

Our Daily Homily - Psalms

by F.B. Meyer

F.B. Meyer emphasizes the importance of rooting oneself in God's Word, understanding resurrection, and trusting God through trials and prayer.

Scripture: Psalm 1:3, Psalm 2:7, Psalm 3:3, Psalm 4:3, Psalm 5:3, Psalm 6:3, Psalm 7:8, Psalm 8:6, Psalm 9:10, Psalm 10:1

Topics: "The Power of God's Word", "Spiritual Resilience"

Description

F.B. Meyer emphasizes the importance of rooting ourselves in God's Word to maintain spiritual vitality and resilience against life's challenges. He draws parallels between the flourishing of a tree planted by water and the believer's life sustained by meditation on Scripture. Meyer also reflects on the transformative power of God's gentleness and the necessity of prayer, urging believers to seek a deeper relationship with God through intentional communion and trust. He reassures that God is always present, even in trials, and encourages believers to embrace their identity as anointed ones, destined for dominion and fellowship with the Divine.

Transcript

...his leaf also shall not wither - Psalm 1:3

"If a man abide not in Me," said our Lord, "he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered."

The same thought is here. Thrust down your rootlets to the oozy river bed, and there is no doubt about your continuing earnest, patient, God-filled. The sun of temptation may strike you with sword-like beams, but you will have a source of supply which they cannot exhaust. The secret of an unwithering beauty is in the Word of God, delighted in and meditated upon day and night. And what is the Word of God, but the life of God. translated into human speech?

Wean yourself from all beside, and learn to feed on God. Withdraw your rootlets from men and things, and let them travel to the river of God, which is full of water. Close other doors, and open those that lead out on to the terrace, whence you may behold the far-spread landscape of what He is, and says, and is willing to be to us all.

Note that word meditate. The root must lie in contact with the stream, and the soul must steep itself in the Word of God. We must give the truth time to enter and pervade our souls. We must have retreats, shut

away from the rush of life, up and down the glades of which we may tread. These retreats are oftener found within the soul than without. Just as in the temple of old, there was Solomon's porch, where Jesus walked, so in the temple within there are closes and cloisters, where we may commune with our heart, and be still.

This day have I begotten thee - Psalm 2:7

The Holy Ghost tells us that this was addressed by the Father to the Son in his Resurrection (see Act 13:33). It was from the grave that our Lord stepped up to his mediatorial throne, whence all the hatred of his foes has had no power to dislodge Him, and never shall have. Death is a birth into the true life. Jesus was the Firstborn from the dead; we too are to be born out of the darkness of the grave into the Life Immortal.

"There is a beyond, and he who has once caught a glimpse of it is like a man who has gazed at the sun. Wherever he looks, he sees everywhere the image of the sun. Speak to him of finite things, and he will tell you that the finite is impossible and meaningless without the infinite. Speak to him of death, and he will call it birth; speak to him of time, and he will call it the mere shadow of eternity."

But is it not wonderful that He has begotten us also unto a living hope by the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead to an incorruptible inheritance? We are the sons of the resurrection. In Jesus we are already on resurrection-ground. Our sun shall no more go down, nor our moon withdraw herself. For us, at least, God hath destroyed "the veil that is spread over all nations."

Do not wonder, then, at the hate of men. They will rage, and imagine vain things; they will take counsel together. It cannot be otherwise.

Thou mayest expect, then, to be bruised by thy brethren, and hated by the world. But at such times Christ will come to thee, and give thee fresh accessions of his resurrection life, carrying thee into the hidden house of his abiding, and confirming the weak knees and the heart that faints.

But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head - Psalm 3:3

Oh, my soul, hast thou made God thy glory Others boast in their wealth, beauty, position, achievements: dost thou find in God what they find in these? Thou needest safety from the shocks of time and change: is He thy shield? Thou must have something outside of time, to complete thy blessedness: is He thine ideal? Thy head is drooping like a flower-cup - it sadly needs the dexterous hand of the Gardener: is it busy with thee

"Nothing resting in its own completeness

Can have worth or beauty: but alone -

Because it leads and lends to further sweetness,

Fuller, higher, deeper than its own -

Life is only bright when it proceedeth

Towards a truer, deeper life above;

Human love is sweetest when it leadeth

To a more divine and perfect love."

