

GOOD CHEER FOR THE NEEDY

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A SERMON

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*“For the needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish forever.”
Psalm 9:18.*

THESE words will fall upon different ears with quite different effects. If any of you are, in the Scriptural sense, “poor and needy,” God the Holy Spirit will enable you to see much in these gracious sentences; but if you fancy that you are “rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing,” you will care nothing whatever for such words as these. You know right well that the value of a text to any soul depends upon the condition of that soul. I know not how many stars may be visible at the present moment; I do not think that I even looked up at them before I came here, and perhaps you have not; but to the mariner, who needs to know his position when far out upon the sea, even one lone star gleaming amid the clouds may be very precious. So, if you are among the poor and needy ones, the light in this text will be most joyful to your heart; but if you are not among them, perhaps you will scarcely condescend to look up to see its light. When Richard I. was shut up within the gloomy walls of a foreign prison, you remember that he heard a song sung by his faithful friend, who was traversing all Europe, as a troubadour, to try to find him. There were many ears that heard that strain; and, possibly, some of the listeners had noticed the sweetness of the music; yet there was nothing very special in it to them; but the imprisoned king, when he heard that song, could sing the refrain to it, and, therefore, it had a peculiar value to him, for it re-opened his communion with the world outside, and ultimately led to his release. So, it may be that my text has a refrain that you do not know; and if it is so, you will not care for it; but if your heart is very poor—if you are consciously very needy—if you are reduced to spiritual destitution, then these simple words, “The needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish forever,” will awake echoes in your soul which will be the means of bringing you great joy.

Here let me remark what a blessed thing it is to be poor in spirit and down among the lowly in heart. The best things come to those who are in such a condition. Up there, on the mountaintops, you are in a conspicuous but very cold position. If there are any storms about, they will be sure to gather around the mountain’s brow; but if there are brooks, they will be sure to flow down there in the quiet seclusion of the valley, where the nourishing grass grows for the feeding of the sheep. He who dwells in the Valley of Humiliation lives in a place where he may delight himself with safety; because he is certain, while he abides there, to give all the glory for his delight to his God. It is not a land that every man chooses; it lies too low for some men’s tastes. There are those who love the high places of the earth, where they can exalt themselves; but he who is wise will choose to be numbered among the hungry that the Lord fills with good things and not among the rich whom He sends away empty. He will delight to be reckoned among those that are of low degree, whom God exalts, even the humble and the meek; and he will not wish to be gathered with the proud, against whom the Lord has registered His solemn declaration that He will stain the pride of their glory.

If you look at our text as it stands, it bears, first of all, the literal and natural meaning that God will take care of the poor and needy. As a general rule, they are forgotten. In the regulations of many kingdoms, no provision whatever has been made for the poor. Christianity has done much to cause modern governments to make some recognition of the rights of the poor and needy, and also to provide to some extent for them; yet this provision is often handed out to them with great coldness and sternness. Our poor laws

are not, even with the best intentions, always administered justly; while there are lands where everything seems to be done to increase the riches of the rich, and to make the poor still poorer. Well, it will not always be so; there are better days coming for you that are despised, and poor, and needy. You need not fight, and strive, and be envious, and make discord; there is One in heaven who is your Helper, and He is coming down to earth again; and when He comes, “He shall judge the poor of the people, He shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.” The reign of Jesus Christ, though it may seem to be long in beginning, will assuredly come at the appointed time; and when it comes, then all tyranny and oppression and wrong-doing shall be speedily ended. “In His days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace as long as the moon endures.” In His days shall no man be robbed of his rights—no man be down-trodden—no man be oppressed. Behold, the Lord has laid help upon One who is mighty; He has exalted One chosen out of the people. His coming is the world’s hope; His appearing will be the signal for the world’s deliverance from all that is opposed to Him and to His gospel.

