

The Fainting Hero

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon teaches that believers, like Samson, may face new trials after great victories, but God's past deliverances assure their present security and future help.

Scripture: Judges 15:18, Psalm 34:19, Psalm 23:4, Hebrews 13:8, Isaiah 63:3, 2 Corinthians 4:8-9, Psalm 91:4, Genesis 32:31

Topics: "God's Deliverance", "Faith and Trust", "Christian Perseverance"

Description

In 'The Fainting Hero,' C.H. Spurgeon reflects on the story of Samson to encourage believers who face new trials after experiencing God's deliverance. He reminds his audience that despite present weaknesses or troubles, God's past faithfulness guarantees their security and continued help. Spurgeon calls Christians to trust in God's unchanging nature and to find comfort in the assurance that He will never abandon His people.

Transcript

"He was very thirsty, and called on the LORRD, and said, You have given this great deliverance into the hand of Your servant: and now shall I die of thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumncised?" Judges 15:18.

YOU will remember the occasion on which these words were spoken. Samson had been brought down from the top of the rock Etam, bound with cords by his own brothers, and given up as a captive into the hands of the Philistines. But no sooner did he reach the Philistines than the supernatural force of God's Spirit came upon him and he snapped the cords as though they had been but hemp and, seeing the jawbone of a newly-slaughtered donkey lying near at hand, he grasped that strange weapon and fell with all his might upon the hosts of the Philistines! And though, no doubt, they took to speedy flight, yet the one man, smiting them hip and thigh, left no less than a thousand persons dead upon the ground! And as he piled up the heaps of the slain, he looked with grim satisfaction upon the slaughter which he had worked, crying, "With the jawbone of a donkey, heaps upon heaps, with the jaw of a donkey have I slain a thousand men." There was, perhaps, a little of vaunting and vain-glorying in his conduct, but in a moment, a sudden faintness came over him. He had been exerting himself most marvelously, straining every nerve and muscle, and now, being very thirsty, he looked round him for a stream of water, but there was none—and he felt as if, for lack of water, he would die and then the Philistines would rejoice over him! With that simple-minded faith which was so characteristic of Samson, who was nothing but a big child, he

turned his eyes to his heavenly Father, and cried, "O Jehovah, You have given me this great deliverance, and now shall I die of thirst? After all that You have done for me, shall the uncircumcised rejoice over me because I die for lack of a drink of water?" Such confidence had he that God would interpose on his behalf.

Now, my drift is the comforting of God's saints, especially in coming to the Table of their Lord. I have thought there may be many of you who are feeling in an unhappy and a distressed frame of mind and that by referring you to what God has already done for you, I might lead you to see a lighter estimate upon your present trouble and enable you to argue that He who has worked great deliverances for you in the past will not allow you to lack in the future!

I. YOU HAVE ALREADY, MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS, EXPERIENCED GREAT DELIVERANCES.

Happy is it for you that you have not had the grim task of slaying a thousand men, but there are "heaps upon heaps" of another sort upon which you may look with quite as much satisfaction as Samson and, perhaps, with less mingled emotions than his when he gazed on the slaughtered Philistines.

See there, Beloved, the great heaps of your sins—all of them giants—and any one of them sufficient to drag you down to the lowest Hell! But they are all slain! There is not a single sin that speaks a word against you. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" Another arm than yours has done it, but the victory is quite complete. Christ has returned with dyed garments from Bozrah. He has trodden the winepress of God's wrath and I may almost say that the blood which stains His apparel is the blood of your sins which He has utterly destroyed forever. Look at their number. Take all the years of your life and make each year a heap. Divide them, if you will, into groups and classes—put them under the heads of the Ten Commandments and there they lie, in ten great heaps, but every one of them destroyed!