God around us as a shield, God above and within us as an ideal, God lifting up the tired and sorrowful face - this was David's threefold conception of his relation with God. All around men were filled with wrath at him. He heard their harsh voices, and what they said. Nevertheless he comforted, and stayed his heart with the words, .But Thou, O Lord. Ah, what an instant change they make!

We kneel, and all around us seems to lower;

We rise, and all, the distant and the near,

Stands forth in sunny outline, bravo and clear;

We kneel, how weak - we rise, how full of power!"

Ah, these .Buts! What a difference they make in our lives. There is always the hedge of God's care, always an illimitable reserve of power and help within our reach, of which we may avail ourselves; and we are so sure of it, that we lay ourselves down in peace to sleep, though the foe in thousands encamps around.

Know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for Himself - Psalm 4:3

The Lord sets apart for his own enjoyment. - " A garden enclosed is my sister." Out of the wild prairie Christ encloses favoured bits of land, that they may become fair gardens in which to walk. God must have spirits with which He can commune; and therefore He shuts selected ones away in sick chambers, in loneliness, and in prisons, that there may be nothing to divert them from the holy intercourse with Himself which is his refreshment and delight.

The Lord sets apart for fellowship in intercessory prayer. - He leads three of the apostles into the shadows of Gethsemane, that they may add their intercessions with his. In each church there is a favoured band to whom He tells his secret anxiety for other souls, and whom He leads out in prayer on the behalf of them and of the world.

The .Lord sets apart for service. - Those that separate themselves from evil become vessels unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use. Do not be surprised if you are withdrawn from the madding crowd, from the ambitions and interests of earlier years; it is the Lord's way of engaging you for special service.

We can never forget how the Holy Ghost bade the early Church separate Barnabas and Saul to their appointed ministry. They were separated unto the Holy Ghost. A similar separation may become ours. Let us live in the world as those who are set apart for God, like the Temple vessels that might not be put, as Belshazzar attempted to put them, to idolatrous and lascivious purposes. Oh to know what God means when He puts his reserve on the soul, and says, This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell!

In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee - Psalm 5:3

It is very important to consider the order of our petitions. No man would approach an earthly sovereign without taking time to consider how best to present his requests. He would consider the pleas on which to

rely, the arguments to present, and the method in which he would be most likely to carry his case. Upon entering the presence of the great King, our Father, would it not well repay us to stay on the threshold for a moment to ask what petitions we are about to proffer, the order in which we should arrange them, and the reasons we should adduce?

It is manifestly a mistake to pray at haphazard. There is too much random praying with us all. We do not return again and again to the same petition, pressing it home with all humility and reverence, and arguing the case, as Abraham did his for the cities of the plain.

Study the order of the Lord's prayer - the adoration and prostration of soul before God prior to supplication for definite gifts; the acquiescence in the Divine will before the prayer for daily bread; the entreaty for forgiveness before there can be a thought of deliverance from evil. Or consider the order of the High Priest's intercession for his own in John 17. before He pours out his soul in prayer for the world. Lay the wood "in order." Enter the temple of prayer through successive courts - Confession, Absolution, Ascriptions of Praise, the Te Deum, the broken sentences, the outburst of intercession, as suggested by the Church of England liturgy. At the same time, do not forget to be perfectly natural. Whilst the soul ascends the temple by regular steps, let there be the glad conviction of the tender love of the waiting Father.

...but thou, O LORD, how long? - Psalm 6:3

You have been long in coming, love says. So miserly are we of the minutes, so leaden-paced is the beat of the pendulum, when our heart stands on the tip-toe of expectation. Moments lengthen to hours when we suffer and await deliverance, just as hours contract to moments when the heart is young and gay.

How long, Lord, ere the trial cease? - When we are entering into the furnace, we like to make bargains with God that it shall not last beyond a certain hour; but He never tells us, lest patience might miss her perfect work. He says simply, It is enough to suffer one moment at a time.

How long, Lord, ere deliverance arrive? - Long ago we sent for reinforcements; and since then the battle has been waxing more fierce. We have looked eagerly to the horizon to see the relieving column, clear-cut on the sky line; but in vain. We think we can hold out no more. We have strained at the oar to the last degree of strength, and if some deliverance does not come to us, the fourth watch of night will see us drifting helplessly to destruction. "Where is thy God?" the enemy cries; and we are tempted to think ourselves forsaken and forgotten.

