

HOWLING CHANGED TO SINGING NO. 2310

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, MAY 28, 1893
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON
ON LORD'S-DAY, EVENING, APRIL 28, 1889

*“How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? for ever?
how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?
How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily?
how long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?...
I will sing unto the LORD, because he hath dealt bountifully with me.”
Psalm 13:1-2, 6*

THIS is a very short Psalm, there are only six verses in it, but what a change there is between the beginning and the end of it! The first two verses are dolorous to the deepest degree, but the last verse is joyful to the highest degree. David begins many of his Psalms sighing and ends them singing, so that I do not wonder that Peter Moulin says, “One would think that those Psalms had been composed by two men of a contrary humor.”

If I were asked, “Are there two men here or is there only one?” My answer would be, that there is only one, but that one is two, for every man is two men, especially every spiritual man. He will find within himself an old man and a new man, an old nature and a new nature—and even the new nature itself is subject to strange changes—so that, like April weather, we have sunshine and showers blended. Sometimes it seems as if all the showers were poured on top of the sunshine and the sunshine itself were quenched and could scarcely gladden us.

David was a wonderful man for changes of experience. God permitted him to go through many experiences, not so much for himself, as for the good of succeeding generations. Whenever you look into David's Psalms, you may somewhere or other see yourselves. You never get into a corner but you find David in that corner. I think that I was never so low that I could not find that David was lower—and I never climbed so high that I could not find that David was up above me, ready to sing his song upon his stringed instrument, even as I could sing mine.

These are two instantaneous photographs. The first one gives us the man complaining, the second one gives us the man rejoicing. I wonder whether we shall get two such photographs tonight—some sitting here complaining, who, before the service is over, will go their way rejoicing? God grant that it may be so!

Possibly somebody here says, “I do not understand what you mean by each man being two men.” Well, let me say a little more on that point. Every man is a mystery. He is a mystery to other people, but if he ever thinks, he is a great mystery to himself. And if he never does think, why then I think that he is a mystery indeed, that he should have such a wondrous faculty as the power of thought, and yet should let it lie idle!

He who does not study himself, may think that he understands himself, but it is the judgment of folly. He who has been accustomed to make a friend of himself and has had himself for his companion, and talked to himself, and cross-examined himself, is the man who will say, “I am puzzled. I cannot make myself out. I am often at my wits' end. I am such a strange mixture and so dreadfully changeable.”

You must know yourself, dear friend, in some measure, or else I am afraid that you will never know the Lord Jesus Christ. And if you do not know Him, then you do not know what eternal life means, for to know Him is life eternal. But why is it necessary for us to know ourselves, that we may know Christ?

You must have some knowledge of the disease that you may know what the Physician can do—and there is also this truth to be remembered—the Lord Jesus Christ is the model Man and only by knowing something about men do we know much about Him.

Is it not strange that the Psalms are often so written that you do not know whether David is writing about himself or about the Lord Jesus? One verse can only be applied to Christ and you are certain that David is writing of the Messiah, but the next verse you can hardly apply to Christ, for there are some terms in it which would be derogatory to the Lord Jesus Christ, so it must refer to David. The fact is, that there is a wonderful union between David and David's Lord—there is a marvelous union between the saint and his Savior, between the believer and Him in whom he believes—and you cannot tell always where one begins and the other ends.

So, if you have no knowledge of man, it is to be feared that you have no knowledge of that Son of man, the Man of men, the Savior of men, the First-born amongst many brethren, to whose likeness we are yet to be fully conformed. I invite anybody here, who has not yet known the Savior, to pray to God to make him know himself. It may be that the discovery of what you are will necessitate your discovering what Christ is.

A true estimate of your own poverty may compel you to resort to Him for wealth. A true sight of your own disease may force you to apply to Him for His all-healing medicine. Certainly it is to be urged upon you by the highest of motives that you do not, with all your understanding, forget to understand yourself, and that, while you have many books on your shelf, you do not read them so as to forget this book which lies within, this wonderful book which concerns you more than all the writings of men, the book of your own nature, your own wants, your own desires, your own changes. God make you familiar with them and then make you also familiar with the book of grace which is written in the life of the Son of man!

Now, with that as a preface, I invite you to the study of our text.

First, you will see, in the first two verses, *a man complaining*. Go three verses farther on and you will get to *a man singing*, about whom we will talk in the second place. And then we shall close our discourse tonight by asking, What are *the connecting links between the man complaining and the man singing*? How did this complaining man get up to concert pitch and begin to sing before he had gone more than a little way further on the road?