But I am going to take our text in a spiritual sense, and refer it to those who are “poor and needy” in the Scriptural meaning of those words. This is a description that is very frequently applied to the people of God. They have been taught, by the Spirit of God, to realize their poverty; they know it, and they confess it. They also feel that they have many needs; indeed, they seem to themselves to now have more needs than they ever had before; and were it not for the infinite fullness which is treasured up in Christ, the very thought of their needs would crush them, and drive them to despair. “Poor and needy” is a fair and full description of all those who have been taught of the Lord to see themselves as they really are in His sight.

I want to give some good cheer to the poor and the needy, and my text seems to me to refer to three pairs of things which concern them. First, it speaks of *two bitter experiences which will come to an end*; then, *two sad fears which are removed by the text*; and, thirdly, *two precious promises which are given to us in the text*.

I. First, there are TWO BITTER EXPERIENCES, which many of God’s people—no, all God’s people have more or less had, especially if they happen to be poor and needy in temporal things as well as in spiritual.

The first bitter experience is that *they have been forgotten*. The text says, “The needy shall not always be forgotten,” plainly implying that they have been forgotten—forgotten by those who used to know them; forgotten by those who fed at their table, and who lauded and flattered them in the days of their high estate. They do not know you now. You are the same, but your coat is different, your house is different, your purse is different; and, therefore, though they loved you—oh, so fervently!—their love is now gone because the various adjuncts, which, after all, were the real ground of their love, have departed. The leaves are withering, so the swallows, which gathered in the summer, are all gone before the winter comes. Many friends are of that sort; their friendship withers like the leaves of autumn; and, like the swallows, they are gone to find other summers somewhere else. If you become prosperous again, and get another summer, they will come back, and seek to ingratiate themselves with you again. Like dogs, they will follow you as long as you have a bone to give them; but, unlike many dogs, they will not stay with you even when you have nothing to bestow upon them. If you are a poor man, who was once better off, you have passed through this bitter experience I have no doubt, and have been forgotten because your circumstances have changed.

Possibly, you have been forgotten ever since you have been a Christian. While you were self-righteous, like other men, they knew and respected you. You helped to keep each other’s self-righteousness up, just as tradesmen, with their accommodation bills, help to keep each other financially afloat. But you suddenly became poor in spirit; you began to see that you needed a better righteousness than your own. They called you melancholy; and no wonder that they did, for you were indeed melancholy. You were very uncongenial company for them; you used to heave a deep sigh when they would rather have heard a noisy laugh; and now that you have gone right over, as they say, to the Puritanic party, and left their merry-making, they have forgotten you—they do not know you—they look down upon you, and despise you. They say, sometimes, “You are a canting hypocrite,” and they have other equally pretty names that they apply to you. If they remember you, it is that they may scoff at you; but they say they have forgotten you, and it is

a great mercy if they have; and it will be another great mercy if you also forget them. There is a message, in the 45th Psalm, which may be addressed to you: “Forget also your own people, and your father’s house; so shall the King greatly desire your beauty: for He is your Lord; and worship you Him.” You are to go outside the camp, bearing Christ’s reproach, and to be forgotten by your former friends and acquaintances because of your religion. It will be a painful ordeal to you, but you may go through it without any very serious loss.

Possibly, too, dear friends, you have often thought that you have been forgotten in the arrangements of God’s people, since you have come among them. You are so needy, perhaps in pocket, but certainly in spirit, that when arrangements have been made for the help and relief of others, you fancy that you have been overlooked. Do not be quite certain that it is so, for I have known some poor people, who have been a little too sensitive on these points, and have suspected unkindness when everything has been really planned for the best. Do not be ready to misjudge your fellow Christians if they are better off than you are. As it would be a sin, on their part, to be proud, it would be equally a sin, on your part, to be envious. It would be wrong for them to be unkind to you, but it would be just as wrong for you to be unkind to them by thinking that they are unkind when they are not. Still, I should not wonder if it does sometimes happen that you fancy yourself forgotten even in the arrangements that are made in connection with the house of God.

