stand the wear and tear of everyday life is not worth two pence, and the sooner you are rid of such rubbish the better. We want a religion which we may take with us wherever we go, that will keep us calm and quiet and self-possessed, because we are possessed of the Spirit of God. May we reach this happy state and never leave it.

What is the way to get it? The psalm tells us, “Let Israel hope in the Lord, from henceforth and forever.” Faith blossoming into hope is the way of sanctification, the road to a calm and quiet spirit. You cannot say to yourself, “I will fret no longer,” and then expect never to fret. No, brother, you must expel one affection by another—one propensity must be vanquished by another. You are too ready to trust in man—trust in God will push out carnal confidence. You are expecting great things of the world, that is foolish. Expect great things of God, and you will cease from carnal hopes. You are seeking from day to day for this world’s good, you feel an ambition to rise—seek after the eternal good, and feel an ambition to get nearer to God, and the other ambition will die. You are worried by fears and anxieties—come and rest your soul upon the faithful promise, and, resting there, your anxieties will cease. I fear that many

Christian people think that faith has nothing to do with everyday life. They do not expect to find that it relieves them of anxieties as to bread and cheese for themselves, and shoes and socks for the children, and all those little troubles and worries which concern a housewife and a father. But, oh, beloved, it is not so. The heathen had their household gods, and blessed be God, He is our household God, the God of all the families of Israel, The Lord hears the young ravens when they cry, will He not hear His people? The ravens only cry for meat, a dead rabbit or a pigeon is all they want, yet the Lord sees that their wants are supplied, and I find that “not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father, and the very hairs of your head are all numbered.” These poor hairs? These little things! These trifling things! You will never be as a weaned child till you leave these little things with God, for the child has no great things. A child’s matters are all little—though they are great to the babe they are little to us. Leave your little things with God. Leave everything with God. Live in God. Dwell in God. Have no secrets between yourself and God. The troubles of life which fret us most are the little things. If a man goes on a long walk, it is not the climbing, and it is not the slipping down the steep hillside, it is that nasty little stone which has got into the shoe which troubles him. You can hardly see it, but there it is, and it blisters his foot and lames him. Ah, dear brother, take the little stone to God. Ask Him to remove that little vexation from you, for as with God there is nothing great, so is there nothing little. The greatest philosopher in the world, or the greatest king, if his little child had a thorn in his finger, would not think himself disgraced if he stooped to take it out with a needle. And the Lord who makes all things, and calls the stars by their names, does not dishonor Himself when He binds up our broken hearts. Go, then, to your God, and let your soul leave everything with Him, by faith being made as a weaned child.

“Easier said than done,” says somebody. Yes, brethren, except by faith, but to faith it is easy enough, and I boldly say here, I have sometimes found it easier to exercise faith than to talk about it. When I trust God—and I hope I do that habitually—I do not find that to give up anxiety and to trust in God is difficult now, though it used to be. Blessed be my Lord, I cannot help believing Him, for He loads me down with evidences of His truth and fidelity. Once get really into the swim of faith and you do not need to struggle, the sacred current of grace will carry you along. Give yourself completely up to the Lord Jesus Christ and the mighty energy of the blessed Spirit, and you will find it sweet to lie passive in His hand, and know no will but His. God bring you there!

If there is any unconverted person here who cannot understand all this, I pray the Lord to make him a child first, and then make him a weaned child. Regeneration must come first, and sanctification will follow. Believe in Jesus for pardon, and then you will have grace given to resign yourself to the divine will. May the Lord wean you from earth and wed you to heaven. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 130, 131.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—708, 778.

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