I. First, then, here is A MAN COMPLAINING.

Pardon me if I say that here is a man *howling*. Let me read the first two verses again—“How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? how long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?”

Said I not truly, when I called it howling? There is so much of complaining here, so much of questioning—“How long? How long? How long? How long?”—four times over, that we may call it, as David did once call his prayer—“the voice of my roaring.” It is a kind of howling, roaring, moaning complaint before God in the bitterness of his soul. Let us take these four “How longs?” and speak of them.

Here is, first, *the poor man's grief, as it seems to him*—“How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? for ever?” Think for a minute. Can God forget? Can Omnipotence forget? Can unchanging love forget? Can infinite faithfulness forget? Yet so it seems to David. So it has often seemed to men in the deepest of trouble. “How long wilt thou forget me?”

You have been praying for mercy and you cannot find it—and you think that God forgets. You have been, perhaps, a seeker after peace for years, and yet you have not found it, and you think that God forgets. Or, perhaps, years ago, you were one of the happiest of the happy and you bathed in the light of God's countenance.

And now you are the unhappiest of the unhappy, you are at a distance from your God, you have been trying to get back, and cannot get back, and you think that God forgets you. Or else wave upon wave of

trouble has rolled over you—you have hardly had time to breathe between the surges of your grief. You are ready to perish with despondency and you think that God forgets you. That is how it looks to you, but it is not so and cannot be so.

God cannot forget anything, it is impossible. “Can a woman forget her sucking child?” Mark that expression, the child that still draws its nourishment from her bosom. That is just what you are doing still, for albeit you think that God forgets you, you are still living on what He daily gives you and you would die if He did not give you of His grace and strength. “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.” Lay hold of that great truth and dismiss that which can be only an appearance and an error. God has not forgotten to be gracious, nor has He even forgotten you.

The next “How long?” the next piece of David’s howling, represents *his trouble as it really is*. “How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?” That is as it really is with some of you—God has hidden His face from you—not His heart, nor His mind. He has not forgotten you, but He has taken away from you the comfort of His smile.

Are you crying tonight “Lord, how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?” I am glad you cry about it. The ungodly do not cry for God’s face to be revealed to them—they wish that God would always hide His face from them. They do not want either His face or His favor. But if you are longing to see His face, it is because that face is full of love to you. I do not wonder that you are unhappy, if you have lost the light of God’s countenance, for he who has ever had it cannot lose it, nay, not for a moment, without feeling his heart ready to break.

“There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? LORD, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.” Only give us to know that You love us and we will not envy the man who owns the greatest estate or enjoys the highest degree of human applause. This is enough for us, to have God with us.

Oh, dear child of God, if you have lost the light of your Father’s countenance, and you sigh after it, you shall have it again, you shall have it very soon! By the degree of your longing, you may measure the length of His absence. If you long but little, He will be absent long, but if you long much, He will soon come to you. You will soon find that the hidings of His face are over and the light of His countenance is again your joy.

This is what the trouble really is, and a great trouble it is while it lasts, though it works for your good. What plants would grow if it were always day? Does not night make them grow as well as day? Brethren, if we always had fine weather, should we ever have a harvest at all? The Arabs have a proverb, “All sun makes the desert.” If there is no rain, how can there be verdure?

There is a ripeness given to the fruits by the moon as well as by the sun. Grieve when God hides His face from you, but do not despair as well as grieve, but believe that even in this, He loves you still. It is a face of love that you do not see. You believe that, yourself, or else you would not wish to see it. If it were a face of wrath, you would not be longing to see it again. It is a face of love that is hidden from you. Wherefore, be of good courage, you shall see it by and by.

Notice next, that we have *the man’s sorrow as it is within himself*. “How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily?” He talks to himself. That is the counsel he takes with himself and he does not get any very great help out of that. It is a mark of wisdom to talk with yourselves sometimes, but not if you make yourself your own oracle.

A man may talk to himself until he talks himself into despair, though there is a way of talking with yourself that will talk you up into the light, such as David used when he said, “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God.” That is the way to talk to yourself. But yet, as a rule, there is not much good comes of talking to yourself unless there is a third One present—that blessed One, who can construe what self may say in mystery—and set right what self might twist into error.

Oh, yes, I know some who pour out their hearts within them! Do you remember what David says in the forty-second Psalm? “I pour out my soul in me.” Now, if it were possible to pour the contents of a jug of water out into itself, the water would be there, all the same, would it not? That is a grand passage where David says, “Ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us.”

