

The Crook in the Lot - Part 3

by Thomas Boston

The sermon emphasizes the importance of humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and provides directions for reaching this humiliation through faith, humility, and a willingness to submit to God's will.

Scripture: Job 1:21, Psalm 139:23, James 4:10, 1 Peter 5:6

Topics: "Gods Sovereignty", "Humility"

Description

Thomas Boston preaches about the importance of humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of God in various circumstances. He highlights the need to notice God's sovereignty in all aspects of our lives, acknowledge our own worthlessness and guilt, submit silently to God's hand, and magnify His mercies even in trials. Boston emphasizes the need for a holy admiration of God's ways, forgetting our own dignity, and willingly submitting to God's will. He encourages believers to trust in God's timing for their lifting up, as it will come in due time.

Transcript

III. What it is in humbling circumstances to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. This is the great thing to be aimed at in our humbling circumstances. And we may take it up in these eight things.

1. Noticing God's mighty hand, as employed in bringing about everything that concerns us, either in the way of efficacy or permission. "And he said, It is the Lord; let him do what seems him good. " "And the king said, The Lord has said to him, Curse David: who shall then say, Wherefore have you done so?" He is the fountain of all perfection, but we must trace our imperfections to His sovereign will. It is He that has posted every one in their relations by His providence; without Him we could not meet with such contradictions; for, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turns it wherever He pleases." He sends afflictions, and justly punishes one sin with another.

2. A sense of our own worthlessness and nothingness before him. Looking to the infinite Majesty of the mighty hand dealing with us, we should say, with Abraham, "Behold, I am but dust and ashes;" and say amen to the cry, "All flesh is grass. " &c. The keeping up of thoughts of our own excellency under the pressure of God's mighty hand is the very thing that swells the heart in pride, causing it to rise up against it. And it is the letting of all such thoughts of ourselves fall before the eyes of His glory that is the humbling required.

3. A sense of our guilt and filthiness. The mighty hand does not press us down, but as sinners; it is meet then that under it we see our sinfulness; our guilt, by which we shall appear criminals justly caused to suffer: our filthiness, whereupon we may be brought to loathe ourselves; and then we shall think nothing lays us lower than we well deserve. It is the overlooking our sinfulness that allows the proud heart to swell.

4. A silent submission under the hand of God. His sovereignty challenges this of us. "Nay but, O man, who are you that replies against God?" And nothing but unsubdued pride of spirit can allow us to answer again under His sovereign hand. A view of His sovereignty humbled and awed the Psalmist into submission, with a profound silence. "I was dumb, I did not open my mouth, because You did it." "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed is the name of the Lord." And, "What shall I answer You? I will lay my hand on my mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer; yea, twice, but I will proceed no farther." And Eli, "It is the Lord; let Him do what pleases Him."

5. A magnifying of His mercies towards us in the midst of all His proceedings against us. Has He laid us low? If we are duly humbled we shall wonder He has laid us no lower. For however low the humble are laid, they will see they are not yet so low as their sins deserve.

6. A holy and silent admiration of the ways and counsels of God, as to us unsearchable. Pride of heart thinks nothing too high for the man, and so arraigns before its tribunal the Divine proceedings, pretends to see through them, censures freely, and condemns; but humiliation of spirit disposes a man to think awfully and honorably of those mysteries of Providence he is not able to see through.

7. A forgetting and laying aside before the Lord all our dignity, by which we excel others. Pride feeds itself on the man's real or imaginary personal excellency and dignity, and, being so use to practising it before others, cannot forget it before God. "God, I thank You I am not as other men." But humiliation of spirit makes it all vanish before him, as does the shadow before the shining sun, and it lays the man, in his own eyes, lower than any. "Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man."

8. A submitting readily to the meanest offices requisite in or agreeable to our circumstances. Pride at every turn finds something that is below the man to condescend, or stoop to, measuring by his own mind and will, not by the circumstances God has placed him in. But humility measures by the circumstances one is placed in, and readily falls in with what they require. Concerning this our Savior gave us an example to be imitated: "Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death." "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you ought also to wash one another's feet."