Think, too, of the heaps of your doubts and fears. Do you not remember when you thought God would never have mercy upon you? Let me remind you of the deep dungeon where there was no water when the iron entered into your soul. Some of us can never forget the time when we were under conviction of sin. Moses tied us up to the Halberts and took the ten-thronged whip of the Law of God and laid it upon our backs most terribly—and then seemed to wash us with brine as conscience reminded us of all the aggravations which had attended our sins! But though we feared we should have been

in Hell. Though we thought that surely the pit would shut its mouth upon us, yet here we are living to praise God, as we do this day, and all our fears are gone! We rejoice in Christ Jesus. God "has not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." "Heaps upon heaps" of fears have we had—bigger heaps than our sins—but there they lie, troops of doubters. There are their bones and their skulls, as Bunyan pictured them outside the town of Mansoul, but they are all dead, God having worked for us deliverance from them!

Another set of foes that God has slain includes our temptations. Some of us have been tempted from every quarter of the world, from every point of the compass. Sometimes it has been pride. At another time, despair. Sometimes it has been too much of the world and at other times it has been too little. Sometimes we have been too strong and puffed up. At other times we have been too weak and cast down. There has sometimes been a lack of faith and at other times our fervency may have been inflamed by the flesh. The best of men are shot at with the devil's worst darts. You have been tempted by Satan. You have been tempted by the world. Your nearest and dearest friends have, perhaps, been your worst tempters, for "a man's foes shall be they of his own household." There has not been a bush behind which an enemy has

not lurked. There has been no inch of the road to Canaan which has not been overgrown with thorns!

Now look back upon your temptations and where are they? Your soul has escaped like a bird out of the snare of the fowler and this night you can say, "They compassed me about like bees. Yes, like bees they compassed me about, but in the name of God have I destroyed them! I have passed safely where others have been ruined. I have walked along the walls of salvation when others have been lying at the foot, dashed in pieces by their presumption and their self-confidence— 'heaps upon heaps' of my temptations have been slain and You, O God, have worked for me a great deliverance!"

So let me say, in the next place, has it been with most of your sorrows. You sons and daughters of tribulation have sometimes sat down and said, "All these things are against us." You have lost children, friends have died, business has departed, wealth has melted—almost every comfort has had a blight upon it. Like Job's messengers, evil tidings have followed one another and you have been brought very low. But, Beloved in Christ Jesus, you have been delivered! "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all." It has been so in your case. Whatever form the affliction has taken, Mercy has taken a suitable form to meet it. When the arrow flew, God was your Shield. When the darkness gathered, He was your Sun. When you had to fight, He was your Sword. When you needed to be supported, He was your Rod and your Staff—

"Thus far we've proved that promise good Which Jesus ratified with blood. Still is He gracious, wise, and just And still in Him let Israel trust."

I will let no man or woman in this congregation take a place before me in obligation to the Most High! Brothers and Sisters, we are all debtors, but I count myself most of all a debtor! I boast that I have nothing to boast of! I would desire to lie the lowest and to take the meanest place, for I owe most of all to the Grace of God! When I look back to my parentage, when I see from where the Lord has brought me and what He has done for me and by me, I can only say, "You have given to Your servant this great deliverance." And I suppose if all the people of God could meet here, one by one, they would each claim that there is something peculiar in their every case. Each one would say, "There is something in the deliverance God has worked for me that demands of me a special song"—therefore let the whole of us together, who have known and "tasted that the Lord is gracious," look back upon the past with thankfulness and praise to the Lord! II. YET FRESH TROUBLES WILL ATTACK YOU AND EXCITE YOUR ALARM.

Thus, after his fight with the Philistines, Samson was thirsty. This was a new kind of trouble to him—he was so thirsty that he was afraid that he would die! The difficulty was totally different from any that Samson had met before. Shake those Samsonian locks in which your strength lies, but they cannot distil a single drop of dew to moisten your mouth! The strongest man is as much amenable to thirst as the weakest—and that arm which could slay a thousand Philistines, cannot open a fountain in the earth, or draw down a shower from the skies, or yield to thirst a single draught of water! He is in a new plight. Of course it seems to you to be a far simpler trial than he had known before, and so it was. Merely to get thirst relieved is not anything like so great a thing as to be delivered from a thousand Philistines! But I daresay, when the thirst was upon him and oppressed him, Samson felt that little present difficulty more weighty and severe than the great past difficulty out of which he had so recently been delivered!