Take your pitcher and turn it bottom upwards, and let the contents all run out. That is a true easement. To pour out from itself into itself is a poor change. To pour it out before God is to find instant relief. Beloved, it may be that you cannot get any relief, and that daily, from morning until evening, you are still in a fret and a trouble. Well, that is the case with David here—and my text is a photograph of you.

And once more, the fourth “How long?” shows *the man’s sorrow as it is without Him*. “How long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?” It adds very much to a man’s grief when somebody from the outside says, “Oh, you are always miserable! It makes anybody wretched to be near you.” It was thus when Peninnah exulted over Hannah’s barrenness and “provoked her sore, to make her fret.”

It does happen to many Christians to have this sort of thing done by somebody, especially a very “candid friend.” A candid friend is only an enemy candied over with a little sugar, as a general rule, and one who takes the opportunity to say nastier things than a downright enemy would say. You may have some such person in your family. Above all, there is our great adversary, from whom may God deliver us, who also delights to triumph and exult over us whenever he can!

And so our trouble outside is that Satan and his allies exult over us and we have not yet learned to say, as we ought to say, “Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy, when I fall, I shall arise.” That last touch may, perhaps, make the photograph depict somebody here who said, “I do not think that I shall see my portrait tonight. I have been roaming about and got into great trouble, and I am one by myself.” Well, but here is David, who is with you, and David’s Lord is with you, too.

That is the first photograph—a man complaining.

II. I am glad to pass from the first view and bring on the second one. The second picture of the same person is found in the sixth verse, where we see A MAN SINGING—“I will sing unto the LORD, because he hath dealt bountifully with me.”

It is the same man that we saw before, but he has done with his howling, and has taken to singing, for first, *his heart is rejoicing*. Read the fifth verse. He says, “My heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.” It is not merely the appearance of joy—it is real joy—his heart is rejoicing. Have you never seen a friend who has been suddenly lifted up by the Spirit of God out of great mourning, and of whom you have said, “Well, I should not have known that it was the same person”?

Grief throws a peculiar cast over the human countenance. Well do I remember, as a child, a lady who used to come to my grandfather’s house, whose face was terrible to look upon, and when I asked who that sad lady was, they said, “Hush, child,” and they made me hold my tongue until she was gone, and then they told me that she was one who thought that she had committed the unpardonable sin. I do not know what it was that struck me, but there was something about her face which has never gone from my memory, though it must be pretty well fifty years ago that I saw her.

But when a person is full of joy, especially spiritual joy, have you ever noticed what a kind of transfiguration the face undergoes? You have been, yourself, to have your photograph taken, and the man places an iron clamp at the back of your neck and you go away directly, I mean that *you* do. Your body stands there, but yourself go traveling down the rod of iron, and you are not there at all, and the likeness is not yourself—it is your chrysalis, the case in which you used to be, but *you* are gone.

Well, now, when you have joy in your heart, really in your heart so that everybody can see it on your countenance, your eyes begin to sparkle and your whole face is lit up, so that people say, “Well, really, he is only an ordinary-looking person as a general rule, but when he is in that state of mind, there is a wonderful kind of beauty about him.”

Now, the Lord can work that change for some of you, so that when you go home, mother will say, “Why, Maria, you are quite different from what you were when you went to the Tabernacle! John, how

changed you are! You went so dull and heavy, but now you seem to be quite another person.” Yes, the secret is that it is with him as it was with David—his heart is rejoicing.

The next thing is that *his tongue is praising*. “I will sing unto the LORD.” That which is down in the well will come up in the bucket. That which is in the heart is sure to come up to the mouth before long—so the happy believer begins to sing, and very likely he breaks out with the children’s hymn,—

*“I feel like singing all the time,
My tears are wiped away;
For Jesus is a Friend of mine,
I’ll serve Him every day.”*

You may try, perhaps, to repress your emotion, but if the Lord has really brought you up out of the horrible pit, such as I have been describing, your emotion will not be altogether repressed. You will feel as if, should you hold your peace, the very stones would begin to cry out. A rejoicing heart soon makes a praising tongue.

Notice, next, that *the man’s judgment is content*. That cool, calculating faculty now begins to read God’s dealings and it comes to a very different conclusion from that which it arrived at before. Some of you used to learn, as children, a book called, “Why, and Because”—and it is a good thing to have a, “why, and because,” for your own feelings.