So, too, you may have had the experience of seeming to be forgotten in various regulations which are passed by your fellow Christians. For instance, someone has been declaring the proportion that every Christian should give to the cause of God out of his substance. It has been laid down by some, as a hard and fast rule, that nobody should give less than a tenth—a good rule, mark you, and a rule applicable to nearly everybody; but, sometimes, there is a needy saint, who says, “I could not spare a tenth from my poor pittance; I can scarcely spare a penny from the little that I have, so this rule presses hard upon me.” Well, then, give what you feel to be right, and do not trouble about the matter. When we speak to various classes, we cannot always mention the exceptions; you know that there are exceptions to all rules, and we do not wish any rule to press hardly upon anyone. The poor widow gave her two mites, and so may you; but do not fret and worry, though I have no doubt it sometimes pains you when, in such utterances, you seem to be forgotten.

It is also very painful to a Christian, who is poor and needy in spirit, when, in the preaching of the gospel, there seems to be nothing for the poor lame sheep, for the halting, for those that are weak-kneed, for those who are ready to perish. I have heard sermons, which have related to very glorious experiences, in which I have taken some delight; but I have felt, all the while, “I wonder what the poor weaklings of the flock think of this, when they hear about this experience, and are told that they can have it if they like, and that they must have it, or else they have no real saving faith at all?” At such a time, my mind always goes to those who can only touch the hem of the Savior’s garment, or say to Him, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief.” My witness is that some of the best children in the whole family of God never have the enjoyment of full assurance; but they are so careful, so watchful, so sensitive, that their very sadness of heart drives them close to Christ. They seem to be so conscious of their own weakness, and so afraid of sinning against God, that, though in them there is not the perfect love that casts out fear—I wish it were—yet I would be the last to condemn them. There is One, who will not condemn them; even He who carries the lambs in His bosom, and who is tender and full of pity to all the weak ones in His flock. We must mind, when we are preaching experience, that we do not so put the experience of the strong, as to make it the standard for the weak. That is almost as wrong as to make the experience of the weak to be the standard of the strong, as some have done. The fact is, there is no experience that is a real standard of the Christian life except the experience of a change of heart, and of simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Ah, dear heart! I know what you mean when, after listening to a sermon, you have said, “Alas, I am forgotten! There seems nothing there for me. There are no crumbs for those who have lost their teeth, and have only sore gums; there is no bread and milk for the children. It is all rounds of beef—strong meat for grown-up men; but, woe is me, there is nothing that I can eat.” I should not wonder if that is what you have felt; but, if so, do not feel it any longer, “for the needy shall not always be forgotten.”

And, perhaps, up till now, you have even experienced a forgetfulness on the part of providence as you have understood the term. Others of your family have risen in the world, but you have not. Your friends have set up in business, and have done well; but you have not. You have sought to obtain a competence, but you have not secured it yet. You wished, at any rate, to get out of financial trouble; but you are in it still, and you are apt to fear that when the Lord distributes His favors, He forgets you—at least, as far as His providential mercies are concerned. Well, now, let this fear be gone, I pray you; let this bitter experience come to an end. Believe that you are not forgotten, after all, by Him who is in heaven, and who beholds all His people; and if you have experienced, in some measure, a sort of forgetfulness, real on the part of man, but never real on the part of God, do believe that it will not last forever.

The second painful experience is that *you have been disappointed*, as well as fancied that you have been forgotten. Our text says, “The expectation of the poor shall not perish forever,” which implies that it has perished sometimes.

Now, dear friend, I know that if you are a Christian, you have had some of your expectations that have perished, and a good many of them, too. Why, you expected, at one time, to find your own way to heaven—you expected that your own righteousness would make you acceptable to God and that you could do everything that was necessary to gain His favor. That foolish expectation has perished forever, has it not? Your self-righteousness is such a mass of filthy rags that you never mean to try to patch those old rags together, and make them into a garment to wear in the sight of God.

Then, you thought that you might expect, when you believed in Jesus Christ, that you would have perfect peace directly. Yet, possibly, you did not have it. Believer as you were, you had to live by faith, without much experience of inward joy. And you also expected that you would never be troubled any more with any sort of bitter experiences, certainly not with any sins. You had lost your burden at the foot of the cross, and you meant to go singing all the way to heaven; in fact, you imagined that you were to ride there, in a carriage, in a most luxurious and delightful style, having two heavens—one here, and another hereafter. That expectation has not been realized, has it? You have found that the way to heaven is a rough road, that there are many hardships in the pilgrim’s pathway, and that there are giants to be fought and slain. Alas, also, there are sins within that have to be contended with from day to day.