Now I think, Beloved, there may be some of you who have been forgiven, saved, delivered and yet you do not feel happy tonight. "God has done great things for you, whereof you are glad," yet you cannot rejoice.

The song of your thanksgiving is hushed. A little inconvenience in getting into your pews, a hasty word spoken by somebody outside the gate, the thought of a child at home—something which is very little and insignificant compared with all that God has worked for you will sometimes take away the present joy and comfort of the great—the unspeakably great gifts which you have received! You may be sure of your standing in Christ and yet some little trouble keeps buzzing about your ears and may be distracting you even now. Let me say two or three words to you.

It is very usual for God's people, when they have had some great deliverance, to have some little trouble that is too much for them. Samson slays a thousand Philistines and piles them up in heaps—and then he must die for need of a little water! Look at Jacob—he wrestles with God at Peniel and overcomes Omnipotence itself—and yet he goes limping on his thigh! Strange, is it not, that there must be a touching of the sinew whenever you and I win the day? It seems as if God must teach us our littleness, our nothingness, in order to keep us within bounds! Samson seems to have crowed right lustily when he said, "With the jaw of a donkey have I slain a thousand men." Ah, Samson, it is time your throat became hoarse when you can boast so loudly! The mighty man has to go down on his knees and cry, "O God, this thirst will overcome Your hero! Send me, I pray You, a draught of water." God has ways of touching His people so that their energy soon vanishes. "In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved...You did hide Your face and I was troubled." Now, dear child of God, if this is your case, I say it is not an unusual one. There is a reaction which generally follows any strong excitement. No doubt the excitement of having slain the Philistines would naturally be followed by depression of spirits in Samson. When David had mounted the throne of Judah, there came a reaction and he said, "I am this day weak, though anointed king." You must expect to feel weakest just when you are enjoying your greatest triumph!

I have already said that the use of all this is to make a man feel his weakness. I hope it makes you feel yours. What fools we are, Brothers and Sisters and yet, if someone else were to call us fools, we would not like it—though I do not doubt but that we are very well named, whoever may give us the title—for the whole of Heaven cannot make us rejoice if we have a pain in our head and all the harps of angels and our knowledge of our interest in "the Glory that shall be revealed," cannot make us happy if some little thing happens to go contrary to our minds! Somebody trod on the corns of your pride as you were coming in here—and if an angel had preached to you, you would not have enjoyed it because of your mind being discomposed. Oh, simpletons that we are! The table is daintily spread and the manna of Heaven lies close to our hands, but because there is a little tear in the garment, or a small thorn in the finger, we sit down and cry as though the worst of ills had happened to us! Heaven is your own and yet you cry because your little room is scantily furnished! God is your Father and Christ your Brother—and yet you weep because a baby has been taken from you to the skies! Your sins all forgiven and yet you mourn because your clothes are poor! You are a child of God, an heir of Heaven—and yet you sorrow as though you would break your heart because a fool has called you ill names! Strange is it and foolish—but such is man—strangely foolish and only wise as God shall make him so!

III. If, my Brothers and Sisters, you are now feeling any present trouble pressing so sorely that it takes away from you all power to rejoice in your deliverance, I want you to remember that you ARE STILL SECURE! God will as certainly bring you out of this present little trouble as He has brought you out of all the great troubles in the past.