Use. Of exhortation. Let the bent of your heart, then, in all your humbling circumstances, be towards the humbling of your spirit, as under the mighty hand of God. This lies in two things.

1. Carefully notice all your humbling circumstances, and overlook none of them. Observe your imperfections; inferiority in relations; contradictions you meet with; your afflictions; uncertainty of all things about you; and your sinfulness. Look through them designedly, and consider the steps of the conduct of Providence toward you in these, that you may know yourselves, and may not be strangers at home, blind to your own real state and case.

2. Observe what these circumstances require of you, as suitable to them; bend your endeavors towards it, to bring your spirits into that temper of humiliation, that, as your lot is really low in all these respects, so your spirits may be low too, as under the mighty hand of God. Let this be your great aim through your whole life, and your exercise every day.

Motive 1. God is certainly at work to humble one and all of us. However high any are lifted up in this world, Providence has hung certain badges for humiliation on them, whether they will notice them or not. Now, it is our duty to fall in with the design of Providence, that while God is humbling us we may be humbled ourselves, and that we may not receive humbling dispensations in vain.

2. The humiliation of our spirit will not take effect without our own agency in there: while God is working on us that way, we must work together with Him; for He works on us as rational agents, who, being moved, move themselves. God by His providence may force down our lot and condition without us, but the spirit must come down voluntarily and of choice, or not at all; therefore, strike in with humbling providences in humbling yourselves, as mariners spread out the sails when the wind begins to blow that they may go away before it.

3. If you do not you resist the mighty hand of God. You resist in so far as you do not yield, but stand as a rock, keeping your ground against your Maker in humbling providences. "You have stricken them, but they have not grieved; you have consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction. They have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return. " Much more when you work against Him to force up your condition, which you may see God means to hold down. And of this resistance consider.

(1.) The sinfulness; what an evil thing it is. It is a direct fighting against God, a shaking off of subjection to our sovereign Lord, and a rising in rebellion against him.

(2.) The folly of it. How unequal is the match! How can the struggle end well? What else can possibly be the issue of the potsherds of the earth dashing against the Rock of ages, but that they are broken to pieces? All men must certainly bow or break under the mighty hand of God.

4. This is the time of humiliation, even the time of this life. Everything is beautiful in its season; and the bringing down of the spirit now is beautiful, as in the time of it, even as the ploughing and sowing of the ground is in the spring. Consider,

(1.) Humiliation of spirit is in the sight of God of great price. As he has a special aversion to pride of heart, he has a special liking of humility. The humbling of sinners and bringing them down from their heights, in which the corruption of their nature has set them, is the great end of His Word and of His providences.

(2.) It is no easy thing to humble men's spirits; it is not a little that will do it; it is a work that is not soon done. There is need of a digging deep for a thorough humiliation in the work of conversion. Many a stroke must be given at the root of the tree of the natural pride of the heart before it falls; often it seems to be fallen, and yet it arises again. And even when the root stroke is given in believers, the rod of pride buds again, so that there is still occasion for new humbling work.

(3.) The whole time of this life is appointed for humiliation. This was signified by the forty years the Israelites had in the wilderness. It was so to Christ, and therefore it must be so to men. And in that time they must either be formed according to His image, or else appear as reprobate silver that will not take it on by any means. So that whatever lifting up men may now and then get in this life, the habitual course of it will still be humbling.

(4.) There is no humbling after this. If the pride of the heart is not brought down in this life it will never be; no kindly humiliation is to be expected in the other life. There the proud will be broken in pieces, but not softened; their lot and condition will be brought to the lowest pass, but the pride of their spirits will still

remain, from which they will be in eternal agonies, through the opposition between their spirits and lot.

Therefore, beware lest you sit your time of humiliation: humbled we must be, or we are gone forever; and this is the time, the only time of it; therefore, make your hay while the sun shines; strike in with humbling providences, and do not fight against them while you have them. The season of grace will not last; if you sleep in seedtime, you will beg in harvest.