Perhaps you had even entertained some very high expectations that you were going to be one of the brightest stars that ever shone among the spiritual constellations of God. Oh, what wonders you were going to do! You were going to be the leader among the people of God. There would be no diminution of zeal in you; no lack of life in you; no declension from grace in you; no neglected prayer in you. You would be the very paragon of virtue; you would push the world before you, and drag the church behind you. I do not know how high your expectations soared; but I should not wonder if some of them have perished before now, and you have come down to be, even in your own estimation, a very ordinary sort of person; in fact, you have continued to grow smaller and smaller ever since you have known Christ, till now you have come down to be nothing, and you are on the way to being less than nothing; and you will be wonderfully near the mark when you get down to that point.

How many human expectations turn out to be mere wind! As I studied my text, turning it over and over again, it occurred to me that the needy, the poor, are generally the people who have the greatest expectations. I have talked with many poor men, and I have found, over and over again, that they have a great, great uncle, somewhere or other, who may leave them a lot of money some day; or else they think they are entitled to property somewhere, only the lawful owner keeps them out of it! They have proofs that there was someone in their family who left—well, I do not know whether it was not some millions of money, that now lie in the Bank of England, and they are expecting to get them! Ah, he that butters his bread with such expectations will find it very dry; and he who waits till expectations of that kind are fulfilled will, I am afraid, find that he is waiting in vain. But poor people generally have plenty of expectations; and, as a rule, those expectations come to an end. This is a part of the bitter experiences of life, and always will be; so, let us bear it patiently, for our text assures us that our disappointment shall only be temporary.

II. Now, in the second place, there are TWO SAD FEARS, WHICH THE TEXT REMOVES.

The first sad fear is that, perhaps, *we may be forever forgotten of God*. Oh, what a sad day it would be for us if God should ever forget us! You remember what varied experiences David had. Once he wrote, “In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. Lord, by Your favor You have made my mountain to stand strong: You did hide Your face, and I was troubled.” At another time, he wrote, “Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has He in anger shut up His tender mercies?” Ah, that is how the greatest saints have to talk sometimes; but what a fall in the barometer that indicates! From being up there at “set fair,” it has gone down to “much rain” and “storms.” “Zion said, the Lord has forsaken me, and my Lord has forgotten me.” This fear will come to the child of God at certain times; it may take this shape—“What if God should forget me in my present trouble? None but He can get me out of it. I am so bowed down and distressed that without divine consolation, I know that I shall surely sink in the deep waters; yet the consolation does not come, the help I need does not arrive. I cannot see any way of escape, and I am as much in perplexity now as I was six months ago. I have made it a matter of prayer, and waiting on the Lord; but I sometimes fear that He has forgotten me. What shall I do if He never helps me? If it had not been the Lord who was on my side, I should long ago have sunk into despair; but what shall I do if He deserts me now? I can never escape out of this difficulty without Him.”

Possibly the believer is not so much in temporal trouble as burdened under a sense of sin. He used to feel joy and peace through believing in Christ; but he has wandered away from fellowship with his God, and God is walking contrary to him because he is walking contrary to God. He is dwelling under his Father’s frown; he is smarting under his Father’s rod. Now he says within himself, “What will happen to me if He should never again give me the kiss of reconciliation?” He cries, “Deal mercifully with Your servant, O Lord, and restore unto me the joy of Your salvation!” Yet still he walks in darkness, and sees no light. He is under a cloud, and his cry is, “Oh, that I knew where I might find Him whom my soul loves!” There comes to his heart the horrible fear that God has forsaken him. It is a horrible fear, but it is quite unfounded; there is no real reason for it. God cannot forget His chosen ones, whom He has engraved upon the palms of His hands; and though a woman may forget her sucking child, God cannot forget any of His people, sorrowful or sinful though they may be.