How long, Lord, ere the Advent break? - He said that He would come quickly - but the weary centuries pass; and, strain our ears as we may, we cannot detect his princely footfall along the corridor of time.

Cease, fond heart, thy complaining. Delay is not denial. He counts a thousand years as a day. He is coming on the wings of every wind; already He is nigh, even at the doors. Never a moment too early - but not a moment too late.

Judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me - Psalm 7:8

Specific charges were being made against David, of which he knew himself to be absolutely innocent. He would not have dared to challenge God thus, if the whole of his life were passing under review. In that case there would have been no hesitation in confessing that, taken generally, he was a sinful man.

Similarly, God's children are often accused of wrongs of which they are absolutely innocent. In such case they have a right to declare their innocence before their fellows; then if this avail not to procure their acquittal, they must turn to God, and ask Him to interpose.

But what a question this suggests! Are you able, child of God, to declare that, as far as you have the light, you are living righteously, soberly, godly, in this present world? Is your life right-wise - that is, four-square with the demands of God's law, able to bear the test of his line and plummet? Can you assert your integrity? Integrity is derived from the Latin integer, a whole, a number unbroken by fractions. Are you whole-hearted? or, to use the grand old word, is your heart perfect before God? If it be, it matters very little what men shall say of your character. If a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but glorify God on this behalf. What is said is aimed rather at the Master than the servant. God becomes responsible for your vindication. He will arise and show Himself strong, putting to silence the enemy and avenger. Trust your reputation with God, and, in the meanwhile, go on doing his will. There is no harm in calmly and temperately attesting your innocence; but if this avails not to stay the storm, bend before it. Do not appeal to law. God will vindicate you.

Thou madest him to have dominion - Psalm 8:6

Yes, broken, beaten, fallen, O child of man, thou wast made to have dominion. Not only over cattle, birds, and fish, but over thine own wonderful nature. Within thee there is a realm as full of multitudinous life as Paradise was when God brought the animals to Adam that he might name them; and over all this thou wast meant to rule. Yea, thou wert made to have dominion also over the wicked spirits that are thy sworn foes. A royal, regnant, victorious life was that which thy Creator inbreathed. There is no reason, on God's side, or in thy original constitution, why thou shouldst not exercise thy dominion. Remember, thou wast made to have dominion.

We see not yet all things put under us. There is open revolt and anarchy within. The will resembles the ancient kings whose sway was limited by proud and strong barons. The animal creation largely defies us, and is in this the symbol of our loss of authority everywhere. But look away to Jesus. This old psalm is fulfilled in Him. His glorious nature rose, by its inherent glory, to the right hand of power. All authority is his in heaven and on earth. And in proportion as we identify ourselves with Him, and receive his life, we regain our lost dominion. He makes us kings and priests unto God. We share a life which neither death nor the devil can master.

What shall we say of the excellency of his name, who is not only our Creator, but our Redeemer, and who at such great cost to Himself has replaced on our brows the crown that sin tore from them? He made us to have dominion by the word of creation. He made us kings unto God by his blood. His name shall, therefore, be honoured through all the earth.

And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee - Psalm 9:10

We do not trust, because we do not know. If we were once to know God, it would seem as absurd to doubt Him as to fear that we should fly off at a tangent from the surface of the earth. Men complain of their little faith: the remedy is in their own hands; let them set themselves to know God. We may know about God, and yet not know Him. We may hear what others say about Him, but have no direct and personal acquaintance. "That I may know Him," said the Apostle.

The materials for the knowledge of God are all around thee; make use of them. Think of the promises by which God has bound Himself to succour those that come to Him; of the record of his gracious interpositions for his saints; of the necessity that He should maintain his character and reputation in the face of the universe.

Above all, argue, as Jesus bade, from your own heart. Would you give stones to hungry babes, and scorpions into childish hands? Would you desert a forlorn and hunted soul that trusted? Would you insist on a certain measure of agony before stepping in to deliver? Would you take delight in inflicting needless anguish? And will God? Trust may be read as the superlative of true. To trust is to count God true, though circumstances belie; to count Him truer than the melancholy forebodings of our hearts; to count Him our truest and tenderest Friend. "Yet let God be true, though every man is proved to be a liar."

But for all this, you must make time. You cannot know a friend in hurried interviews, much less God. So you must steep yourself in deep, long thoughts of his nearness and love.

Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? - Psalm 10:1

Men in sorrow do not always speak wisely; and they ask many questions which God does not answer. Here is one. God does not stand afar off and hide Himself in times of trouble. As the psalmist sings, in a happier mood, "He is a very present help in time of trouble." But He permits trouble to pursue us, as though He were indifferent to its overwhelming pressure; that we may be brought to an end of ourselves, and led to discover the treasures of darkness, the unmeasurable gains of tribulation. No cross, no crown. No pain, no gain.

We may be sure that He who permits the suffering is with us in it. The form of the Fourth may be hard to distinguish, but it is there in the fire. It may be that we shall only see Him when the trial is passing; but we must dare to believe that He never leaves the crucible. Our eyes are holden; and we cannot behold Him whom our soul loveth. It is dark - the bandages blind us so that we cannot see the form of our High Priest. But He is there, deeply touched. Let us not rely on feeling, but on faith in his unswerving fidelity; and though we see Him not, let us talk to Him in whispers as though we could detect Him.

"I take the pain, Lord Jesus, from thine own hand,

The strength to bear it bravely, Thou wilt command."

Directly we begin to speak to Jesus, as being literally present, though his presence is veiled, there comes an answering voice which shows that He is in the shadow, keeping watch upon his own. Do not be afraid of the darkness. Behind the cloud, the sun is shining. Little child, your Father is as near when you journey through the dark tunnel as when under the open heaven! Go nearer, and you will feel Him!

The LORD trieth the righteous - Psalm 11:5

Do not be surprised if you are passing through trials. The righteous Lord is exercising you towards righteousness, that your face may ever behold his in unswerving communion. As the trainer of a young athlete will place him, now in one position, and again in another, to call certain muscles into play, to strengthen them by use, and to make the whole organization supple and subservient to the impulses of the soul, so God tries us - to call into operation, and test by use, each faculty of our being.

"Trials make the promise sweet,

Trials give new life to prayer;

Trials bring us to his feet,

Lay us low, and keep us there."

There is a great difference between the temptings of Satan and the tryings of the Lord. The former are intended to make us fall; the great adversary takes pleasure in showing how weak and sinful we are, and in casting us down to destruction. The latter, that we may be led out towards faith, patience, courage, meekness, and other-worldliness. "Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope." Whatever spiritual power is latent within us, we may be unaware of its value or helpfulness till it is called into exercise by trial. But when once it has been summoned into manifestation, it becomes the invaluable possession of all after time.

There is this consolation in trial, that at least we are not reprobates. The Lord trieth the righteous. The lapidary does not waste his time in cutting common pebbles. If we endure chastisement, we are clearly not bastards, but sons. Our Father loves us too much to let us miss the rich fruit that is to reward us when all the pruning is over.

The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth - Psalm 12:6

What a contrast is presented in this Psalm between God's words and man's! "They speak vanity, with flattering lip and double heart." God never flatters; his words are absolutely pure because they have passed through the furnace of his holiness, but they are therefore absolutely reliable and trustworthy.

As silver enriches its owner, so does the Word of God enrich its lovers. Nothing so strengthens the intellect, clears the judgment, enlarges the views, purifies the taste, quickens the imagination, and educates the whole man. The humblest daylabourer who imbibes the Bible becomes rich in thought and speech, and able to dispense his riches to others.

As silver is beautiful to the eye, so fair is the Word of God. After a boy born blind had been suddenly possessed of sight through an operation by a skilful oculist, his mother led him out-of-doors, took off the bandages, and gave him his first view of sunshine, sky, and flowers. "Oh, mother," he cried, "why did you never tell me it was so beautiful?" With starting tears, she said, "'I tried to tell you, my dear, but you could not understand me." We need opened eyes, and then the Bible is more to be desired than fine gold.

As silver is pure, so is the Word of God; and it purifies. It has been the main purifying agent of the world. Though it deals with the corruptions of the human heart, it does so in such a delicate and holy manner as to excite within us something of the abhorrence of the Holy God. Like the passage of water through a sieve, it cleanses the heart and life.

I will sing unto the LORD, because he hath dealt bountifully with me - Psalm 13:6

Here is the man who had sorrow in his heart all the day breaking into song! We do not find that his troubles were any less. The enemy was still exalted over him, and boasted of having prevailed; it seemed indeed as though he must soon sleep the sleep of death. But he never let go his trust. Whatever were his outward discomforts and trials, he clung to his God and waited patiently for: Him; with the result that out of his stormy griefs he built a Bethel; and in the midst of his anguish broke out into song.