5. This is the way to turn humbling circumstances to a good account; so that, instead of being losers, you would be gainers by them. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted. " Would you gather grapes of these thorns and thistles, set yourselves to get your spirits humbled by them.

Humiliation of spirit is a most valuable thing in itself. It cannot be bought too dear. Whatever one is made to suffer, if his spirit is by that means duly brought down, he has what is well worth bearing all the hardship for.

Humility of spirit brings many advantages along with it. It is a fruitful bough, well laden, wherever it is. It contributes to one's ease under the cross. It is a sacrifice particularly acceptable to God. The eye of God is particularly on such for good. "To this man I will look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at My word " Yea, He dwells with them. And it carries a line of wisdom through one's whole conduct: "with the lowly is wisdom. "

6. Consider it is a mighty hand that is at work with us--the hand of the mighty God; let us then bend our spirits towards a compliance with it, and not wrestle against it. Consider,

(1.) We must fall under it. Since the design of it is to bring us down we cannot stand before it; for it cannot miscarry in its designs. "My counsel shall stand. " So fall before it we must, either in the way of duty or judgment. "Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies, by which the people fall under You. "

(2.) They that are so wise as to fall in humiliation under the mighty hand, be they ever so low, the same hand will raise them up again. In a word, be the proud ever so high, God will bring them down; be the humble ever so low, God will raise them up.

Directions For Reaching This Humiliation.

1. General Directions.

Direct. 1. Fix it in your heart to seek some spiritual improvement of the conduct of Providence towards you. Until your heart has gotten set, your humiliation is not to be expected. But nothing is more reasonable if we would act either like men or Christians, than to aim at turning what is so grievous to the flesh to the profit of the spirit; that if we are losers on one hand we may be gainers on another.

2. Settle the matter of your eternal salvation in the first place, by going to Christ, and taking God for your God in Him, according to the Gospel-offer. Let your humbling circumstances move you to this, that while the creature dries up, you may go to the Fountain: for it is impossible to reach due humiliation under His mighty hand, without faith in Him as your God and friend.

3. Use the means of soul-humbling in the faith of the promise. Moses, smiting the rock in faith of the promise, made water gush out, which otherwise would not at all have appeared. Let us do likewise in dealing with our rocky hearts. They must be laid on the soft bed of the Gospel, and struck there, as "Turn

to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful;" or they will never kindly break or fall in humiliation.

II. Particular Directions.

1. Assure yourselves that there are no circumstances that you are in so humbling but you may get your heart acceptably brought down to them. "But God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it. " This is truth. "My grace is sufficient for you; for My strength is made perfect in weakness." And you should be persuaded of it, with application to yourselves, if ever you would reach the end. "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me. " God allows you to be persuaded of it, whatever is your weakness and the difficulty of the task. "For our sakes this is written, that he that ploughs should plough in hope; and he that threshes in hope shall be partaker of his hope. " And the belief of it is a piece of the life of faith. If you have no hope of success, your endeavors, as they will be heartless, so they will be vain. "Therefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees. "

2. Whatever hand is, or is not, in your humbling circumstances, take God for your part, and consider yourselves in there as under His mighty hand. Men in their humbling circumstances overlook God, so they do not find themselves called to humility under them; they fix their eyes on the creature instrument, and instead of humility, their hearts rise. But take Him for your party that you may remember the battle and do no more.

3. Be much in the thoughts of God's infinite greatness; consider His holiness and majesty, to awe you into the deepest humiliation. Job met with many humbling providences in his case, but he was never sufficiently humbled under them, till the Lord made a new discovery of Himself to him, in His infinite majesty and greatness. He kept his ground against his friends, and stood to his points, till the Lord took that method with him. It was begun with thunder. Then followed God's voice out of the whirlwind, by which Job is brought down. It is renewed till he is further humbled, "Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. "

4. Make it your habit to silently admit mysteries in the conduct of Providence towards you, which you are not able to comprehend, but will adore. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" That was the first word God said to Job, "who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?" It went to his heart, stuck with him, and he comes over it again, as that which particularly brought him to his knees, to the dust. Even in those steps of Providence which we seem to see far into, we may well allow there are some mysteries beyond what we see. And in those which are perplexing and puzzling, sovereignty should silence us; His infinite wisdom should satisfy, though we cannot see.

