

“HIDING IN YOU!”**NO. 2930**

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*“I flee unto You to hide me.”
Psalm 143:9.*

WHAT a great mercy it is for us that David had not a smooth path and an easy life! We would have lost much valuable instruction if he had been able to hold on the even tenor of his way continually; whereas, now, we are great gainers by his trials and sufferings. In reading the Psalms of David, you will often find a verse which just suits your own case. It is hardly possible for you to be placed in any position without discovering that the son of Jesse has been there before you. I cannot, in all respects, liken him to the Lord Jesus Christ, who was in all points tempted like as we are; yet, to a large extent, it was so with David as well as with “great David’s greater Son.” He seems to have been, not merely one man, but “all mankind’s epitome,” and to have known almost all human temptations, and human sins, and human joys, having been led, sometimes by the Spirit, and sometimes, alas, by his own frailty and foolishness, into all sorts of strange places in order that he might become an instructor to us.

You have probably heard this remark a great many times, but did it ever strike you that very much the same may be said concerning your own experience? When you are wondering why you are so strangely tried, and why your experience is often so remarkable, may it not happen that the reason does not lie in yourself so much as in others to whom God means to make you useful. You are being led along a rough road, and being tried and instructed, in order that you may be the means of helping others whom you will find in some of the dark places of the earth. You are being trained as a hardy mountaineer in order that when the Lord’s sheep are lost on wild craggy places, you may know how to climb up after them, and bring them down to a place of safety. You are being taught how to find your way through the low country of despondency and despair in order that when the pilgrims to the Celestial City lose their way, and get into the marshy places of fear and doubt, you may know how to bring them out again, and set their feet again upon the rock, and establish their goings once more. The bearings of any one man’s life upon the lives of other men can scarcely be fully known to us here. Even when we are able to look upon the completed life, we shall hardly know how much it has been intertwined with other men’s lives; and, certainly, until the life is completed, no man can know how much his present sufferings have to do with his usefulness to others; nor can he fully understand how he is being prepared here, there, and in a thousand other places, for usefulness in a position of which he little dreams that he will ever be the occupant. Yet he is one day to be placed where all this mysterious training will be of the utmost service to other people. The steel blade, that was put into the fire again, and again, and yet again, to be tempered, did not know that the Cid would use it in the day of battle to cut through the armor of his adversaries; if it had not been prepared for use in this fashion, it would not have been fit to be placed in such a hero’s hand. Believers are being made into vessels meet for the Master’s use, and it is not every vessel that is fit for Him to employ in His divine service. David was so prepared, but he could only have become so by means of the remarkable life of trial through which he was called to pass.

Whenever we read the story of David’s life, or note in the Psalms where he went and what he did, we should not merely notice how David acted and suffered, and what he did while undergoing the suffering, but we should try so to study his experience as to be able to do as he did if we are placed in circumstances similar to his. Avoid his sin; let that be a beacon to warn you; but imitate his virtues. Pray the Lord to make you a partaker of the fullest measure of the grace which the psalmist possessed; but never look at his life as you gaze at a statue—merely to admire it, and to say how beautifully it is worked—but look at it as a boy should look at his copy, that he may imitate it; look at it as the soldier looks at the fugleman, that he may march step by step as he sets him the example; and, above all things, always keep your eyes

on David’s Lord and Master, lest even David should be the means of misleading you. Let your admiration both of David and of the Lord Jesus Christ be practical; there is far too much of that kind of religion which consists in merely admiring other people, or in seeing what we ourselves ought to be, or in regretting that we are not what we should be; but true godliness is manifested as we bring forth the fruit of the Spirit by being and doing that which we feel we ought to be and to do. To this end, gracious Spirit, be pleased to help us! Let us give to our text that sort of meditation which shall all the while be aiming at a practical result, and while we see how David fled to his God in the time of trial, let us each one also make this resolve, in the strength of the Holy Spirit, “I will do the same as David did; I will flee unto God to hide me.” In our text we have David’s declaration to the Lord, “I flee unto You to hide me.” We also ought to do as David did, but no man will do this unless he has the five things of which I am about to speak.