When we are sitting under the shadow of severe trial, God can wrap us about with the garment of praise, and fill our mouths with singing. Although the fig-tree does not blossom, and there is no fruit in the vines, yet the soul may rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of salvation. You cannot starve a man who is feeding on God's promises; and you cannot make that man or woman wretched who has a clean conscience, the smile of God, and the love of Jesus in the soul.

When brave old Thomas Halyburton lost his much-loved son, he made this record: "This day has been a day to be remembered. O my soul never forget what this day I reached. My soul had smiles that almost wasted nature. Oh, what a sweet day! About half-an-hour after the Sabbath, my child, after a sharp conflict, slept pleasantly in Jesus, to whom pleasantly he was so often given Jesus came to me in the third watch of the night, walking upon the waters, He stilled the tempest in my soul, and lo! there was a great calm." When God is bereaving us of all else, He may so fill us with Himself that we shall magnify, his bountifulness.

When the LORD bringeth back the captivity of his people - Psalm 14:7

It is good to have an eye on the future, even though we get sometimes a little weary of waiting, and impatient of delay. Here a captive soul transports itself to the hours when its captivity shall be ended; and although it cannot altogether suppress the "Oh!" of longing desire, it dilates with ecstasy, as it anticipates the outburst of joy that shall hail the Divine deliverance.

Let us look on and up. Bunyan tells us that the heart of the Pilgrim "waxed warm about the place whither he was going." A real lover of Christ, who knows something of the law of sin in his members, and of the dull weight of this mortal tabernacle, is apt to have, at times, eager desires for his home and his glorious inheritance. Paul was one of the most eager of workers, but he was ever dwelling on the blessed hope.

"When," exclaimed Baxter, "when, O my soul, hast thou most forgot thy wintry sorrows? Is it not when thou hast got above, closest to Jesus Christ, and hast conversed with Him, and viewed the mansions of glory, and filled thyself with sweet foretastes, and talked with the inhabitants of the higher world?" Such devout anticipations do not slacken our work down here during this little while. It is said of Samuel Rutherford that he was always studying, always preaching, and always visiting the sick; but it was he who exclaimed, "Oh, time, run fast! Oh, fair day, when wilt thou dawn? Oh, shadows, flee away! Oh, well-beloved Bridegroom, be Thou to me like the roe or the young hart on the mountains!"

"The best is yet to be.

The last, for which the first was made."

LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? - Psalm 15:1

This holy soul was not content to stand in the outer court without the sacred tent; he coveted to enter where the High Priest entered, and to live there. It was impossible then; the way into the Holiest was not made manifest. No ordinary worshipper might pass the Veil, and the high priest who passed it once a year remained but a few moments.

How marvellously different our experience may be! We have boldness to enter into the holy place, and remain there, by the blood of Jesus; and, by the enablings of his Priesthood, we may spend our entire lives under the consciousness of the presence and favour of God. It is much like the servants of Solomon, to stand before our King, and to hear Him speaking, bidding us either to perform his errands, or fold the

wings of activity in wrapt communion.

This is not your experience? Then look carefully through the conditions which this Psalm enumerates. Perhaps you are not transparently truthful; or your tongue is not carefully controlled; or you are not perfectly honourable in your business dealings; or you do not know the power of the blood of Christ, as it cleanses from dead works to serve the living God.

It is worth any sacrifice to maintain this habit of indwelling the Most Holy Place. Ask that it may become your second nature. The Lord Jesus will secure this, since He was appointed for us in things that pertain to God. Whenever anything in the inner life seems faulty and deficient, we may turn with unabated confidence to our High Priest, asking Him to adjust it, to bring us into the presence of God, and to keep us there.

For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell - Psalm 16:10

This hymn is for ever sacred because of its application by the Holy Ghost to our Saviour's resurrection (Acts 2.). It was as though our Lord had stayed his soul upon these words as He left this world and entered the unseen. The last words He uttered were of committal to his Father, and then He commenced to traverse the land of shadow, "He that ascended is He that first descended into the lower parts of the earth." The Apostle Peter says that He went to visit the spirits in prison. Whither He went is not material - it is enough for our purpose that He sang, as He went, this hymn of immortal hope. Sure that He was the Father's beloved, He knew that He would not be left in Hades, nor suffered to see corruption. He knew that there was a path of life somewhere, which God would show.