5. Be much in the thoughts of your own sinfulness. "Behold, I am vile. What shall I answer You? I will lay my hand on my mouth. " It is overlooking of that which gives us so much ado with humbling circumstances. While the eyes are held that they cannot see sin the heart rises against them; but when they are opened, it falls. Therefore, whenever God is dealing with you in humbling dispensations, turn your eyes, on that occasion, on the sinfulness of your nature, heart, and life, and that will help forward your humiliation.

6. Settle it in your heart that there is need of all the humbling circumstances you are put in. This is truth, "Though now for a season (if need be) you are in heaviness through manifold temptations." God brings no needless trials on us, afflicts none but as their need requires: "For He does not afflict willingly, nor grieve

the children of men." That is an observable difference between our earthly and our heavenly Father's correction: "They, after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness. " Look to the temper of your own hearts and nature, how apt to be lifted up, to forget God, to be carried away with the vanities of the world: what foolishness is bound up in your heart. Thus you will see the need of humbling circumstances for ballast, and of the rod for the fool's back; and if at any time you cannot see that need, believe it on the ground of God's infinite wisdom, that does nothing in vain.

7. Believe a kind design of Providence in them towards you. God calls us to this, as the key that opens the heart under them. Satan suggests suspicions to the contrary, as the bar which may hold it shut: "This evil is of the Lord, what should I wait for the Lord any longer?" As long as the suspicion of an ill design in them against us reigns, the creature will, like the worm at the man's feet, put itself in the best posture of defence it can, and harden itself in sorrow; but the faith of a kind design will cause it to open out itself in humility before Him.

Case. "Oh, if I knew there were a kind design in it, I would willingly bear it, although there were more of it; but I fear a ruining design of Providence against me in it. "

Answ. Now, what word of God, or discovery from heaven, have you to ground these fears on? None at all but from hell. What do you think the design towards you in the Gospel is? Can you believe no kind design in all the words of grace there heaped up? What is that, I pray, but black unbelief in its hue of hell, flying in the face of the truth of God, and making Him a liar. The Gospel is a breathing of love and good-will to the world of mankind sinners. But you do not believe it, in that case, more than devils believe it. If you can believe a kind design there, you must believe it in your humbling circumstances too; for the design of Providence cannot be contrary to the design of the Gospel; but contrariwise, the latter is to help forward to the other.

8. Think with yourselves, that this life is the time of trial for heaven. "Blessed is the man that endures temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love Him." And therefore there should be a welcoming of humbling circumstances in that view, "Count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations. " If there is an honourable office or beneficial employment to be bestowed, men strive to be taken on trial for it, in hope they may be in this way legally admitted to it. Now God takes trial of men for heaven by humbling circumstances, as the whole Bible teaches; and shall men be so very loath to stoop to them? I would ask you,

(1.) Is it nothing to you to stand a candidate for glory, to be put on trial for heaven? Is there not an honor in it, an honor which all the saints have had? "Behold, we count them happy that endure, " &c. And a fair prospect in it? "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Do but put the case, that God should overlook you in that case, as one whom it is needless ever to try on that head; that He should order you your portion in this life with full ease, as one that is to get no more of Him; what would that be?

(2.) What a vast disproportion is there between your trials and the future glory! Your most humbling circumstances, how light are they in comparison of the weight of it! The longest continuance of Hem is but for a moment, compared with that eternal weight. Alas! There is much unbelief at the root of all our uneasiness under humbling circumstances. Had we a clearer view of the other world we should not make so much of either the smiles or frowns of this.

(3.) What do you think of coming foul off in the trial of your humbling circumstances? "The lead is consumed of the fire; the founder melts in vain; for the wicked are not plucked away. Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord has rejected them. " That the issue of it is only that your heart appear of such a temper as by no means to be humbled; and that therefore you must and shall be taken off them, while yet no humbling appears. I think the awfulness of the dispensation is such as might set up to our knees to deprecate the lifting us up from our humbling circumstances, before our hearts are humbled.