I. And, first, no man will ever flee to God to hide him unless he has A SENSE OF DANGER.

David was in danger from many cruel enemies, and he fled to God to hide him from them. You and I may not be in any such danger as that, physically. We live in a country where, happily, we are protected from such a danger as that—at least, the most of us do; but there are other dangers to which we are exposed. David fled to God to hide him because he realized the danger in which he was placed, and we shall only flee unto the Lord to hide us when we realize our own personal peril.

We are all well aware that *many persons have perished because they have not realized their danger*. You know how often this is the case. Men have gone, without any thought of peril, into places where there have been pestilential odors or the seeds of deadly diseases. If they had known what was there, they would not have gone in that direction, or they would have taken various precautions to guard themselves from infection; but, in ignorance of their peril, they have breathed the fatal air, and have gone home to sicken and die. Many a gallant ship has struck upon a hidden reef, or upon a sandbank that was not marked on the chart. I have never heard of any vessel being wrecked through its officers keeping too good a lookout; nor do we often read of ships being lost because the captain was too anxious to keep far away from the treacherous sands and the dangerous headlands; but we often hear of wrecks which have occurred through the captain’s ignorance of the danger to which his vessel was exposed. Every now and then, we learn that some obstruction has been encountered upon the railway as the express train has come rushing along. If the driver had but known that the permanent way, as it is called, was out of order, and that there would be a collision if he did not stop the train, he would have done all that he could to avoid such a calamity; but because he did not know that he and his passengers were in danger, he went on as though all had been well, and the most terrible consequences ensued.

Many have perished—I am using the word “perish” in the ordinary sense—because they have not known that they were in danger; and we know (oh, that it were not so!) that concerning spiritual things, there are millions of our fellow countrymen who are in danger of the eternal wrath of God, yet they are not conscious that it is so. They know that they are living in sin, and they have some dim perception that sin is an evil thing in God’s sight, yet they do not fully comprehend what sin is. Many of them do not know, in the full meaning of the word, that they are sinners. See how contented they are with their fancied righteousness, conceiving themselves to be in perfect safety, and all the while they are in the utmost peril. They eat and they drink, they are married and they are given in marriage, as though such a state of things would last forever. Talk to them concerning the last dread conflagration which is to consume the world, and they will laugh you to scorn, and cry, “Peace and safety,” even though sudden destruction is coming upon them. If we could once make men realize that they are in danger, there would be some hope that they would seek to escape from the peril that threatens them; but we cannot make them believe in its reality and certainty. They are unbelieving with regard to such disturbing news. If we cried aloud to them, “Peace, peace,” although we know there is no peace for them as long as they continue as they now are, they would probably believe us, for they lend their credulous ears to any superstition that seems to promise them a false peace; but if we try to warn them of their danger—danger of the most terrible kind—they will not, as a rule, be persuaded to listen to such unwelcome tidings; or if they do listen, they do not believe our message, and they will not admit they are in danger.

If any such persons are present with us here—and I fear that there are some—I mean, those who have no sense of danger, and yet have never trusted in Christ for salvation, let me remind you, dear friends, that your sins must inevitably bring punishment upon you. There is a Judge of all the earth, who must do right; and every transgression of His righteous law must be followed by punishment; otherwise, why should

there be a Judge of the earth at all, if He is indifferent to the iniquities of man? Let me also remind you that your sin is holding you in its power, and though, at present, you may not indulge in the grosser forms of vice, you are in great danger of going much further into paths of sin than you like to think you will. You cannot stop in an evil course just when and where you please. You cannot say to sin, “Thus far shall you go, and no further.” The beginnings of evil are like the letting out of water, and when the dyke is once broken, and the pent-up flood is set free, it soon deluges the fields, and, perhaps, sweeps away multitudes of men and their habitations as well. Oh, that men could but realize that while they are living in sin, they are always in danger of committing more sin, and yet more sin, going on from bad to worse and from worse to the very worst of all! Many a young man would shudder with horror if he could foresee what he will yet become unless the grace of God shall prevent it. You have often seen that familiar picture of the child and the kind of man that he will yet become—either drunken or sober. If that child should be told that, one day, he would be like that red-faced old drunkard, he would not believe that he could ever grow to be as bad as that; neither will most young men, who are now living in sin, believe that they can ever grow to be what they will be if they continue in their present course. Yet that is the danger to which they are continually exposed—the danger of sin always producing yet more sin; and, to my mind, it seems to be punishment of a most grievous kind, even if there were no other, that sin should be allowed to breed within itself something yet more black and foul and filthy than it is itself—till, on the cancer of sin there comes yet another cancer, more foul and loathsome, and yet another, and another, and another; or until the man, who was possessed with one devil, becomes possessed with seven devils even more wicked than the first one was. There is this real danger, this grievous danger, in the case of every unconverted man or woman upon the face of the earth. Therefore, each one of them should cry unto the Lord, “I flee unto You to hide me.”