Then, too, this thought will come: “I am sick; my health is failing; I have less strength every day; and, soon, I shall have to go through the cold river of death; and what if, then, I should be without my God? It will be hard to suffer, and harder still to die—to leave the warm precincts of this house of clay, and, as a disembodied spirit, to be launched into an unknown world; what if there should be no guardian angels around my dying bed, and no Savior to receive my departing spirit? What if, after all, my hope should turn out to be a delusion, my faith a fiction, and my experience a dream?” I do not wonder, when such thoughts as these cross your minds, that you should feel distressed, as hundreds before you have been, “who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” But our text is a blessed cure for this sad fear: “For the needy shall not always be forgotten.”

The other dreadful fear is, *lest, after all, your expectation should perish*. Your expectation, beloved, is that since you have trusted in God, you shall never be confounded—and that because you have relied upon the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, you shall be numbered with His saints in glory everlasting. Yet, sometimes, you sorrowfully say, “Shall I hold on to the end? Shall I be able to persevere? I am so weak, so unstable, so apt to slip and slide, that I fear what will happen to me. Will my hope endure to the end?” Then you look around, and see the strong temptations that beset your path; you live, perhaps, where there are few Christians to help you, and where everything seems to go against your progress in the divine life; and you say, “I shall surely one day fall by the hand of the enemy. How can I hope to outlive these many perils and dangers?”

Possibly, your constitutional temperament is a hindrance to you, and you cry, “Woe is me, because I have such corruptions within—such a fierce temper—such a cold heart—such a penurious disposition. Can I ever, after all, be fashioned into the likeness of my Lord? Can such gritty granite as my soul is made of ever be melted down, and run into the divine mold, or be turned like wax to the divine seal?” It does make you fear and tremble; especially when trials come, the likes of which you never saw before; and you say, “My expectation will perish. I thought that, by God’s grace, I should leap over a wall, and break through a troop; I hoped that I should continue to trust in the Lord even though all creature aid should fail.

But now I tremble and fear. I have run with the footmen, and they have wearied me; what shall I do when I have to contend with horses; and, above all, what shall I do in the swellings of Jordan?" Well, now, this is the sort of fear that arises in the hearts of God's children; yet that fear need not be entertained for a single moment. It is your duty and privilege to shut it out of your heart, for thus says the Lord, "The expectation of the poor shall not perish forever."

III. Now I come to our third and last point—TWO PRECIOUS PROMISES ARE HERE GIVEN TO US.

The first is given to the needy, and it declares that *they shall not always be forgotten*. Possibly, some of you think that you have been forgotten in the arrangements of providence. Listen, troubled one. If you can only wait with patience, and stand still, and see the salvation of God, you will find that the needy shall not always be forgotten. Have you ever noticed how a father carves for a large family? You do not expect him, at a single stroke, to carve enough to fill every plate, do you? There is a little child who is ill, so there must be a suitable portion sent away for that one; and, likely enough, that will be the first portion sent from the table. Then the father serves his other children according to a certain order which he has in his own mind, and there must be some who come after the others. I have known carvers keep someone waiting till they have reached the juiciest part of the meat; they only made him wait till they could give him something especially choice; so, if you are kept waiting for your portion, you will not lose anything by waiting a while. Patience is rewarded in due season. If ships are longer on their voyage, we expect them to bring home all the richer freight. If the trees are slower than usual, this year, in putting forth their buds—if the peach blossoms or the apricots are not visible as soon as in other seasons—let us hope that it will be all the better for the ultimate fruit-bearing of the trees. Be you content to come last rather than first, for sometimes last is best, and "there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last." Poor as you are, you shall not always be forgotten; there is a portion in reserve for you—even for you.

You shall not be forgotten at the mercy seat. You have been there many times without receiving an answer to your petitions. Perhaps, poor heavy heart, you have prayed seven times, and no reply has yet come. Possibly you have gone to your God as often as the poor widow went to the unjust judge, and you have gone as importunately as she went; but, so far, there has been no sweet relief such as your soul longed for. Yet you shall not be always forgotten; so, continue in prayer. If the promise tarries, wait for it; for, in due season, the answer shall surely come.