9. Think with yourselves, how, by humbling circumstances, the Lord prepares us for heaven. "Giving thanks to the Father, who has made us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." The stones and timber are laid down, turned over and over, and hewed, before they are set up in the building; and not set up just as they come out of the quarry and wood. Were they capable of a choice, such of them as would refuse the iron tool would be refused a place in the building. Pray, how do you think to be made suitable for heaven by the warm sunshine of this world's ease, and getting all your will here? Nay, sirs, that would put your mouth out of taste for the joys of the other world. Vessels of dishonour are fitted for destruction that way; but vessels of honor for glory by humbling circumstances. I would here say,

(1.) Will nothing please you but two heavens, one here, another hereafter? God has secured one heaven for the saints, one place where they shall get all their will, wish, and desire; where there shall be no weight on them to hold them down; and that is in the other world. But you must have it both here and there or you cannot digest it. Why do you not quarrel, too, that there are not two summers in one year; two days in the twenty-four hours? The order of the one heaven is as firm as that of the years and days, and you cannot reverse it. Therefore, choose whether you will take your night or your day first, your winter or your summer, your heaven here or hereafter.

(2.) Without being humbled with humbling circumstances in this life you are not capable of heaven. "Now, he that has wrought us for the self-same thing is God. " You may indeed lie at ease here in a bed of sloth and dream of heaven, big with hopes of a fool's paradise, wishing to cast yourselves just out of Delilah's lap into Abraham's bosom; but except you be humbled you are not capable,

(1.) Of the Bible-heaven, that heaven described in the Old and New Testaments. Is not that heaven a lifting up in due time? But, how shall you be lifted up that are never well got down? Where will your tears be to be wiped away? What place will there be for your triumph, who will not fight the good fight? How can it be a rest to you who cannot submit to labor?

(2.) Of the saints' heaven. "And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." This answers the question about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the saints with them there. They were brought down to the dust by humbling circumstances, and out of these they came before the throne. How can you ever think to be lifted up with them with whom you cannot think to be brought down?

(3.) Of Christ's heaven. "Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of God " Oh! Consider how the Forerunner made His way. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" And lay your account with it that if you get where He is you must go there as He went. "And He said, If any man win come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. "

10. Give up at length with your towering hopes from this world, and confine them to the world to come. Be as pilgrims and strangers here, looking for your rest in heaven, and not till you come there. There is a prevailing evil. "You are wearied in the greatness of your way; yet you did not say, There is no hope. " So the Babel-building is still continued, though it has fallen down again and again. For men say, "The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones; the sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars. " This makes humbling work very lonesome; we are so hard to quit hold of the creature, to fall off from the breast and be weaned. But fasten on the other world, and let your hold of this go; so shall you "be humbled" indeed under "the mighty hand." The faster you hold the happiness of that world the easier it will be to accommodate yourselves to your humbling circumstances here.

II. Make use of Christ in all His offices for your humiliation under your humbling circumstances. That only is kindly humiliation that comes in His way. "And they shall look on Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn," &c. This you must do by trusting on Him for that effect.

(1.) As a Priest for you. You have a conscience full of guilt, and that will make one uneasy in any circumstances; it will be like a thorn in the shoulder on which a burden is laid. But the blood of Christ will purge the conscience, draw out the thorn, give ease, and fit for service, doing our suffering. "How much more shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? "

(2.) As your Prophet to teach you. We have need to be taught rightly to discern our humbling circumstances; for often we mistake them so far that they prove an oppressive load; whereas, could we rightly see them, just as God sets them to us, they would be humbling, but not so oppressive. Truly we need Christ, and the light of His word and Spirit, to let us see your cross and trial as well as our duty.

(3.) As your King. You have a stiff heart, loath to bow, even in humbling circumstances: take a lesson from Moses what to do in such a case. "And he said, Let my Lord, I pray you, go among us (for it is a stiff-necked people), and pardon our iniquity and our sin. " Put it in His hand that is strong and mighty. He is able to cause it to melt, and, like wax before the fire, turn to the seal.