Whenever you are stepping down into the dark, unable to see a hand's breadth before you, and just letting the foot fall from step to step - it may be because of some act of obedience to conscience, or because you are called to enter the unknown and untried, or even death itself - cheer your heart with this holy Psalm. God will never desert the soul that absolutely honours and obeys Him. His way leads to the light through the dark, to the deathless through death, to the abounding fruit-bearing through desertion and loneliness. How lonely the vine-stock is through the winter! Follow Him, He will show.

"She is sinking very fast," whispered an attendant in the dying chamber of a godly woman. "No, no," was the quick response of the departing saint, who had overheard the words; "no; I am not sinking; I am in the arms of my Saviour."

I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake - Psalm 17:15

To a good man, then, this is the world of dream and shadow, and death is the awakening. We are like men asleep in some chamber that looks towards the eastern sky. Outside is the day with its revealing beams, but our heavy eyes are closed to it all. "Here and there, some lighter sleeper with thinner eyelids or face turned to the sun is half conscious of a vague brightness and feels the light, though he sees not the wealth of colour it reveals. Such souls are our saints and prophets; but most of us sleep on unconscious." But the moment is at hand when we shall awake and start up and declare ourselves fools for having counted dreams as realities, whilst we were oblivious to the eternal realities.

When we awake we shall behold the face of God. Likeness is properly "form," and is the same word employed in reference to Moses, who saw the similitude of the Lord. We shall see Him as He is. There will be an outward revelation and manifestation of his lovely and holy character, and it will satisfy us

completely. "The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." And we shall be satisfied. The mind will be satisfied with his truth, the heart with his love, the will with his authority. We shall need nothing else. Heaven itself, with its outspread mystery of beauty, will not divert our gaze from God, nor contribute to our satisfaction. To know God, to stand before Him, to realize that we are accepted in the righteousness of the Well-beloved - this will be enough for evermore.

"This life's dream, an empty show;

But the bright world to which I go

Hath joys substantial and sincere;

When shall I wake, and find me there?"

...thy gentleness hath made me great - Psalm 18:35

The Nasmyth hammer which can pulverise blocks of tough metal, will break the shell of a nut without hurting the kernel. In this it resembles this Psalm, in the earlier part of which there is one of the grandest descriptions that words can give of God's mighty interposition on behalf of his threatened child. But here we are told that it is the Divine gentleness which has made him great. It is as though God's power were exerted against our foes, whilst our education is undertaken by his love.

Review your life. See the perils from which you have been rescued; the process of your education; the slow degrees by which you have climbed to any eminence of Christian character; the method by which you have attained the power of influencing others: is it not all attributable to the gentleness of the Good Shepherd? Not by sudden cataclysms and catastrophes; not by the earthquake, the fire, or the hurricane; not even by the stringent requirements of law; but by a succession of tenderest, gentlest movements of the Divine Spirit. He has remonstrated in whispered accents; He has seemed grieved and sad; He has turned and looked; He has sent a message by a woman's lips; He has put a little child into your life to lead you; He has poured on you one continual stream of sunshine. Now, it has been the distilling of dew; and again, soft showers on the mown grass: and through all, the purpose has run of eliminating the self-life, and leading you to the full stature of the perfect man. The strongest soul I ever knew, one who seemed to have been fashioned by God's mightiest strokes, was wont, in life's eventide, to attribute all to the effect of God's gentleness.

...cleanse thou me from secret faults - Psalm 19:12

It is not likely that we shall be kept from the great transgression unless we are preserved from presumptuous sins; and these in turn will befall us unless we have been cleansed from bidden faults. Just as the germ of disease taken into the system will presently reveal itself in an outburst of malignant fever, so hidden faults flower out into presumptuous sins, and these into great transgression. "Then lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin; and the sin, when it full-grown bringeth forth death."

First, we need forgiveness for secret sins. The Jewish law made large provision for sins of ignorance. A man might unawares walk across a grave, or touch some article of furniture which was ceremonially unclean, and so become defiled. Even though unconscious of actual transgression, he would find his communion with God broken. Thus, after the holiest day we have ever spent we need to ask for cleansing in the precious blood, for sins which God has discerned, but which in the twilight of our ignorance, and because we compared ourselves with those beneath us in spiritual attainment, have escaped notice.