No man ever flees to God for shelter until he realizes that he is in danger, yet all men, whether they are the children of God or the children of this world, are in danger of one kind or another. As for the men of this world, the children of disobedience, they are in danger of the punishment which is due on account of their present sin and that awful growth of sin of which I have been speaking; but are the children of God also in danger? Ask them, and they will tell you that they are pilgrims to the Celestial City, which they will, in due time, reach by God’s grace; but they will also tell you that all along the road to heaven, there are dangerous places where the traveler might fall to his very grievous hurt—for instance, the descent in the Valley of Humiliation, with Apollyon waiting there, determined to slay, or at least to wound the pilgrim; or the Valley of the Shadow of Death, a little further on, with its miry bog, and its hobgoblins, and all manner of terrifying sights and sounds—and then the Enchanted Ground, with its temptation to the pilgrim to sleep, and Vanity Fair, where there are all sorts of ill wares to allure and deceive the pilgrim. Dangers of every sort beset the followers of the Lamb, and they are only safe as they are divinely protected. The moment you become a Christian, you are—

“Safe in the arms of Jesus,”

as far as your ultimate and final perseverance is concerned; but, all the while you are on the road to heaven, you must wear the armor provided for the good soldiers of Jesus Christ, for you are always exposed to danger from the adversary’s arrows and sword. All the while, that you are in the earthly pastures, you need the protection of the good Shepherd. Why? Because you are in danger from the roaring lion, which goes about seeking whom he may destroy; and unless the great Shepherd’s rod and staff protect you, you will certainly be destroyed.

Let me also remind you that *some dangers are not readily perceived, and those are generally the worst of all*. We may be able to keep clear of “the arrow that flies by day;” but who can guard himself against “the pestilence that walks in darkness”? Possibly we do not fall into open sin; but the dry rot of gradual declension—the silent sliding away of the heart from Christ—who but God can guard us against that? Many a man is caught in the invisible nets of Satan, and well-near destroyed, even while he dreams that he is safely pursuing the path that leads to heaven. Therefore do I sound the signal and ring the alarm bell again and again, to remind you that we are all in danger, though some think they are not; those are the very persons who are in the greatest danger of all because they think they are not in peril. I wish I had the power to awaken all of you to a true sense of your danger with regard to spiritual things, for then you would, like David, flee to God to hide you. You never will do that until you realize the peril in which you

are placed, and recognize that as long as you are not abiding in Christ, you are in continual peril, and that your only safety lies in fleeing to God to hide you, even as the psalmist did long ago.

II. The second great need of a man, in order that he may flee unto God to hide him, is A SENSE OF WEAKNESS.

A man who thinks that he can fight his own battles in his own strength will not flee unto God to hide him. *But we are all of us as weak as water if we are left to ourselves*, and we soon show that we are quite unable to cope with our spiritual foes. The unforgiven sinner proves how weak he is by yielding at once to the tempter. He has a traitor within his own heart, which opens the gates to Satan, and so he is easily overcome; and the believer, though he has within him the new life which hates sin, is as weak as other men if he is left without the Spirit of God for a single moment. There is enough of the fire of hell in you, my brother—you who are the most spiritual and most like Christ—to set all hell alight again if the infernal fires were ever put out. You are inclined toward that which is good; but if the grace of God ever left you, you would be quite as much inclined toward that which is evil. I will not quite say what Ralph Erskine said concerning himself—

*“On good and evil equal bent,
And both a devil and saint;”—*

but I will say that if a saint could ever be left of God, he would soon become a devil; and he, who was so eager after that which was good, would be just as eager after that which is evil; so again I say that we are all of us as weak as water if left to ourselves.