Now, says David, “I will sing unto the Lord, because, after weighing and judging the matter thoroughly, I can testify that He hath dealt bountifully with me. I thought that He had forgotten me, but He hath dealt bountifully with me. I thought that He had hidden His face from me, but He hath dealt bountifully with me. I said in my heart that He treats me very harshly, but I call all such language back. Lord, I eat my own words with bitter herbs and I regret that I should ever have used them! You have dealt bountifully with me.”

“Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.” This poor man, who thought that he was forgotten, now looks at the food which God has put upon his table and he finds that he has Benjamin’s portion—much more than was given to the rest of his brethren—and his verdict is totally changed now, as to the dealings of the Lord with him. He says, “Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.”

And now that his judgment has been set right, now that heart, tongue, judgment—all are right—*his resolve is right*, for he says, “I will sing unto the LORD.” “Not only am I singing now, but I will make up my mind to this, I have been sighing long enough, I will now sing. I have been groaning and complaining, now I will sing. I will sing unto the Lord.”

I like this resolve, for it relates not only to present joy, but it is a resolution to project that joy throughout the whole of his life. “I will sing unto the LORD.” I trust that some of you will go out of the Tabernacle tonight saying, “Well, I will sing. Yes, I will. God helping me, I will. I will sing unto the Lord. I will sing at my work. I will sing on my bed. I will sing when I wake in the morning. I will sing when I go to bed at night. The Lord has put a new song into my mouth and I cannot keep it there—I must sing it out. I must sing His praises.” I am sure we will not try to stop you. We will encourage you to sing unto the Lord as much as possible.

There is not half enough singing in the world. The music of the early mornings in the country, at this time of the year, always seems to chide me. The birds are up and they wake us up, and when they are up, the first thing they do is to sing. And there is a kind of contention among them, each one tries to sing the most sweetly and the most loudly, and one calls to another, and the other answers him.

They sing as they fly and they sing as they build their nests. And they make such a wonderful chorus of song that it often astonishes us that such little creatures can make such cataracts, such Niagaras of music as they pour forth from their tiny throats. Oh, that God's people would sing more!

I remember a servant who used to sing while she was at the washtub. Her mistress said to her, "Why, Jane, how is it that you are always singing?" She said, "It keeps bad thoughts away." I remember an old Methodist brother who was pretty nearly eighty, and I never came across him, as he went along the street at a rather slow pace, without hearing him toot-tooting little bits of tunes as he walked. If you went by his door and heard a noise in his house, it was the old man singing. He never seemed to make any other noise but that of praising and blessing God.

Oh, that we might do so continually!

*"Sing a hymn to Jesus,
When the heart is faint;
Tell it all to Jesus,
Comfort or complaint;"*

and when you have done that, sing another. And when you have finished that, sing another. Whether it is a hymn of comfort or complaint, still sing to the praise of His name, and make this your resolution as you go out tonight, "I will sing unto the Lord, my God, as long as I live."

There are the two photographs. Put them into your album and take care of them.

III. But how came this change to take place? What are THE CONNECTING LINKS BETWEEN THE MAN COMPLAINING AND THE MAN SINGING? How did No. 1 get to be No. 2? How did this howler become a singer? What process did he pass through?

If you read this thirteenth Psalm over again when you get home, you will notice that the first thing David did was, *he pleaded with God*. He stated his case to the Lord, he mentioned the separate particulars of it, and then he pleaded, "Consider and hear me, O JEHOVAH, my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death."

For you, mourners, the first step towards comfort is to go and take the matter to your God. You have Rabshakeh's letter in your pocket—it is a dreadful letter, enough to make you sad. While I have been preaching, you have been sighing to yourself, "Ah, me! When I get home, I shall be thinking about that letter. I shall lie awake thinking of it." Some of you, who are rather of a nervous temperament, will let some little thing keep boring into you like an gimlet. You cannot get away from it.

Now, I invite you to take that letter out of your pocket when you get home and spread it before the Lord. Many and many a time I have had great troubles—who can be the pastor of such a church without them? I have done my very best with the matter that has perplexed me and I have only made it worse, and at last I have laid it before the Lord and prayed over it. And in such cases I have always said to myself, "I will never have anything to do with that matter again. I have done with it."

I advise you to do the same. Cast your burden upon the Lord. Put it upon that shelf. But then if you take it down again, what good have you done? No, leave it there. Leave it there and have done with it. The Lord will bring you out of the difficulty when you clear yourself of it. Do not go on hugging your trouble—take it to the Lord in prayer.