Next, we need deliverance from the love and power of sin, in lower depths than we have ever realized. We desire to pass muster at the bar, not only of our neighbours and ourselves, but of God. We desire that the Spirit should antagonize the flesh in depths below the reach of the plumb-line of our consciousness. We desire the inner purity of heart. But this is peculiarly God's prerogative. It is his work to cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit. "Cleanse THOU me.

Now know I that the LORD saveth his anointed - Psalm 20:6

This was no doubt true of David as the anointed king of Israel, and of the Lord Jesus for whom the Father hath promised that He will subdue all things under Him; but it is also true of every saint who has been anointed with the Holy Ghost. Christian means an anointed one. Alas, that in so many cases the name is a misnomer! And men cannot claim the saving strength of God's right hand because they have not bent head and heart beneath the chrism of the Holy Spirit. How is it with thee? Art thou included in what Paul said, "He that anointeth us is God"; and in what John said, "The anointing which has once been received, abideth"? If so, there can be no doubt that Jehovah will ever save thee with a present-tense salvation. He saveth those whom He anointeth with the saving strength of his right hand.

Dost thou doubt this? Sayest thou that the annoyances and solicitations, the pitfalls and snares, the antagonisms and temptations of thy life, are so great as to offer an insuperable obstacle to thy entire deliverance from fret, irritation, and failure? Then turn to the marvellous phrase that follows, and tell me, if thou canst, the meaning of the saving strength of God's right hand. Is not God's right hand strong enough? And notice that its strength is pledged not to destroy, but to save. All the strength of God's right hand goes forth to save unto the uttermost. Look away from adversary and temptation, and keep murmuring to thyself, "He shall save me to-day, and always, with the saving strength of his right hand." And is not the right hand of the Most High the place where Jesus sits? Is not the right hand of God moved by the love that died on Calvary? "He laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not."

For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness - Psalm 21:3

God is always beforehand with us. The word "prevent" is not as familiar to our modern English as it was when the Bible was translated. Then it meant "that which comes or goes before." And the idea is that God goes before us, preparing our way, and laying up supplies of grace to anticipate our need. This is the meaning of the prayer: "Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings."

Go into the chamber where the mother is preparing for the advent of a little babe. You have no difficulty in telling what the wants of the child will be by all the articles which her tender forethought is providing; and when presently the little one opens its eyes in this strange, new world, it finds that it has been prevented with the blessings of goodness.

For ages prior to the appearance of man on the earth, the great heart of God was exercised in preparing for him. To please his ear, Music tuned her lyre; to satisfy his eye, the Great Artist wrought variety of colour and form; to warm him, seams of coal were laid down; to give him drink, rivers poured from crystal urns of snow-clad peaks; and Adam might have adored God's prevenient grace. Think, for instance, of the colour, the light and scent and driving-power in rock-oils!

Still more is this the case in the kingdom of redemption. God has stored all the blessings of goodness in Jesus. In eternal ages, in the incarnation, the cross, the ascension, He has prepared beforehand; for every possible need of our spiritual life. Whenever you pray, remember that you are not to procure

unthought-of help; but to avail yourself of the blessings of goodness with which God has anticipated your coming.

He hath done this - Psalm 22:31

This is the Hebrew equivalent for the words, "It is finished." Surely it was meet that the Psalm of the Cross, which our Lord must have recited to Himself during those hours of anguish, should close with this triumphant outburst.

Finished, the ceremonial law. - It had served its purpose in prefiguring the person and work of Jesus; but now the rending of the veil betokened the abolition of the forms of the earlier dispensation. The things which could be shaken passed, that those which could not be shaken might remain.

Finished, the fulfilment of prophecy. - Very diverse predictions had met, and were closed, as gates are when the king has passed through. That He should be a King and a Sufferer; a Priest and a Victim; a Lion of the tribe of Judah, and a Lamb for substitution.

Finished, the work which was given to Him to do. - The Messiah was to be cut off, not for Himself, to finish transgressions, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness. And each of these great ends was realized.

