

STANDING AND SINGING

NO. 3375

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“My foot standeth in an even place; in the congregation will I bless the LORD.”
Psalm 26:12

You will remember our taking a pathetic verse for our meditation, some little while ago, which was the prayer of a saint in trouble, whose prayer was, “Look upon my affliction and my pain.” [See Sermon #741, Volume 13—A TROUBLED PRAYER] We must now look upon the reverse of the picture and think upon a Christian in prosperity and joy, and perhaps, as there may have been some comfort to afflicted souls before, so there may be some instruction tonight to those who are prosperous.

It is worthy of remark, at the outset, that *the condition of a Christian cannot readily be judged by anyone but himself*. Certainly his outward condition is a very unfair test of his real state. When Paul and Silas had been scourged and laid with their feet fast in the stocks, they seemed to others to be very miserable objects. But when, in the dead of the night, they began to sing God’s praises and the prisoners heard them, they proved themselves to be among the happiest of men.

So was it with David. When the Psalmist wrote this song, he was slandered and vilified—every evil thing was laid to his charge. This was the case externally, and yet within, his mind was at such perfect peace that he could say, “My foot standeth in an even place.”

It seemed to the common onlooker as though his foot must slip, as though he were like one hurled from the Tarpeian rock, to be certainly dashed to pieces—but his soul’s experience was the absolute reverse of this. He seems to say to them all, “Hoot at me if you will. Seek to trip me up as you please. God is high above you all, and in Him I shall still stand my ground, for, blessed be His name, notwithstanding every attempt of the enemy to throw me down, my foot standeth in an even place and in the congregation will I bless the LORD.”

There are two things in the text to which I would call your attention. The first is *a believer in a happy position*. And the second is, *a believer engaged in a happy occupation*. His “foot standing in an even place,” a happy position. “Praising and blessing God,” a happy occupation.

We have here, first, then—

I. A BELIEVER IN A VERY HAPPY POSITION.

Now, what does he mean by his “foot standing in an even place”? Well, is it not the very worst evil that a genuine Christian can suffer to fall into sin? To fall finally, would, of course, be our everlasting ruin. To fall at all, in any sense, is our greatest grief. Every true child of God would sooner sorrow a thousand times than sin once. His Father’s rod he has learned to love, but sin, even when it is the choicest pleasure, he has learned to hate. “Lord,” says he, “allow me to go anywhere, except into sin. If the way be rough, so be it—if it be Your way, I will bless You for being in it. But if the road be never so smooth, suffer not my feet to tread it, if it is Bye-Path Meadow.”

The worst evil that can befall a Christian, I say, is to fall into sin and continue to do so. On the contrary, one of the richest blessings that a Christian can enjoy is to be kept aright in his walk and conversation—year after year to wear a spotless character—year after year to be such a one as Daniel, that even the man’s enemies can find nothing against him except touching the law of his God.

Oh! this is a great honor! This is a rare jewel. There are some of God's servants who will get to heaven who never wore this jewel. They have been the Lord's people, but yet their slips and falls have given them broken bones and troubled hearts, and they have been saved at the last "so as by fire."

But it is a choice mercy if the child of God is able not only safely to get into the harbor, but to get into the harbor without having touched a rock, without having sunk upon a quicksand, without having suffered shipwreck—not only to come safely to heaven, but to have "an abundant entrance ministered to him" into the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Now, dear friends, the standing which is spoken of in the text relates to *the secure standing of the child of God in respect to sin*—and it may be understood in two senses. Sometimes the Christian is in an even place with *regard to common, outward sin*. And secondly, he is at all times in an even place with *regard to the sin of other men*—there he stands in such an even place that sin touches him not.

First, I say there are some Christians who may take the language of the text *in regard to outward sin* and thank God that they are not just now exposed to vehement temptations. They are not journeying in slippery places, but their foot standeth in an even place.

This may be occasioned by several causes. *Sometimes it is caused by Providence*. My brothers, you have, perhaps, sometimes wished that you were rich. You have been in a little way of business and you have thought, "I wish I had a larger capital that I might launch out a little, that I might speculate, that I might get a larger income and accumulate at a faster rate."

Ah! you do not know. Those high places are slippery places, as some of late have proved to their own sorrow. You have need, instead of asking God to put you there, to thank Him that you are not so rich, that you are not therefore subject to the peculiar temptations incidental to great transactions of business, or great accumulations of gold. Comparatively, you may sit down and thank God that you are not in this position, but that your "foot standeth in an even place."