You shall not always be forgotten in the Word. You have been reading it, yet no promise has seemed to comfort you. In fact, as you turn over the pages of your Bible, you find bitter things recorded there, as if they were written against yourself. But read on; read on; and, one of these days, you will come to a passage that will seem to leap up out of the Scriptures to meet you. It will woo you, the very sight of it will fascinate you, and you will say, "The Lord has spoken this message to my soul, and I bless and praise His holy name."

You shall not always be forgotten from the pulpit. Perhaps there is someone here, who has long been listening to the gospel, and who sorrowfully says, "I find that others are comforted, but I am not. God seems to give a portion to all the rest of His people, but none to poor me. Alas! I come and I go, but it seems to be all in vain. I love to go where I see others getting a blessing, yet I find no comfort there for myself." Well, you shall not always be forgotten; God will bid His servant drop a handful on purpose for you. Perhaps this very text is a message to your heart just now.

You shall not always be forgotten at the Lord's Table. You have gone there hoping that He, who often reveals Himself to His servants in the breaking of bread, will be pleased to manifest Himself to you at His own table; yet you have not had a smile from Him. You have sat with others at the King's table, but the King, Himself, did not seem to sit there with you. You ate the bread, but you did not spiritually feed upon His flesh. You drank the wine, but you did not spiritually drink His precious blood. Well, you shall not always be forgotten. If you are really trusting in Jesus, there are brighter days yet in store for you. The King shall yet bring you into His banqueting house, and His banner over you shall be love; and you shall see such changes that you shall sing—

*"My mourning He to dancing turns,
For sackcloth joy He gives,*

***A moment, Lord, Your anger burns,
But long Your favor lives.”***

And you shall not always be forgotten in the service that you are rendering unto God. You have not yet seen a soul converted through your instrumentality, but you shall not always be forgotten in that respect. And in the sufferings that you are called to bear for Christ's sake, you shall not always be forgotten. Patience will yet have her perfect work, and the suffering will end when it has accomplished its purpose. You are persecuted and despised, perhaps, but you shall not always be forgotten; you shall yet learn the sweetness of being reproached for Christ's sake. You may seem to be forgotten for a little while, but you shall not really be so. God, the Holy Spirit, will not forget you; He will sustain, instruct, illuminate, and console you. God the Son will not forget you. He paid too high a price for you, ever to forget you. You are His bride; He loves you as He loves Himself. You are part and parcel of Himself, so He will never forget you. And God the Father will not forget you. You have been His from all eternity, and He has “begotten you again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” You will die soon; but you will not be forgotten, for the holy angels will convoy you home to heaven. The rich man died, and was buried, with many waving plumes over his mourning coach. His will was read, his property was squabbled over, and that was the end of him; everybody soon forgot him. But the angels carried Lazarus into Abraham's bosom. They had not forgotten Lazarus. The dogs had licked his sores, but the angels had loved him. The dunghill was his couch, but Abraham's bosom was his throne. If you are a believer in Jesus, you are not forgotten up in glory. Rowland Hill, when he was very old, used to like to go and see aged people when they were dying, and he used to say to them, “When you get to heaven, give my love to the three glorious Johns up there, and be sure to tell them that poor old Rowley hopes they have not forgotten him.” There is no fear that they will forget any of you who are going there. There is a crown in heaven which will fit nobody's head but yours, and that crown must hang as a useless thing until you get there to wear it. There is a mansion in glory that nobody but you can inhabit; and you cannot suppose that it will be allowed to stand empty forever, can you? Oh, no; you must be there to occupy it; and you may rest assured that He who is preparing the place for His people, will bring His people to it, for He has not gone to heaven to prepare a place for His people without resolving that His people shall not perish on the way there.

“The needy shall not always be forgotten.” They will be especially remembered when Christ comes, and He says to them, “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” They will be remembered as they enter into the joy of their Lord; and then, throughout the eternal ages, they will never be forgotten of Him. They may well bear whatever comes upon them now in the anticipation of the glory that is yet to be revealed.