He will do this for two reasons, both of which are found in the text. The first is because if He does not deliver you, your enemy will rejoice over you. "What?" said Samson, "Shall I die of thirst, and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised? Faint, weary, thirsty, shall I become their victim?—I who was once their terror

and made the damsels of Gath and of Askelon to weep instead of to dance? Shall I be slain?" And what do you say? But hush your gloomy forebodings! If you perish, the honor of Christ will be tarnished and the laughter of Hell will be excited. Bought with Jesus' blood and yet in Hell—what merriment there would be in the Pit! Justified by the righteousness of Christ and yet lost—what a theme of scorn for fiends! Sanctified by the Spirit of God and yet damned—oh what yells of triumph would go up from the abode of Apollyon and his angels! What? A child of God forsaken of his Father? A jewel plucked from Jesus' crown? A member rent from Jesus' body? Never, never, never! God will never permit the power of darkness to triumph over the power of light. His great name He always has in respect and the ruin of the meanest Believer would be the cause of dishonor and disrespect to God—therefore you are safe! Oh it is such a blessed thing when you can run behind your God for shelter! Some youngster out in the street has been offending his fellow and is likely to receive a blow—but here comes his father—and he runs behind him and feels that there is no fear for him now! So let us shelter ourselves behind our God. Better than bronze walls, or castles, or high towers shall Jehovah be to us! And we may then look at all our enemies and say, as the Lord did to Sennacherib, "The virgin, the daughter of Zion, has despised you and laughed you to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem has shaken her head at you." The uncircumcised shall not rejoice! The daughters of Philistia shall not triumph! We are our God's and He will keep His own until the day when He shall display them as His jewels.

That is one reason for confidence, but another reason is to be found in the fact that God has already delivered you. I asked you just now to walk over the battlefield of your life and observe the heaps of slaughtered sins, fears, cares, temptations and troubles. Do you think He would have done all that He has done for you if He had intended to leave you? The God who has so graciously delivered you up to now has not changed! He is still the same as He ever was. I have no doubt about the sun rising tomorrow morning—he always has done so since I have been able to see him. Why should I doubt my God, for He is more certain than the sun? The Nile ceases not to make Egypt laugh with plenty—men trust it. And why should not I trust my God who is a river full of water overflowing with loving kindness? If we never doubt God till we have cause to do so, distrust will be banished from our hearts forever! Of men, we speak as we find them—let us do the same with God. Was He ever a wilderness to you? When did He forsake you? When did your cries to Him return without an answer? Has He ever said, "I have blotted you out of My Book and I will remember you no more?" You have doubted Him wickedly and wantonly, but never have you had any cause for suspicion or mistrust! Now, since He is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever," the God who delivered you out of the jaws of the lion and out of the paws of the bear will yet deliver you out of your present difficulty!

Do you think, dear Friend, if He does not do so, He will lose all that He has done for you! When I see a potter making a vessel, if he is using some delicate clay upon which he has spent much preliminary labor to bring it to its proper fineness—if I see him again, and again, and again molding the vessel—if I see, moreover, that the pattern is coming out—if I know that he has put it in the oven and that the colors are beginning to display themselves—I think were it common everyday ware I could understand his breaking up what he had done, because it would be but worth little. But since it is a piece of rich and rare porcelain upon which months of labor have been spent, I could not understand his saying, "I will not go on with it," because he would lose so much that he had already spent! Look at some of those rich vessels by Bernard de Palissy which are worth their weight in gold, and you can hardly imagine Bernard stopping when he had almost finished and saying, "I have been six months on this, but I shall never take the pains to complete it."

Now God has spent the blood of His own dear Son to save you! He has spent the power of the Holy Spirit to make you what He would have you be and He will never stay His mighty hand till His work is done! Has He said and shall He not do it? Has He begun and shall He not complete it? God will have no unfinished works! When Jehovah's banner is furled and His sword is sheathed, then shall He cry—

"'Tis done,

For the kingdoms of this world Are the kingdoms of My Son."

Doubtless some of you who are saying that I am speaking as one who does not know the occasion or the bitterness of your peculiar distress. My dear Friends, I do not care to know it. It is enough for me to know that if God has worked for His servants so great a deliverance as He has done, the present difficulty is only like Samson's thirst and I am sure He will not let you die of faintness, nor suffer the daughter of the uncircumcised to triumph over you. "Ah," says one, "it is all very well talking, but mine is a very, very, very peculiar case!" Well, then, dear Brother, there is a special reason why God should deliver you because if Satan could overcome you in that peculiar case, he would then say that he could have overcome all the saints if he could have got them into the same corner! And he would loudly boast just as though the whole had perished! But I do not think that your case is so very peculiar—it is only the way in which you look at it. The road to sorrow has been well trodden—it is the regular sheep path to Heaven—and all the flock of God have had to pass along it. So I pray you, cheer up your heart with Samson's words and rest assured that God will deliver you soon!