You may be thankful, too, if you are not extremely poor, for extreme poverty, like extreme wealth, is a very dangerous position. When a person is extremely poor, he may be tempted to steal. If he should be able to overcome that, he will be tempted to envy and may be very jealous of those who are better off than himself. And I do not know a more miserable spirit than an envious one.

Nothing can be more un-Christian than to be angry with my fellow man because he happens to have more of outward good, and of inward excellence, too, perhaps, than I may happen to have. Thank God that your lot is cast in the middle place. If Agur's prayer is fulfilled in *you*—"Give me neither poverty nor riches"—if you have just enough to have food and raiment, be you therewith content and say, "I thank God that providentially I am not exposed to the temptations of fashion and all its mazes, and I am not thrust into the temptations of penury with all its grief—in that respect my foot standeth in an even place."

How many a young man is dazzled with the idea of fame! "Ah!" thinks he, "if I could but carve my name on that rock! If I could, I would mount higher than that last, and carve my name high up there!" Yes, but how many have rolled back, have tried to scale the battlements, but have fallen to the bottom, mangled corpses!

"The path of glory leads but to the grave!"

Be thankful, young man, if God should mark out for you a quiet path of usefulness in the Sabbath school, or in some village station, or in some place where, in the midst of your little family, you may bring your children up as a godly parent should, and at last, before the clods of the valley shall close over you, you may have, ere you go hence, to thank God that your foot stood in an even place, though it might have slipped if you had been called to a more dangerous point on the hill.

It is best for us to be thankful for the position in which Providence has placed us, for I suppose that most of us now present will see that we are not peculiarly exposed to either of the extremes, and therefore in that sense our "foot standeth in an even place."

Sometimes this is the case not so much with regard to our own condition, as to the place of our abode, and the surroundings of our family circle. How many of you young people ought to bless God that you are converted and live where you do! I know the temptation with some young persons is to wish to get away from the parental roof very early and to try to set up on their own account.

Young woman! if you have a godly father and a godly mother, be in no great hurry to go away from the hearth where piety has been your joy. Young man! if you are apprenticed with godly people, do not be in such hot haste to be away from the place. This is a wicked city and for every place where a young man's foot may stand "in an even place" in it, there are fifty places where it will need all the grace he has, and a great deal more that only God can supply, to keep him from giving way to temptation.

I am afraid that now-a-days, such is the general business habit as we say, and the fastness of our living, that many of our young people do not think enough of religious privileges. I have read of a Jew who would not trade in a certain town because there was no synagogue in it—he said he would rather be at such place, because there was a synagogue there.

And what the Jew felt in this respect, surely the Christian ought to feel far more! If you have to put up with far less money, yet if you have an opportunity of hearing the Gospel, and mixing with God's people, be not in a haste to throw away your golden privileges for the sake of those poor brazen gains which are pitiful in comparison with spiritual wealth.

It is a wonderful mercy—a mercy which some of my dear friends now present would prize very much if they could have it—it is a wonderful mercy, I say, to live in the midst of godly people. Contrast it to the living with the ungodly! There are those in this place now who, when they go home from this place of worship tonight, will hear oaths and blasphemy before they fall asleep.

They will probably be startled in the morning by hearing the name of God profaned. Whose religion provokes the animosity of their dearest friends. Who cannot be at their work without hearing ribaldry, and without being selected to be the butt of all the archers who shoot at them, and sorely wound them, and grieve them—for though there are no burnings at the stake now-a-days, yet there are "trials of cruel mockings," and these "mockings" are sometimes very "cruel" indeed.

There is all the difference between the plant in the sheltered corner of the garden and the other plant set out in the wild, bleak waste for every frost to nip. Be thankful, dear young friends, aye, and let us be thankful who are not so young, if we are placed in a position where we are not continually exposed to the vicious example, or to the frowns of gainsayers. Let us say thankfully with David, "My foot standeth in an even place in that respect: and in the congregation will I bless the LORD for it."

Besides this, *our foot may be kept by Providence and grace combined*. Providence may have placed us where the ministry is instructive and established, and then our foot standeth in an even place. I have known some shepherds of flocks, and in the short time in which it has been my privilege to preside here, I think I have seen them veer to all points of the compass.