If you have a solicitor, and there is a suit at law, and the person against whom the suit is laid comes to you and says, "I want to hear what you are going to do," do not say anything to him, except, "I have left that with my solicitor. You must be so good as to see him. I refer you to him." If there are two of you to manage the business, one will be a fool and I think I know who that one will be. Either do not have a solicitor, and be your own lawyer, or else, if you have somebody to attend to the suit for you, let him do it. Why keep dogs and bark yourself? So let it be in all things. If you lay the matter before God, then do not begin to take it on your own back, as well. That will be an absurdity.

Although I made you smile just now, by quoting an old proverb, I do seriously urge upon you, my friends, the impropriety of attempting to undertake a case which you have laid before God in prayer. Leave it there. If you have done so, let your Advocate see you through with the business. Come, beloved, you shall soon begin to change your mode of talking if you will go and tell your trouble to God straight away.

“Well, I shall see my brother, tomorrow.” Do not see your brother—go and see your Father. “Oh, but I want to call in a friend!” That is what I want you to do, but not the friend you are thinking of—call in the Friend of friends. Tell Him everything about your trouble and your difficulty, and when you have done that, have done with it and leave it with Him. You will then soon begin to sing.

The next thing is that David, having prayed and brought his cause before God, *trusted in the Lord*. This is the chief point. Read the fifth verse and you will see that the whole story is made plain—“I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.”

I seem as if I could leave all you troubled saints now, just to say to any sinner here, who is in deep soul trouble, what you have said to yourself, “That first photograph was very like me. I cannot say that I am at all like the second one.” No, but you will be like that second one, if you will, from your heart, say this, “I have trusted in thy mercy.” This is the remedy for the disease of sin and for the disease of the heart—trust Jesus.

There He hangs on yonder cross. Trust Him. “I cannot realize that He is mine,” you say. Did I tell you to realize that? Trust Him. “Oh, but I do not feel as if I had a good heart to bring to Him.” Did I tell you to bring Him anything? Trust Him. Trust Him. Trust Him. Oh, child of God, this is the lesson you want to learn—*trust!* Oh, old sinner, this is the essential lesson for you if you would enter into Light of God and peace—*trust!*

“I have so many sins.” Trust! “But I have such tendencies to sin.” Trust Him to overcome those tendencies. “But I have tried.” No, I did not say try, but trust. “But I, I, I will try.” No, do not try. I did not say try. “Sir, I was going to say I will try to trust.” I did not say try to trust. Trying to trust is the very reverse of trusting. If Christ be a liar, do not trust Him. If He be true, trust Him. If He cannot save you, do not trust Him, but as He is the Almighty Savior, trust Him.

Oh, that I could shout that word loud as a thousand thunders speaking at once, TRUST! O soul, the way of the law is obey—a hard word, with which you cannot comply, for you are too weak. But the Gospel way is trust, *trust*, TRUST. When you have learned that way, you shall afterwards learn how to obey and you shall obey through trusting. But the first thing is, trust.

Is your leg broken, so that you cannot walk? Lean on Him who can carry you. Have you a great weight? Lean hard, then. Is it greater than ever it was? Lean harder, then. Trust, implicitly trust. As the blind man puts his hand into the hand of him who can see, that he may lead him, so trust in Jesus. Put your hand into the hand of Him who was crucified and trust Him tonight.

There, you may put away that first photograph. You may sit down now, if you have trusted, and we will take your likeness again, and I am sure your likeness will agree with the sixth verse, and you will say, “I will sing unto the Lord; I will go home singing. I have trusted. I have found salvation.”

Lord, lead these people to trust You! Why can they not trust You? What have You ever done that they should doubt You? Lord Jesus, if I had a million souls, I would trust them all with You, fully persuaded that You could wash them all whiter than snow. Trust, then, beloved friends. Trust Jesus. God help you to trust, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITIONS BY C. H. SPURGEON

PSALMS 12, 13, 14

Psalm 12:1. *Help, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.*

One might have thought that David still lived among us, his cry is so timely, so exactly true to the position of affairs today. What a prayer he offers! Driven away from confidence in men, he cries, “Help, Lord! Thou mighty One, put forth Your power! Thou faithful One, display Your truth! ‘Help, LORD; for the godly man ceases; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.’”

2. They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.

They speak vanity. There is nothing in it. It is all froth, no reality. Vain speech about vain subjects, having no real spiritual power to help the man that hears—“They speak vanity.” “With a double heart do they speak,” saying one thing and meaning another—trifling with words, orthodox to the ear—heterodox to the heart. Oh, how much there is of this falseness in these days!