And now, while I have been talking thus, the thought has again occurred to me that many people listen to me who are not Christians. My Friends, my great wonder is what some of you do without God! I can hardly understand how the rich man can have any comfort without God, for he must suffer from bereavement and bodily pain as well as the poor. Those silly butterflies of fashion who spend all their time in flitting about from flower to flower are so heartless and thoughtless that I can, to some extent, comprehend how they can do without God. With empty heads and silly hearts, men and women can make gods of anything! Their own pretty persons can be quite a sufficient object for their idiotic worship. But a man who stands right straight up, a sensible thinking man—a working-man, if you will—I do not mind whether he works with the dry heat of his brain or with the damp sweat of his face—I cannot understand how a man like this, with organs of thought and a reasoning soul, can go on without God! There must be pinches with some of you when you need a God. I would have been in a madhouse a dozen times if it had not been for my God. My feet would have altogether gone into the chambers of despair and I would have ended this life if it had not been for the faithful promises of the God who keeps and preserves His people! My life has not been a miserable, but a happy one! And yet I tell you that there have been innumerable times in it when I could not have done without my God. I do not understand what some of you who are always so pinched, do without God. There are many such here. You are poor. You are not often without sickness. You were born inheritors of maladies that make your life wretched. Your children are sickly about you. It is as much as you can do by Saturday night to make ends meet—you are frequently in debt—you are constantly in trouble. Oh, I cannot tell what you do without God! Why, you have nothing here, and no hope of anything hereafter! Poor Souls, I could weep for you to think that you are without God!

And you will have to die soon. When the death-thirst is in your throat, what do you think you will do without God? To die in God's Presence is simply to let life blossom into something better than life—but to die without God must be horrible! You will not want your companions then! Strong drink will not pacify you then! Music will have no charms for you then! The love of a tender and gentle wife can yield you but sorry

comfort then! You may lay your moneybags at your side, but they will not calm your palpitating heart then! You will hear the booming of the waves of the great sea of eternity! You will feel your feet slipping into the dreadful quicksand! You will clutch about you for help, but there will be none! Instead, invisible hands shall begin to pull you down and down through the dark sea! And you will descend to those darker depths where dread despair will be your everlasting heritage!

But there is hope yet! Whoever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved! Turn your eyes to Christ, poor Sinner, as He hangs there suffering in man's place, taking human guilt on Himself and being punished for it as though it were His own! Trust Him, Sinner—and resting in Jesus you shall be saved!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: PSALM37.

Verse 1. Fret not yourself because of evildoers, neither be you envious against the workers of iniquity. They often seem to have the best of it in this life, but if it really is so, we must never forget that there is another life after this in which there will be no reason for the righteous to be envious of evildoers and workers of iniquity!

2. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. It is very easy to cut down the grass with a sharp scythe. And when Death takes down his scythe and cuts down men as the mower cuts down the grass of the field, they fall, rank upon rank, to "wither as the green herb."

3. Trust in the LORD, and do good. These are two good things to go together—faith and good works! "Trust in the Lord, and do good."

3. So shall you dwell in the land Not merely on earth, but in the land of promise, the land which God has promised to His people. We dwell there by faith even now. Everywhere we find our God and wherever we find Him, it is Emmanuel's land to us.

3. So and verily you shall be fed. "Verily, verily," is Christ's most solemn affirmation. [See Sermon #3053, Volume 53—jesus CHRIST'S IDIOM] David here says, "verily," because the statement

he makes is absolutely true—"Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed."