But some people think that they are very strong. Hear how the boastful man says, “I can drink my glass of beer or wine, but I shall never become a drunkard. I can attend the theater, and see what a low standard of morals prevails there, but I shall never fall into such an evil thing as fornication or adultery. I shall never become a blasphemer; I am not in the habit of even using coarse language, and it is quite impossible that I should become profane.” He thinks when he stakes his small sums of money that he will never become a gambler. “No,” he says, “I am not such a fool as that.” Yet, often, when a man says that, you may write his true name in large capital letters, “A FOOL,” for there is no other fool who is so foolish as the one who thinks he is not such a fool as other men are. When Hazael was told by Elisha what he would afterwards do, he exclaimed, “Is your servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?” Ah, brethren! We are all sadly weak, and those are the weakest of all who think themselves to be strong. Past failures ought to have taught us all how great is our weakness. I wonder if any of you ever tried to soar away into the clouds with the perfectionists who delight to go up in a balloon, and seek to live far above all ordinary mortals. If so, and if you are at all like me—and I expect your flesh and blood are very similar to mine—I imagine that you soon discovered your mistake. The very day that you thought your temper was perfect, you found that it was very imperfect; and at the very time that you intended to have no thought or care, and when you had made up your mind that you were not coming down again to the level of this poor groveling world, you found that you could not rise an inch above the ground, and that you were, as far as spiritual things were concerned, just like a lump of lead. You were made to feel that the best of men are but men at the best; and, in that way, your failure taught you how weak you are. Even if you are the best man or woman in the world, in yourself you are utter weakness, and only Christ Himself can make anything of you; saint as you are, you are still a sinner saved by grace, and you are only holy as you are made so by the blessed Spirit who sanctifies you. If you were left by Him for a single moment, your sinnership would come to the front all too prominently, and your saintship would retire to the rear.

Now, brethren and sisters, *in our weakness lies our strength.* The apostle Paul says, “When I am weak, then am I strong;” and I wish it were possible for me to produce in all of you, whether you are sinners or saints, the sense of positive inability and utter weakness; for, until you feel that, you will never say to the Lord, “I flee unto You to hide me.” On the contrary, you will stand out boldly in the place of danger, and you will even defy your foes to do their worst against you. You will venture into worldliness; you will go up to the very mouth of the furnace of sin; you will become more daring and more presumptuous, and you will be less on your watchtower; you will keep on going further and further in the wrong way as long as you imagine that you are strong. But if the Lord will aim His arrows right at the very heart of your strength, and lay all your fancied glory in the mire, and make you to know that you are less than the least of all saints, then it will be better for you. But before you will reach this point, you will have to confess your own nothingness and say—

***“But, oh! For this no strength have I;
My strength is at Your feet to lie.”***

Then you will flee to the Lord to hide you, and then you will be hidden by Him in a safe place, but never till then.

III. A third thing which we must all have before we are likely to use the language of the text with truth is A PRUDENT FORESIGHT: “I flee unto You to hide me.”

The ungodly man, and, in a measure, the unwise believer also, will perceive the peril in which he is placed, and yet hesitate, linger, delay, deliberate, procrastinate. This is great folly, yet it is just what thousands are doing. I feel sure that some of you, who are here, are not prepared to live—much less are you prepared to die. I am glad to see you come to the house of God on a weeknight, for it looks as if you had some desire to find out the way of everlasting life. Yet how many there are among you who are living as if this life were all! You are quite unprepared for that great day to which you all know you are hastening; and you do not like to even hear anything about death and the judgment to come, because you are utterly unfit to face those stern realities. Are you always going to put off thoughts about these all-important matters, and to go on living without the slightest preparation for eternity? You know that you are in danger, and that you are too weak to face that danger all alone, though you have not yet fully perceived how great your weakness is. Oh, that you would be wise enough to begin to look about you for a way of escape! When you are in this sense wise, you will flee to God to hide you; but until you do get at least a little of this sacred prudence, and some of the wisdom which the Holy Spirit teaches, you will delay, and delay, and delay, till, on some dread day, the long-gathering clouds will discharge the awful storm of divine judgment upon your devoted head; and, then, you will not be able to flee to Christ to hide you, for the harvest will be past, and the summer will be ended, but you will be “not saved.”