Still are there many who “speak with flattering lips and with a double heart.” It is some comfort to us to know that no new thing has happened unto us—we are merely going through an old part of the road which David traversed long ago.

3-4. The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things: who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us?

There is the point in dispute. Man will be lord of himself and God will be Lord of all and everything—and there can be no compromise between these two. Not even a man’s lips are really his own. Who gave the gift of speech? Who created the mouth? Who is Lord over us? Why, the answer is simple enough! He that made us, He that redeemed us, He should be Lord over us. Let us willingly put ourselves in subjection to Him.

5. For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD;

God takes notice of the oppression of poor men and especially, of poor saints when they are tried by the wickedness of the age—“Now will I arise, saith the LORD.”

5-6. I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him. The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.

There is no mistake about the words of this blessed Book. The very words themselves are as accurate, as infallible, as silver is pure when it has been seven times refined by the most skillful artist. There is no improving upon God’s words. We dare not leave one of them out. We would not presume to put one of our own side by side with them—“The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.”

7-8. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever. The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.

When sin gets into the high places of the earth, then it becomes very abundant. Every evil man takes liberty to creep out into public life when some great leader in vice occupies the throne. God save the people when such is the case!

Psalm 13:1-2. How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? how long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?

When you and I have to spread our complaints before God, we are not the first who have done so. When we complain of God’s forsaking us, we are not alone. There was a greater than David who, even in the article of death, cried, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

3. Consider and hear me, O LORD my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death;

When it is dark, very dark, we get drowsy. Sorrow induces sleep. Remember how the Savior found the disciples sleeping for sorrow. Therefore David asks for light. Light will help him to stay awake and he fears to sleep, so he prays, “Lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death.”

4-5. Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved. But—

What a precious “but” this is! You can hear the chain rattle as the anchor goes down to hold the vessel.

5-6. *I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation. I will sing unto the LORD, because he hath dealt bountifully with me.*

What a climb there is, in this Psalm, from the abyss of sorrow up to the summit of joy! “I will sing unto the LORD because he hath dealt bountifully with me.” I hope many of us know what this blessed change means. If any of you are in great sorrow tonight, may my Lord and Master lighten your eyes!

Psalm 14:1. *The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.*

He was a fool to think it. He was not fool enough, however, to say it except in his heart. Fools have grown more brazen-faced of late, for now, they not only say it in their hearts, but they say with their tongues, “There is no God.” Oh, no, I have made a mistake! They do not call them “fools” now—they call them “philosophers.” That, however, is often exactly the same thing.

1. *They are corrupt,*

It is always so. When they will have no God, they will have no goodness “They are corrupt.” That is the secret of infidelity. The psalmist has put his finger on it—“They are corrupt.”

1-2. *They have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.*

David represents God looking from the battlements of heaven upon our fallen humanity, and at the time when He looked, He could see none that understood Him or sought Him. By nature we are all in this condition. Until the grace of God seeks us, we never seek God. Even God looked in vain. He was no stern critic—He was no hypercritic—“The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.”

3. *They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

“That was in old Testament times,” says one. If you turn to the epistle to the Romans, you will find that Paul quotes it as being true in his day. It is always true and it always will be true, apart from the grace of God—“There is none that doeth good; no, not one.”

4. *Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge?*

Are they all so foolish?

4. *Who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the LORD.*

They think nothing of God’s people. They could swallow them at a mouthful, they so despise them. Notice, that whenever a man despises God, he soon despises God’s people—it is only natural that he should do so. Meanwhile, he himself will not call upon the Lord.

5. *There were they in great fear:*

What, these very people who would not call upon God! Were they in great fear? Yes, God can bring great fear upon the men who seem most bold. It is noticed that the boldest blasphemers, when they become ill, are generally the most timid persons. These are the people who begin to cry and give up what they boasted of, when they get into deep waters—“There were they in great fear.”

5. *For God is in the generation of the righteous.*

He is with His people, He always will be with His people, and when He makes bare His arm, fear takes possession of His enemies.

6. *Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the LORD is his refuge.*

They mocked at the idea of a man’s trusting in God for his daily bread or trusting in God for his eternal salvation, but mock as men may, there is no other refuge for a soul but God. When the floods are out, there is no safety but in the ark with God. Oh, that men would trust in Him!

7. *Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the LORD bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.*

May that time soon come! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—63, 30, 130

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.