4. Delight yourself also in the LORD; and He shall give you the desires of your heart. [See Sermon #454, Volume 8—sunshine IN THE HEART] When all your heart's desires are fixed upon Him

because He is your heart's delight, then you may give a loose rein to those desires without any fear that they will run away! When your heart's desires are of this sort, you shall have them, be they what they may! It is not every man who shall have the desires of his heart given to him, but only that man whose heart's delight is in his God. There is much in connection with the person praying which will help to decide whether he shall or shall not have his desires granted. What is the condition of the heart out of which the desires come? When the heart is full of delight in the Lord, its desires shall be pleasing in His sight and shall be granted.

5. Commit your way unto the LORD. You who are just now in trouble. You who are walking in a rough way, commit that trouble and that way to the Lord! You who are in difficulty as to what is your right way, commit that difficulty to the Lord! Then, of course, you will not need to keep it yourself, nor to trouble your head about it. It does not need two to "care" when God is one of the two, so cast all your care upon Him, for He

cares for you! His Grace is amply sufficient for every emergency that can possibly arise, so "commit your way unto the Lord." You have committed your soul to Him—then you can surely commit your business to Him, for that is a far inferior thing to your immortal soul!

5. Trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass. Your desire shall be brought to pass. Your safety shall be brought to pass. Your everlasting advantage shall be brought to pass. Your way shall be made passable to you—you shall find your way to Heaven.

6. And He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your judgment as the noonday. Are you misunderstood, misrepresented, slandered, laughed at? Leave it all with your God! Are you now walking in darkness? Trust in Him and He will bring you out into the Light of God in due time. We do not have morning light in the evening—morning light comes when the morning comes—and your deliverance shall come when it is the right time for you to have it.

7. Rest in the LORD. That is a blessed state to reach. Notice the various stages that the Psalmist has mentioned. There was first, "Trust and do." Then there was, "Delight and have." Then there was, "Commit, and have it brought to pass." And now there is, "Rest in the Lord."

7, 8. And wait patiently for Him: fret not yourself because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger. That comes of fretting and of being in a hurry—and not resting and being patient—for when the mind is restful, we can bear injuries. "Cease from anger."

8. And forsake wrath: fret not yourself in any wise to do evil. Very often our proverb is true, "The more haste, the less speed." And he who is in a hurry often does evil under the notion that it is the shortest way to get good—which it never is, for evil brings forth evil—and that perpetually.

9, 10. For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yes, you shall diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. The very place wherein he stood so high has utterly perished. How many instances there have been of men who have taken great pains to perpetuate their own names, yet their names are forgotten in the very place where they dwelt! God has a way of stamping out evil and putting an end to it—and when there has been great wickedness in the land, He knows how to make the very name of the wicked to rot.

11-13. But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. The wicked plots against the just, and gnashes upon him with his teeth. The Lord shall laugh at him: for He sees that his day is coming. "His day is coming," and what a day it will be! When the day of the wicked shall come—the day of God's righteous vengeance—woe unto him; woe unto him!

14-16. The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as are of upright conversation. Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken. A little that a righteous man has is better than the riches of many wicked. Not of one wicked man, only, but of "many wicked." Fortunes heaped upon fortunes as the result of evil-doing cannot equal the portion of the poorest of God's saints! A little with a blessing resting upon it is vastly better than much accompanied by a curse.

17. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the LORD upholds the righteous. They would soon fall if they were not upheld—but they shall not fall, for God will make them to stand!

18. The LORD knows the days of the upright. He knows our dark days and our bright days—and all our days that are yet to be as well as all our days that have been! The Lord knows all about all our days.

18. And their inheritance shall be forever. What they have, if it is really worth having, they shall keep forever. What God has given them in Christ, because they are His children, shall never be taken away from them, nor shall they be taken away from it—"their inheritance shall be forever." Men try to pass on their estates, but it is often an unsatisfactory system. Our estates are owned by God—upon the inheritance of every one of His people there is an inalienable ownership.