Think on these directions in order to put them in practice, remembering--If you know these things you are happy if you do them. Remember, humbling work is a word that will fill your hand while you live here, and that you cannot come to the end of it till death; and humbling circumstances will attend you while you are in this lower world. A change of them you may get; but a freedom from them you cannot, till you come to heaven. So the humbling circumstances of our imperfections, relations, contradictions, afflictions, uncertainties, and sinfulness, will afford matter of exercise to us while here.--What remains of the purpose of this text I shall comprise in,--

Doctrine II.--There is a due time in which those that now humble themselves under the mighty hand of God will certainly be lifted up.

1. Those who shall share of this lifting up must lay their account in the first place, with a casting down. "in the world you shall have tribulation. " There is no coming to the promised land, according to the settled method of grace, but through the wilderness: nor entering into this exaltation, but through a strait gate. If we cannot away with the casting down, we shall not taste the sweet of the lifting up.

2. Being cast down by the mighty hand of God, we must learn to lie still and quiet under it, till the same hand that cast us down raise us up, if we would share of this promised lifting up. It is not the being cast down into humbling circumstances by the providence of God, but the coming down of our spirits under

them, by the grace of God, that brings us within the compass of this promise.

3. Those who are never humbled in humbling circumstances shall never be lifted up in the way of this promise. Men may keep their spirits on the high bend in their humbling circumstances, and in that case may get a lifting up; but such a lifting up as will end in a more grievous fall. "Surely you set them in slippery places, you cast them down in a moment." But they who will not humble themselves in humbling circumstances will find that their obstinacy will keep their misery ever fast on them without remedy.

4. Humility of spirit in humbling circumstances ascertains a lifting up out of them some time, with the good-will and favor of Heaven. "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one that exalts himself shall be abased, and he that humbles himself shall be exalted." Solomon observes that "A soft answer turns away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger." And so it is, that while the proud, through their obstinacy, do but wreath the yoke faster about their own necks, the humble ones, by their yielding, make their relief sure. "He raises up the poor out of the dust, and lifts up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory. He will keep the feet of His saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail. The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken in pieces. "So the cannon will break down a stone wall, while yielding packs of wool take away its force.

5. There is an appointed time for the lifting up of those that humble themselves in their humbling circumstances. "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." To everything there is a time, as for humbling, so for lifting up. We do not know it but God knows it, Who has appointed it. Let not the humble one say, I shall never be lifted up. This is a time fixed for it, as precisely as for the rising of the sun after a long and dark night, or the return of the spring after a long and sharp winter.

6. It is not to be expected that immediately on one's humbling himself, the lifting up is to follow. No: one is not merely to lie down under the mighty hand, but to lie still, waiting the due time; humbling work is lonesome work; the Israelites had forty years of it in the wilderness. God's people must be brought to put a blank in His hand, as to the time; and while they have a long night of walking in darkness, must trust. "Who is among you that fears the Lord, that obeys the voice of his servant, that walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God. "

7. The appointed time for the lifting up is the due time, the time fittest for it, in which it will come most seasonably. "And let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap if we do not faint. " For that is the time God has chosen for it; and be sure His choice, as the choice of infinite wisdom, is the best; and therefore faith sets to wait it. "He that believes shall not make haste. " Much of the beauty of anything depends on the timing of it, and He has fixed that in all that He does. "He has made everything beautiful in His time. "

8. The lifting up of the humble will not fail to come in the appointed and due time. Time makes no halting, it is running day and night; so the due time is fast coming, and when it comes it will bring the lifting up along with it. Let the humbling circumstances be ever so low, ever so hopeless, it is impossible but the lifting up from them must come in the due time.

A word, in the general, to the lifting up, abiding those that humble themselves. There is a two-fold lifting up.