Finished, the work of atonement. - As the Substitute and Sin-bearer, the Lord Jesus stood with the sins of the race meeting on Him; but when He died He put them away by the sacrifice of Himself. They were borne into the land of forgetfulness, from which they can never be recovered. The demand of Divine justice was satisfied. Mercy and truth had met. Righteousness and peace embraced. And this cry of a finished redemption shall be finally crowned by a cry of complete restitution (Rev 21:6).

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life - Psalm 23:6

We are well escorted, with a Shepherd in front and these twin angels behind! Some one called them watch-dogs; but I prefer to think of them as angels. Do you not see the special beauty of these fair, strong angel-forms following?. We make such mistakes, give unnecessary pain, leave work ill-done and half-done, often succeed rather in raising dust than cleaning the rooms which we would fain sweep! It is good to think that two such angels follow close upon our track as we go through life, putting kind constructions on our actions, disentangling knots, making good deficiencies, and preventing the consequences of ill-advised and inconsiderate action pursuing us to the bitter end.

There are mothers who are always tidying up after their children. The little ones have had a rare time, which have left confusion and disorder; but the mother comes, mending the broken toys, stitching the rent garments, making everything neat and tidy. As the ambulance corps goes over the battle-field; as time festoons with verdure ruins and decay; as love puts the most tender construction on word and act - so the love of God follows us.

His goodness imputes to us the noble motive, though the act itself has been a failure; credits us with what was in our heart; reckons us the full wage, though we have only wrought one hour. His mercy forgives, obliterates the traces of our sins from his heart, undoes their ill-effect so far as possible towards others, and treats us as if we had never transgressed. Do not fear the future. God's angels do not tire. What has been will be, in all worlds, and to all eternity. All the days, even those in which Satan seems to have obtained permission to sift.

And the King of glory shall come in - Psalm 24:7,9

This is what we all want. We must have the King of Glory within. To have Him without, even though He be on the Throne, will not avail. He must come in to abide, to reign, to sway his sceptre. to keep the everlasting doors through which He has passed. This has been our difficulty, that those doors have so often been forced. We want one who is strong and mighty to keep them strongly barred against our mortal foe.

This Psalm was first realized in the entrance of the Ark into Mount Zion, when God went up with a merry noise. It is supposed that the first part of the verse was a challenge from the warders of the ancient gates, whilst the second was a reply from the escorting band that accompanied the sacred emblem. It was a moment of vast triumph when the Ark of the King of Glory passed to the ancient city of the Jebusites.

A still greater fulfilment took place when Jesus, having overcome the sharpness of death, victor over sin and the grave, mighty in battle, vanquished principalities and powers, and entered the city of God. Then to and fro these challenges and answers flew between the angels that awaited Him, and those who accompanied.

But the most vital fulfilment is when the heart opens to receive Him, and He enters, to go out no more, and to hold it against all comers. Oh, beaten and baffled saint, it is impossible for thee to fail when Jesus, all-victorious, garrisons thy heart! He is strong and mighty. Dost thou want strength? It is in the strong Son of God. Dost thou want might? He is all-mighty. Dost thou want deliverance from thy foes? He is mighty in battle.

The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him - Psalm 25:14

What marvellous words! They remind one of the sapphire work which the elders saw at the foot of the throne, and which was like "the body of heaven for clearness." Three different renderings are suggested.

The Secret of the Lord. - To some it is permitted to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. To these the white stone is given, on which is engraven a name, which only he knows that receives it. There are secret passages of love between Christ and the believing soul, which it would not be lawful for it to utter. High fellowship: deep blessedness. Things which eye hath not seen. Jesus revealed his secrets when Judas had gone forth. "Wherefore askest thou after my name," He said to Manoah, "seeing it is secret?"

The Counsel of the Lord. - "His Name shall be called . . . Counsellor." He draws near to those that fear to grieve Him, and gives them counsel. He instructs them in the way that He chooses for them; He guides them in his truth and teaches them; He guides them in judgment; and tells them, as He did Abraham, what He is about to do.

The Friendship of the Lord. - "Ye are my friends," said Jesus, "if ye do whatsoever I command you." He longs for friends - those to whom He can tell his desires, on whom He may impose implicit confidence, and who will be so taken up with Him as to be indifferent to everything else, their one purpose to do his least bidding. Oh to be honoured with the personal friendship of Jesus! It were a rare privilege to be entrusted with his secrets, and to hear Him say, "I have not called you servants, but friends."

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