19. They shall not be ashamed in the evil time. If any shall say to them, "How is it that you are a child of God and yet you live in such an evil time?" they shall not be ashamed, but they will have an answer ready for them. They will tell them that many righteous men have lived in evil times, but they, themselves, have not been evil because of that. Where should bright lights be but in a dark place? Where should the salt be but where everything is going to corruption? "They shall not be ashamed in the evil time," for their God will still be their God and though everyone else may fail them, their God will not fail them.

19-23. And in the days of famine they shall be satisfied. 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 be consumed. The wicked borrows, and pays not again: but the righteous shows mercy, and gives. For such as are blessed of Him shall inherit the earth; and they that are cursed of Him shall be cut off. The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD. Oh, what comfort there is in this blessed assurance! Sometimes we know not which way to move, but we need not lack Divine guidance, for there is a special Providence which watches over every step of a gracious man. When we are right with God, everything is right with us. If our heart's desire is that we may walk in God's way, then God will take care that the way of His Providence shall be made plain to us and shall be full of love to us.

23. And He delights in his way. God delights to watch the way that His children walk, even though their steps may falter and totter, for they are often like little children learning to walk and usually they are very weak and feeble. Yet, if it is a good man who is walking as he should walk, God "delights in his way."

24. Though he falls, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholds him with His hand. He is like a little child who does not yet know how to stand alone, so his mother or nurse holds him up, or picks him up if he falls. God's arms are under His children's arms as He says by the mouth of the Prophet Hosea, "I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms." This is how He also teaches us to go—in wondrous condescension taking us by our arms!

25. I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. I have been young and though I am not yet old, I can truly say that I have never seen the righteous forsaken. I have, however, seen the seed of the righteous begging bread. David never saw that sad sight, but then he was a king, so he was not likely to see as many beggars as some of us do. Yet, still as a general rule it remains true that the God of the fathers does provide for their children. Of course, if the seed of the righteous become vicious and profligate, as they sometimes do, drunkenness will clothe them with rags and set them among the beggars of the street just as it would if they were the children of ungodly parents! And it may be mercy on the part of God that it should be so, as it was in the case of the prodigal, who never came to himself until he was in need—and his begging of bread was a blessing to him—for it brought him, at last, to beg to be received again into his father's household!

26-27. He is always merciful, and lends; and his seed is blessed. Depart from evil. Do not remain near it, do not even look at it, do not parley with it—run away from it! "Depart from evil."

27. And do good. For you must do something, either good or evil. If you became an idler, even though you had departed from evil, you would not have become what God would have you to be. Negatives must be backed up with positives! "Depart from evil, and do good."

27, 28. And dwell forevermore. For the LORD loves judgment, and forsakes not His saints; they are preserved forever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off. Not, of course, if they themselves become righteous, for then they come under the Covenant of Grace and shall never be cut off.

29-37. The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever. The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom, and his tongue talks of judgment. The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide. The wicked watches the righteous, and seeks to slay him. The LORD will not leave him in his hands, nor condemn him when he is judged. Wait on the LORD, keep His way, and He shall exalt you to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, you shall 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: yes, 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. He does not wither and vanish like a gourd of the night. He passes not away like that phantom bay tree which seemed so substantial, but really was not. His end is peace and "all is well that ends well," so all is well with him—and blessed is that man's life which came to such a blessed conclusion as this—"the end of that man is peace."

38, 39. 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. That is why they are not cut off like the wicked, because God's salvation is in them. They would pass away, they would be but the mere dream and phantom that the prosperous wicked ones are, but God Himself is in them and, therefore, are they solid and substantial and their salvation is an everlasting salvation!

39, 40 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. That is the main point—"they trust in Him." One of the descriptions of Abraham is this, "Abraham believed God," and therefore he had God for his shield and his exceeding great reward. Are you trusting in God, dear Friends? Are you living a life of faith? Then the walk of faith will be followed, in due time, by the triumph of faith! Blessed are all they that put their trust in the Lord, and blessed forever shall they be.

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