1. A partial lifting up, competent to the humbled in time during this life. "I will extol You, O Lord, for You have lifted me up, and have not made my foes to rejoice over me. " This is a lifting up in part, and but in part, not wholly; and such liftings up the humbled may expect while in this world, but no more. - These give a breathing to the weary, a change of burdens, but do not set them at perfect ease. So Israel, in the wilderness, in the midst of their many mourning times, had some singing ones.

2. A total lifting up, competent to them at the end of time, at death. "It came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." Then the Lord deals with them no more by parcels, but carries their relief to perfection. Then He takes off all their burdens, eases them of all their weights, and lays no more on forever. He then lifts them up to a height they were never at before, no, not even at their highest. He sets them quite above all that is low, and there fixes them, never to be brought down more. Now there is a due time for both these.

(1.) For the partial lifting up. Every time is not fit for it; we are not always fit to receive comfort and ease, or a change of our burdens. God sees there are times in which it is needful for His people to be "in heaviness," to have their "hearts brought down with grief: " But then there is a time really appointed for it in the Divine wisdom, when He will think it as needful to comfort them as before to bring down. "So that, contrariwise, you ought rather to forgive, and comfort him, lest perhaps such an one should be swallowed up with over much sorrow. " We are, in that case, in the hand of God, as in the hand of our physician, who appoints the time the drawing plaster shall continue, and when the healing plaster shall be applied, and leaves it not to the patient.

(2.) For the total lifting up. When we are sore oppressed with our burdens, we are ready to think, O to be away, and set beyond them all! "As a servant earnestly desires the shadow, and as an hireling looks for the reward of his work; so am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me." But it may be fitter, for all that, that we stay awhile, and struggle without our burdens. "Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all, for your furtherance and joy of faith. " A few days might have taken Israel out of Egypt into Canaan; but they would have been too soon there if they had made all that speed; so it was necessary that they spend forty years in the wilderness till their due time of entering Canaan should come. And be sure the saints entering heaven will be convinced that the time of it is best chosen, and there will be a beauty in that it was no sooner. And thus a lifting up is secured for the humble.

If one should assure you, when reduced to poverty, that the time would certainly come yet that you should be rich; when sore sick, that you should not die of that disease, but certainly recover; that would help you to bear your poverty and sickness the better, and you would comfort yourselves with that prospect. However, one may continue poor, and never be rich, may be sick, and die of his disease; but whoever humble themselves under their humbling circumstances, we can assure them from the Lord's word they shall certainly, without all peradventure, be lifted up out of, and relieved from, their humbling circumstances; they shall certainly see the day of their ease and relief, when they shall remember their burdens as waters that fail. And you may be assured of it from the following considerations.

The nature of God, duly considered, insures it. "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide; neither will He keep His anger forever. " The humbled soul, looking to God in Christ, may see three things in His nature jointly securing it.

1. Infinite power, that can do all things. No circumstances are so low but He can raise them; so entangling and perplexing but He can unravel them; so hopeless but He can remedy them. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Be our case what it will, it is never past reach with Him to help it; but then it is the most proper season for Him to take it in hand when all others have given it over. "For the Lord shall judge His people, and repent Himself for His servants; when He sees that their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left. "

2. Infinite goodness inclining to help. He is good and gracious in His nature. And therefore His power is a spring of comfort to them. Men may be willing that are not able, or able that are not willing; but infinite goodness joining infinite power in God. may ascertain the humbled of a lifting up in due time. That is a word of inconceivable sweetness. "And we have known and believed the love that God has to us. God is love; and he that dwells in love, dwells in God, and God in him." He has the bowels of a father towards the humble. "Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him. " Yea, bowels of mercy more tender than a mother to her sucking child. Wherefore, nevertheless His wisdom may see it necessary to put them in humbling circumstances, and keep them there for a time, it is not possible He can leave them there altogether.

3. Infinite wisdom, that does nothing in vain, and therefore will not needlessly keep one in humbling circumstances. "But though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies; for He does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." God sends afflictions for humbling, as the end and design to be brought about by them; when that is obtained, and there is no more use for them that way we may assure ourselves they will be taken off.

The providence of God, viewed in its stated methods of procedures with its objects, insures it. Turn your eyes which way you will on the Divine providence, you may conclude from it that in due time the humble will be lifted up.