The Lord, by His grace, has made Christian men and women more full of forethought than the ungodly are, and they have desired to escape from the wrath to come, and they have done so. And let me tell you, sinner, you who have not yet fled to Christ for salvation, that, while it is a blessed thing to be delivered from the wrath to come, it is also a most delightful thing to be delivered from the fear of it even now. I do not think that I could live an hour, without being in the bitterest agony, if I had any sort of doubt about my safety in Christ Jesus, for I have a most vivid sense of my danger and my weakness apart from Him, and these, like wings, bear me to the Rock of Ages, where I can hide in absolute security. But I could never rest in peace if I thought that God was angry with me, or if I knew that if I were to drop down dead, my soul would be in hell. How can any of you remain unconcerned in such a sad condition as that? Surely it must be because you do not realize what your true condition is. If I could lock some of you up in a room, and make you think about your position with regard to God, you would be very uncomfortable; you would almost as soon go to prison as sit down to think about the needs of your immortal spirit. Yet it is wrong for a man to be afraid to look into the books in which he keeps his soul’s accounts; it is worse than foolish to be afraid to test the soundness of the foundation of the house in which he dwells; it is sheer madness to be afraid to look to the state of his soul to see whether it has the marks of death upon it or not. Do not any of you be so foolish, so insane. You insure your lives, you insure your houses, you put on warmer garments as winter approaches, and if you have only some slight ailment, you run to a doctor. Have you no care about your immortal souls? Have you no anxiety concerning death and eternity? Or are you resolved to play the fool before high heaven? I pray you, do not so; but awake to something like prudence; and any one of you who does so will say to God, as David did, “I flee unto You to hide me.” You never will do this until you exercise such wise forethought as I urge upon you.

IV. Now, fourthly, and briefly, before any one of us will say to the Lord, “I flee unto You to hide me,” there must be A SOLID CONFIDENCE.

What kind of confidence do I mean? *A solid confidence that God can hide us.* Did you notice the second hymn that we sang? It always seems to me that the writer had a wonderful conception of God in His awfulness and greatness to be feared, and then he says—

“Yet I may love You, O my God!”

Think of the great God who made the heavens and the earth, who is everywhere, filling all things, and doing all things according to the good pleasure of His own will, and then say to yourself, “If I flee unto Him—if He will permit me to flee unto Him to hide me—how safe I must be! It is He of whom I have

been afraid; but if I can hide in Him, how secure I shall be! If I can find a shelter in Him, what a perfect shelter that must be!” When God lifts up His sword of justice, in His almighty hand, to smite the sinner, if that sinner can lay hold upon His arm, and cling firmly to it, how can God smite him? And He urges us to take hold of His strength. A heavy blow falls with the greatest force upon those who are some little distance away from the striker. When a man intends to strike a tremendous blow, if his adversary runs up close to him, and clings to his arm, what can he do with him? And fleeing to God to hide us does, as it were, disarm God; therefore I urge you to flee unto God in Christ that He may hide you from His justice, and He can rightly do this because Christ has borne for all believers the punishment that was due to their sin; and, therefore, the God of justice can Himself smile when He sees a sinner hidden in the Christ who made a full and complete atonement for his sin. Where can any of you flee away from the presence of God? If you ride upon the sunbeams, He will track you. If you plunge into the deeps of the sea, He will discover you. If you could climb up among the stars, He could pluck you from your hiding place, for He is everywhere; but if you flee to God in Christ to hide you, you must be safe forever. I have read an old story of a rebel, who was hunted by a certain king, but who disguised himself, and entered into the king’s tent, and partook of his hospitality before anyone discovered that he was the very man whose life the king had been seeking; and the king nobly and generously scorned the foe who had fled for shelter to his own tent. O poor guilty soul, this is the message of the gospel—Flee to God to hide you from God; turn to Him as the prodigal returned to his father to obtain forgiveness of the wrong which he had done to his father!