There are some I know now whose particular position in theology no one ever did know and I suppose, will never be able to ascertain, for there seems to be no definite teaching, no declaration of doctrines, no laying down of established truth. And mark you, it is a great mercy when the Lord teaches us something and makes us know what we do know, and when what we hear we understand and receive into our souls by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, when we are not carried away by this fanaticism, nor the other enthusiasm, but when we are cast into connection with people who hold fast to the faith which is delivered to them and are not to be carried about by every novelty, but are conservative of the grand old truths and hold fast to the doctrines of the cross of Christ.

It may have been the lot of some of you, dear friends, to sometimes be members of one church and sometimes of another—sometimes of a church given to quarrel and to break up, or on the other hand, members of churches that are taken up with every novelty. Oh! be thankful that you have, many of you young Christians, round about you, fathers in Christ and matrons in Israel, who confirm you in the faith, under God, and through whom your foot has been made to stand in an even place. For this mark of grace, bless the Lord!

But to go still farther. Sometimes the Christian may thank God for his standing, not so much because of his position in life, nor because of the outward means of grace, but *because of the inward establishment and spiritual growth which God the Holy Spirit has given him*. Oh! what a mercy it is, Christian, if your experience has been your own and you are come at last to a settled state of rest of heart!

The devil sometimes says to you, “You will never be able to attain to the glory and the kingdom—you will never overcome your foes.” But you can say, “Ah! in this respect my foot standeth in an even place, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him until that day.”

Sometimes your outward troubles are very many and the fear is that they will be too much for you—but oh! what a mercy it is to be able to stand in an even place in that respect, and say, “Goodness and mercy followed me all the days of my life, and I am persuaded that they always will. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for God will be with me to be my stay!”

When experience and patience have produced in us unstaggering faith in God, what a blessed life we lead! But the unbelieving heir of heaven, the man of little faith and little confidence in God—he is blown about by every wind and every difficulty staggers him—he is ready to weep under every trial. But the true Christian knows that these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, will work out for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. He believes that Jesus walks the stormy waters. He can hear Him say, “It is I,” and he is not afraid. He feels that he cannot suffer shipwreck while Christ is in the vessel with him and therefore, if not always rejoicing, yet he is calm and patient, waiting for the salvation of the Lord.

I think I know some of you who have been for years in this condition. You are not now as you used to be—all in heaven one day and all in the depths the next. You are not so readily excited as you once were. An earnest prayer meeting fills you with holy joy, but it does not transport you quite out of the body as it once did. On the other hand, if some sharp affliction should come upon you, it still distresses you, but it does not perplex you and cast you into despair, as it would once have done.

You are no longer an infant, but you have become a man in Christ Jesus. You have grown strong. You are rooted, and grounded, and settled in the faith. Now, be very tranquil, dear friends, and thankful that you can say concerning these things, “I am not to be moved by them—temptations that were once formidable to me are so no longer, for I know the promise and the faithfulness of my God, and my foot standeth in an even place.”

Once more. This may be peculiarly true of the Christian sometimes, *when he has been enjoying near, dear, and ripened fellowship with the Lord Jesus*. We sometimes stand on Tabor with our transfigured Lord. It is not always Gethsemane. It is sometimes the mount of the first glory and sometimes whatever occurs has no more effect upon us than tempests upon solid rocks. The joy of the Lord, the presence of our Savior, the light of His love, the feast at His banqueting table—these things become so all-absorbing to us that we can say with Dr. Watts—

*“Let earth against my soul engage,
And hellish darts be hurled.
Still I can smile at Satan’s rage,
And face a frowning world.”*

Such a soul, all taken up with love divine, sitting at the feet of Christ with Mary, has neither room nor time for Martha’s cares and encumbrances, but can rejoice and say, “My heart is fixed, oh! my God. My heart is fixed, I will sing and give praise.” Such a one may be poor and yet cannot be poor. Such a one may be sick and yet must be well. Such a one may be alone and yet not alone, for his Lord is with him. I wish that you and I could oftener say in this respect, “My foot standeth in an even place, and in the congregation I will bless the LORD.”

Now you can see that all this view of the text is but occasional. But there is a view of the text *that is permanent*. As I have already said with regard to the great sin, the sin which is unto death, the sin which would destroy a Christian, every child of God may at every time say, “My foot standeth in an even place.”