The other promise in our text is that *“the expectation of the poor shall not perish forever.”* What is your expectation—you who have believed in Jesus, yet who feel very poor and needy? You have been expecting to get peace, have you not? You shall have it, in due time. A friend said to me, quite recently, “Supposing a person has believed in Jesus, but does not feel immediate peace, what then? Is that person to believe that he is saved? What is his evidence that he is?” I replied, “God says that whosoever believes in His Son is not condemned, so I need not ask to have peace within my soul in order to corroborate the declaration of God. I am bound to take the truth of God as it stands, and believe myself to be saved, whether I feel any peace or not. If I will do this, then I shall have the peace; but if I say that I will not believe myself saved till I feel peace, then I am not really believing God at all; but I am asking Him to give me peace to corroborate His evidence, as if the evidence in the Word were not strong enough to satisfy me.” Dear friend, it may be that you have not yet enjoyed peace because your faith is not as simple and as clear as it should be. But if you are really poor and needy, and cast yourself on the promises of God, you may depend upon it that the expectation that you have rightly founded upon the gospel shall not be disappointed. You shall have peace; yes, and you shall have perfect peace one day. “The peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your heart and mind through Christ Jesus.”

You are expecting, too, that you shall triumph over sin. God has promised that sin shall not have dominion over you. It may struggle very hard, and, for a while, you may seem to be under its power; no, more, you may come under its power in a measure, but it never shall reign over you. Sin may, for a time,

conquer a part of Mansoul; but it can never conquer the citadel of the heart; so rest assured of that. “The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly,” and you shall yet feel the power of holiness, and the mighty work of the Eternal Spirit in your soul. “The expectation of the poor shall not perish forever.”

You have been expecting, too, to get out of trouble; well, you shall get out of trouble. You have been expecting to see good come out of evil; well, good will come out of evil. I cannot tell you when you shall be delivered, but delivered you shall be, for thus it is written, “Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all.” One of these days, you will receive a warrant that will set you free from all trouble forever and ever. How soon it may come, I cannot tell; but, till it does, you may patiently wait and quietly hope for the salvation of God.

You have also been expecting to enjoy the full assurance of faith; and your expectation, in that respect, shall not perish forever. The Lord will make your faith grow; every day’s experience will help to establish it, and even your difficulties and troubles will tend to strengthen it. If a boy is apprenticed to a blacksmith, I should not wonder if, for months, his arm aches dreadfully through swinging the big hammer; but keep on, Boy, keep on! Your muscles will grow hard, your sinews will get braced, and you will become strong just where you need to be strong. So, dear friend, shall it be with your faith, you shall become strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.

You expected to have very special spiritual joys, did you not? You expected that your soul would be made like the chariots of Amminadib, did you not? You expected to be in such a condition that whether in the body or out of the body, you could not tell. Well, you shall realize all that in due season, for God will reveal it unto you when it seems good in His sight. As for myself—and I may speak also for all who love the Lord—I am expecting to be with Him where He is, to behold His glory. I am expecting to be like Him, and to overcome, and sit with Him upon His throne, even as He has overcome, and has sat down with His Father upon His throne. And, brothers and sisters, if this is your expectation, it shall not perish forever, but it shall be blessedly realized. I have told you before some of the last words of my venerable grandfather, but I may venture to repeat them to you. One of my uncles said to him, “You know, father, that hymn of Dr. Watts—

*“Firm as the earth Your gospel stands,
My Lord, my hope, my trust;
If I am found in Jesus’ hands,
My soul can never be lost.”*

“Ah, James!” he replied, “I do not like the metaphor that Dr. Watts uses there, ‘Firm as the earth.’ Why, the earth is sinking from under my feet; I want something much firmer than that. I like better what the Doctor says when he sings—

*“Firm as His throne His promise stands,
And He can well secure
What I’ve committed to His hands,
Till the decisive hour.”*

“That will do for me now, James,” said the dying saint; “that is divine sovereignty. The Lord is King; and, as surely as He is King, and sits upon His throne, so surely will He fulfill His promise to a poor feeble worm like me, so I shall behold His face with joy.”

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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