And you Christian men and women, this is to be your constant joy, that *you always can hide in God* that there is no trouble, difficulty, or danger, from which God will not be a shelter to you; for, as He is a shelter from His own justice, He must be a shelter from everyone else and everything else that would harm you. And *you may always hide in God*. You will never say to the Lord, “I flee unto You to hide me,” until you know that you may hide in Him. Yes, beloved, you may flee unto God to hide you, for God is never more truly God than when He receives poor souls that make Him to be their hiding place. It is said that on one occasion when certain wise men were sitting together in council, a poor bird, which was pursued by a hawk, flew into the bosom of one of the counselors, and he—the only man in the whole company who would have done such a thing—plucked the trembling bird out of his bosom, wrung its neck, and threw it away from him, whereupon the other counselors all rose up, and voted for his immediate expulsion from their assembly, for they all felt that any man, who could do such a deed as that, was unworthy to have a place in their ranks; and we may be quite sure that the ever-merciful Jehovah will never take a soul that has flown in His bosom for shelter, and destroy it. You dread God, poor soul, but you need never do so. If you are in Christ Jesus, God is so fully reconciled to you that, when you are pursued by sin, or Satan, or trouble of any kind, the safest place for you to fly to is His bosom, and there you are safe forever, for He will never cast you out. If you have this confidence in God, you will say to Him, as David did, “I flee unto You to hide me.”

V. One thing more is needed, and that is ACTIVITY OF FAITH.

There are some of you, who have heard what I have been saying about hiding in God, and as you go home you will say, “Yes, we know that we are in danger, we know that we are weak, we know that we need a secure hiding place, and we know that God is willing to hide us.” Well, then, if you know that, will you not at once flee unto Him to hide you? Beloved, you who have often fled unto Him to hide you, will not you again flee to Him? Some of you may have a new form of trouble which has just come upon you, and it is of such a kind that you do not like to tell anybody about it. I pray you, do not keep it to yourself for even another minute, but flee unto God, and tell Him all about it. I must confess my own folly in this respect, for I have been foolish enough, partly through weariness of body and brain, to nurse a trouble which I ought to have cast upon the Lord long ago. One does not mind nursing his own children, who may grow up to be a comfort to him, but it is always a pity to nurse trouble, for that often means taking a serpent’s eggs, and putting them into our bosom to hatch there into serpents that will sting us. This is a most foolish course of action; would it not be far wiser for us, as soon as any trouble comes upon us, to flee unto the Lord to hide us from it? Let us be cowardly enough to run away from our trouble. No, it will not be cowardice, but true bravery, always to run unto God directly any trouble comes upon us, each one of us crying to Him, with David, “I flee unto You to hide me.” Suppose that twenty troubles should come to us in a day, and that we should flee unto God twenty times with them, I think that we might almost pray to God to send twenty troubles more, so that we might flee unto Him forty times a day. Any reason for

going to God must be a blessing to us, for going to God is going to bliss; so we may even turn our troubles into blessings by making them drive us to Him.

I want to keep you, dear friends, to the practical point of my subject. Have you been worrying yourself, since you have been here, about a trial that you expect to fall upon you towards the close of this year? You fear that Christmas is not likely to be “a merry Christmas” to you; there are many bills coming in, and not much hope of the money with which to meet them; well, then, flee unto God with that trouble; and whatever is burdening your heart or your mind, flee to God about it, and leave it all in His hands, and go on your way rejoicing.

Last of all, is there not some poor sinner here, who has never yet believed in Jesus Christ as his or her Savior? How happy I should be if even before you leave this place, you would flee unto the Lord to hide you! You do not need even to go into the vestry, to talk to the elders. You may do that, if you like, and they will be glad to see you; but your best plan is to tell the Lord, while you are sitting in that seat, that you are a sinner far off from Him, and that you wish that He would save you. Ask Him, for Christ’s sake, to have mercy upon you. Trust His dear Son to save you; tell Him that you do trust Him to save you, and He will do it, for, according to your faith shall it be unto you. Flee unto Him to hide you. There are His dear wounds, and you are a poor feeble dove, and the cruel hawk is after you. You cannot fight with him, for he would tear you in pieces; you can only escape from him by flying to the wounds of Jesus; do so, then, for your pursuer cannot reach you there—

*“Come, guilty souls, and flee away
Like doves to Jesus’ wounds;
This is the welcome gospel-day,
Wherein free grace abounds.”*

God bless you all, for His dear Son’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: PSALM 143.