The child of God may sin, but he cannot sin away his birthright. The heir of heaven may fall, and he may fall foully, too, but though he falls seven times, he shall be lifted up again—and the eternal hand of God shall keep him, even to the end. Beloved, it is our mercy to believe that—

*“Once in Christ, in Christ forever,
Nothing from His love can sever.”*

If you stand on the Rock of Ages, my dear brother, you stand on a Rock which never can reel beneath you, and from which no power, either earthly or infernal, can ever tear you. If you are in the hands of Christ, you know what He says—“No one is able to pluck them out of my hands; my Father which gave them to me is greater than I, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hands.”

Oh! how safe they are, then, in the hands of Christ first, and in the hands of God after—as if to give a double security, a two-handed guarantee—the power of Christ and the power of the Eternal Father being both guaranteed to the safety of the believer.

But may the believer ever say within himself that he is safe? Beloved, he may never say that he is safe in himself. No, that were indeed but falsehood, but he may always say that he is safe in Christ Jesus. He may never say, “My mountain stands firm; I shall never be moved.” But he may say—

*“My life is hid with Christ in God,
Beyond the reach of harm,”*

and “Because He lives, I shall live also.” He may not say, “I know that I, by my own strength, shall persevere to the end.” But he may say, “I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him until that day.”

The perseverance of the Christian is not ensured by the Christian’s resolve to persevere unto the end, nor by the Christian’s own power, nor by any plans which the Christian can adopt. That perseverance is secured by the promise of Christ, by the energy of the Spirit, by the watchfulness of God, and by the faithfulness of God to His own covenant.

Oh! Christian, how happy are you to be loved with an everlasting love, to have your name written in an everlasting covenant, to know that if your house is not so with God, yet He has made with you an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure! Your foot standeth at all times, in this respect, in an even place, where justice and mercy are sweetly balanced, where justice and truth have taken away all irregularities, where the path is even and plain. Oh! let your tongue sing praises unto the Lord.

And now just a few words, and only a few words, though as earnest as possible, upon—

II. THE CHRISTIAN’S HAPPY OCCUPATION.

The Psalmist says, “In the congregation will I bless the LORD,” and surely we ought to do the same. Oh! think, dear friends, in your own remembrance, how many professors have perished! I scarcely dare to look back upon them. They once floated as calmly upon the surface of the sea as you or I do. There they are. I see the broken hulks, the boards, and broken pieces, tossing still upon the surf. Can you see the corpses as they strew the ocean—corpses of warriors apparently as brave and as well armed as we are. There is Demas, he has made shipwreck. There is Judas, too, the first son of perdition.

Now, brethren, if we have been kept, if our feet have been made to stand in an even place, and we do not bless the Lord, the very stones will cry out against us. Why is it that we have not fallen into sin as many others have done? Why, indeed, but that the grace of God has prevented us? There was everything in us that would have led us into the same mischief—the same sin, the same unbelief, the same evil habit of departing from the living God—and if it had not been for preventing grace which has held us fast, we

should have made shipwreck as well as others. Let us praise God if, after ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty years, or perhaps more, we are still spared to stand in the midst of the Christian church upholding our integrity. Surely we ought to say, “In the congregation will I bless the LORD.”

And then, again, as the Christian ought to do it, so *it is the best thing that he can do, for nothing can be more useful to him*. I fancy if we praised God when we are in the enjoyment of mercies, we should keep mercies longer. If God had more gratitude from us when we are well, He would help us to continue in good health, but He knows that we need to be sick sometimes to make us know the value of health, and therefore He sends us to the bed of sickness that we may learn a lesson of gratitude.

And if we were more grateful, we might, perhaps, be spared some of our troubles, and so while we are kept standing, if we bless the Lord for it, it may be that He will continue thus to keep us, but if not, He may suffer us to slip, in order that we may learn where our great strength lies and may thenceforth praise His name.

Christian, to praise God will be of the utmost service to you. The fact is, you must praise somebody—and if you do not praise God, you will slip into praising yourself—and that will make you hateful in God’s esteem, for a proud look the Lord hates. If you once begin to say, “It is my own goodness and the excellency of my natural temperament that have kept me,” you will soon come down and great will be the fall thereof. But if you praise God, it will keep you from self-conceit.

To praise God is, also, one of the sweetest medicines for worldliness. Most medicines are very queer—sour or bitter. I sometimes think doctors make them so, for many persons would not think them effectual if they were not nasty. Probably there might just as well be sweet medicines as bitter. I do not know why there should not be. Certainly praise, though it is sweet and pleasant, is profitable and curative, too.

It will cure you of worldliness quite as much as will sorrow. If you sit down to a loaded table and bless the Lord for it, the abundance will not give you “fullness of bread.” If you go abroad in the world, and God increases your wealth, and you are grateful for it, it will not eat as does a canker, nor injure you, but the gratitude you have will be a sweet corrective force to keep you from being a mere earth-grubbing mole—as you would have been if you had not been lifting your eyes to heaven and mounting up on the wings of praise, as the eagle does, with his face towards the sun. Praise God that you have been able to bear your prosperity and you will probably have a longer time of it, and you will get good out of it.

Moreover, as you ought to praise God, and it is useful to praise God, so let me say that it *is honorable to God that you should praise Him*. There ought to be somebody to speak well of Him, for this wicked world is constantly abusing Him. If a man’s own children do not praise him, where can he expect to have a good name?

Oh! you who are the children of God, I am afraid you sometimes give your God a bad character. Those long faces of yours, those dolorous tales about providential afflictions, when they hear and see these, the world says, “Ah! we always said so—they are a miserable set and they serve a very hard Master.”

Ah! it is a gross lie. There never were servants that had such a good Master as we have. We love His house. We love His service. We love His wages. We love Himself. We are the happiest people in all the world and though the worldling will have it that we must be wretched because we are religious, we reply, “Our religion is our joy and our comfort. It is our delight and our bliss. We wish we had more of it. We serve a blessed God and we will speak well of His name.”

To bless the Lord, while it is honorable to Him, *will often be useful to our fellow creatures*, and this should be the most practical point. David said, “In the congregation will I bless the LORD,” by which I understand he felt that his blessing God might be useful to others, else he might have shut himself up in his room and praised God there.

David was not like some of whom we know. I hear of some about the country who say, “I shall not go to the place of worship in my village. I cannot get on with the minister. I buy Mr. So-and-so’s

sermons and I find more truth in them, and I shall stop at home.” You remember the view the apostle took of this when he wrote, “Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is”—a very bad manner, let me say, by the way the apostle mentions it.

If there be a few people of God anywhere, join with them, and if they be such a people as you cannot think of joining as people of God, open a place of your own. Make it a point of conscience that where you have a house, God shall have one, and that where there is a tent for you, there shall be an altar for Him.

How much might the kingdom of God spread if Christian people everywhere took care of this! David could have praised God alone, it is true, but he was not satisfied with it. He loved that genial warmth, that glow of holy fire, which always comes when hearts come together, and so he says, “In the congregation will I praise the LORD.”

There are several ways of doing this. You may praise the Lord, you know, by singing, and what a delightful employment that is! I sometimes wish we all knew how to sing. It is very well for us to sing our best, but that best might be a great deal better. Our Moravian friends can, nearly all of them, sing, and if you were to go to their settlement you would find all of them able to join in the sacred song.

It is miserable work where there are two or three fellows in white surplices who get up to praise God, or where there is a big machine out of which the music is brought. I suppose the Lord does have mercy upon such folly, but how there can be anything like spiritual worship coming from a box of pipes I cannot understand. The hearts of God’s people praise Him out of living organs.

We must bring something like spiritual worship and when we have learned to praise God with the understanding as well as with our hearts, surely it will be none the less acceptable to Him, but all the more. He ought to have the best of the best and when we bring Him our praise it should be the best praise that it is possible for even hearts to make.

But there are other ways of blessing Him. You, who cannot sing, can perhaps *praise Him by your preaching*. Oh! how we can help the Lord when we speak well of His name from the pulpit! It enlarges the scope and sphere of our praise when we can call upon hundreds, or on these occasions here, in this house, upon thousands of others, and say, “Oh! magnify the LORD with me and let us exalt his name together: come, let us bow down and worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker: let us come into his presence with thanksgiving, and unto his courts with joy.” It is sweet work to preach when our preaching is blessing God.

Some of you cannot preach and you cannot sing. Well, you can *bless God by your conversation*. May the Lord give us many of His servants to bless Him in the farmyard, in the counting-house, behind the counter, and in the factory. To bless Him when they are driving their carts, whose hearts are so full of praise that they naturally speak well of God as they speak well of some good friend who has helped and prospered them.