Psalm 143. A Psalm of David. Verses 1, 2. *Hear my prayer, O LORD, give ear to my supplications: in Your faithfulness answer me, and in Your righteousness. And enter not into judgment with Your servant: for in Your sight shall no man living be justified.*

That is, of course, apart from the wondrous system of justification by faith in Jesus Christ, whereby believers are made the righteousness of God in Him. Apart from that righteousness, no man living can be justified in the sight of God.

3, 4. *For the enemy has persecuted my soul; he has smitten my life down to the ground; he has made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead. Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate.*

Are any of you passing through this trying experience? If so, does it not encourage you to find that somebody else has been this way before you? The road is very rough, but there is a man’s footprint there, the footprint of a man whom God greatly loved, even the man after God’s own heart. Ah, dear friends, in those deep sorrows of yours, you are not alone; David has passed this way before you; and, what is better still, David’s Lord has traversed this rough road. In all our afflictions He was afflicted, He was tempted in all points like as we are, so He can most perfectly sympathize with us in all the troubles through which we are called to pass.

5, 6. *I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Your works; I muse on the work of Your hands. I stretch forth my hands unto You: my soul thirsts after You, as a thirsty land. Selah.*

One of the things which God’s people are in the habit of doing, when they are in deep trouble, is to look back upon their past experience. You may have seen the bargemen on the canal push backwards that they may propel the barge forwards; and, sometimes, we who believe in Jesus Christ have to push backwards—to look back on our past experience in order to derive fresh courage for the present hour of trial. So the psalmist says, “I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Your works; I muse on the work of Your hands.” Yet in David’s day of distress, when he had meditated upon his experiences in the past, that did not satisfy him. He wanted his God, therefore he cried unto the Lord, “I stretch forth my hands unto

You: my soul thirsts after You, as a thirsty land.” When the fields have long been dry because there has been no rain, you see how the earth opens its mouth in great cracks as if it gaped for the rain it so sorely needs; and David’s soul seemed thus gaping with a strong desire after the living God: “My soul thirsts after You, as a thirsty land.”

7, 8. *Hear me speedily, O LORD; my spirit fails: hide not Your face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit. Cause me to hear Your lovingkindness in the morning; for in You do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto You.*

This is a beautiful prayer, which any of you might present to the Lord: “Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk.” You are perplexed as to what you ought to do; you wish to do that which is right, but you are not sure what is right. Yet God can cause you to know the way wherein you should walk; He leads the blind by a way that they know not, and in paths which they have not seen. So breathe this prayer to Him in the hour of your perplexity—

*“Guide me, O You great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land:
I am weak, but You are mighty;
Hold me with Your powerful hand!”*

Or say with David, “Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk, for I lift up my soul unto You.” He seems to say, “My soul is like a dead weight which cannot lift itself up; but in the strength which You do impart to me, I lift it up; I will not let it lie like a dead log before You: ‘I lift up my soul unto You.’”

9, 10. *Deliver me, O LORD, from my enemies: I flee unto You to hide me. Teach me to do Your will;*

This is another most blessed prayer: “Teach me to do Your will.” Most of us want to have our own will and to go our own way; but each one who is truly wise prays to the Lord, “Teach me to do Your will.”

10, 11. *For You are my God; Your spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness. Quicken me, O LORD, for Your name’s sake: for Your righteousness’ sake bring my soul out of trouble.*

What earnest pleading is this, and how powerful it is! Every word is so fitting that if I had time to explain it, you would note the force and appropriateness of every syllable that the psalmist here uses.

12. *And of Your mercy cut off my enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul: for I am Your servant.*

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—57, 821, 195.

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