Let me enlist you to bless God this very night before you go to bed—bless Him, I mean, in talking to someone else to whom your testimony for God may be blessed. Now, I charge you—you who love the Lord Jesus Christ and are His followers—if He has treated you badly, tell of it, speak honestly.

If you have found Him to be a hard Master, tell it to warn others against Him. But I know you cannot, you dare not say a word against Him, though you can say ten thousand words for Him—and would do so if it were not for your bashfulness. You can all say—

*“Lord, unloose my stammering tongue.
Who should louder sing than I?”*

Tell others that you have tasted and handled the good word of life, that you have found it a delightful thing to weep the tears of penitence, to turn with faith to the Savior and trust in Him. Do you say, “To whom shall I tell it?” Go, husband, tell it to your wife. My good sister, tell it to your husband. Tell it to

your child. Tell it to your brother. “Andrew first findeth his own brother, Simon Peter.” Do you go and do the same. Tell others and so help them to praise Him, too.

And there is another way of blessing God, even without much time. A Christian can *bless God by his life*. I heard somebody say of a Christian brother at Manchester that “he preached with his feet.” Ah! that is a noble way of preaching! May we have many such preachers! That is to say, by practical living, by walk and conversation.

May you praise God by your consistent cheerfulness. There are brethren in this place to look at whose face is always enough to make one feel happy. They are not better nor richer than many I know of, but they seem always happy. They seem to live with Jesus, and when they speak, they speak well of Him. I am sure they are the most likely people to bring in converts.

Ask the Lord to make your face to shine. Pray that you may look at Him until you are changed from glory unto glory. You know what that means—that the glory there is in Christ may come upon you—from glory to glory—that your face may shine like that of Moses, the light of God’s countenance being upon you, through your praising and blessing Him.

I am afraid my sermon has no relation to some here present, but I ask them whether God has not been good to them in many respects. They have been kept alive—let them be grateful for the mercies they have, and let their gratitude lead them to penitence, to think that they have sinned against so good a God.

Ah! my hearers, if you will but repent and come to Him, He will be found of you. Knock and His door will be opened. Speak to Him and He will hear and listen to you. Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and He will wash you in His blood, and bring you to His Father’s right hand in the kingdom. The Lord bless these words, spoken in much conscious weakness, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

PSALM 37:17-40

17. *For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the LORD upholdeth the righteous.*

They must stand, therefore, for how shall he fall whom God upholds?

18-19. *The LORD knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever. They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.*

These are bad times now. Everyone complains, and indeed there seems to be abundant cause, for distress is universal. But let us fall back on the promise. “In the days of famine they shall be satisfied.”

20-23. *But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall be consumed; into smoke shall they vanish away. The wicked borroweth and payeth not again: but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth. For such as be blessed of im shall inherit the earth: and they that be cursed of him shall be cut off. The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.*

There is a mutual delight, you see. If we delight in God, God delights in us. He delights in the conduct of His people. When they walk with Him, He takes pleasure in every step that they take. What you say, brothers and sisters? Have you tried to live today so that God may take pleasure in you? He cannot do it if we have lived carelessly, or fruitlessly, or selfishly. But when we live to Him, then the Lord delights in our way.

24. *Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand.*

Just going to fall, but in came the interposing hand. Grace catches us up when sin would throw us down.

25. *I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.*

It was so unusual a thing that David had never seen it. I have several times seen the seed of the righteous begging bread, but in every case it has been because of their drunkenness or their laziness, or because of their own vice which they brought upon themselves. But as a rule, God takes care of the children of His children. He does not suffer them to want. They may be brought into great straits, but He will not permit them to come to beggary.

26-29. *He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed. Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore. For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off. The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.*

There is a grand time coming (oh! that God would hasten it!) when truth and righteousness shall rule the earth, and then shall the godly have their portion. At the present time—

*“Every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile.”*

But the day shall come when the vile person shall cease from off the earth and the saints shall have the kingdom.

30. *The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment.*

You may often judge a man by his mouth. The physician looks at the tongue to see how the man is—and so is a righteous man known by his mouth and his tongue, for he talks of judgment.

31-40. *The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide. The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him. The LORD will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged. Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it. I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off. But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD: he is their strength in the time of trouble. And the LORD shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him.*

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