Observe the providence of God in the revolutions of the whole course of nature, day succeeding to the longest night, a summer to the winter, a waxing to a waning of the moon, a flowing to an ebbing of the sea, &c. Let not the Lord's humbled ones be idle spectators of these things. They are for our learning. "Thus says the Lord, which gives the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divides the sea, when the waves of it roar; the Lord of hosts is His name. If those ordinances depart from before Me, says the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me forever " Will the Lord's hand keep such a steady course in the earth, sea, and visible heavens, as to bring a lifting up in them after a casting down, and only forget His humbled ones? No, by no means.

Observe the providence of God in the dispensations of it, about the man Christ, the most noble and august object of it, more valuable than a thousand worlds. Did not Providence keep this course with Him, first humbling Him, then exalting Him, and lifting Him up? First bringing Him to the dust of death, in a course of sufferings thirty-three years, then exalting Him to the Father's right hand in an eternity of glory? "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God. " "And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedience unto death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him." The exaltation could not fail to follow His humiliation. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" And He saw and believed it would follow, as the springing of the seed does the sowing it. There is a near concern the humbled in humbling circumstances have here.

This is the pattern Providence copies after in its conduct towards you. The Father was so well pleased with this method in the case of His own Son, that it was determined to be followed and just copied over again in the case of all the heirs of glory. "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brothers." And who would not be pleased to walk through the darkest valley treading His steps? This is a sure pledge of your lifting up. Christ, in His state of humiliation, was considered as a public person and representative, and so is He in His exaltation. So Christ's exaltation insures your exaltation out of your humbling circumstances. "Your dead men shall live, together with My dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, you that dwell in the dust. " "Come and let us return to the Lord: for He has torn, and He will heal us; He has smitten, and He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us. In the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight. " "And has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus " Yea, He is gone into the state of glory for us as our forerunner. "Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever. "

His humiliation was the price of your exaltation, and His exaltation a testimony of the acceptance of its payment to the full. There are no humbling circumstances you are in, but you would have perished in them, had not He purchased your lifting up out of them by His own humiliation. Now, His humbling grace in you is an evidence of the acceptance of His humiliation for your lifting up.

Observe the providence of God towards the Church in all ages. This has been the course the Lord has kept with her. Abel was slain by wicked Cain, to the great grief of Adam and Eve and the rest of their pious children; but then there was another seed raised up in Abel's room. Noah and his sons were buried alive in the ark for more than a year; but then they were brought out into a new world and blessed. Abraham for many years went childless; but at length Isaac was born. Israel was long in miserable bondage in Egypt; but at length seated in the promised land, &c. We must be content to go by the footsteps of the flock; and if in humiliation, we shall surely follow them in exaltation too.

Observe the providence of God in the dispensations of His grace towards His children. The general rule is. "For God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble. " How are they brought into a state of grace? Is it not by a sound work of humiliation going before? And ordinarily the greater the measure of grace designed for any, the deeper is their humiliation before, as in Paul's case. If they are to be recovered out of a backsliding case, the same method is followed: so that the deepest humiliation ordinarily makes way for the greatest comfort, and the darkest hour goes before the rising of the Sun of righteousness on them.

Observe the providence of God at length throwing down wicked men, however long they stand and prosper, "I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree; yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found. " They are long green before the sun, but at length they are suddenly smitten with an east wind, and wither away; their lamp goes out with a stench, and they are put out in obscure darkness. Now, it is inconsistent with the benignity of the Divine nature to forget the humble to raise them, while He minds the proud to abase them.

The word of God puts it beyond all peradventure, which, from the beginning to the end, is the humbled saint's security for a lifting up. "Remember the word to Your servant, on which You have caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction; for Your word has quickened me. " His word is the great letter of His name, which He will certainly cause to shine, "For you have magnified Your word above all Your name;" and in all generations has been safely relied on. Consider,

1. The doctrines of the word; which teach faith and hope for the time, and the happy issue which the exercise of these graces will have. The whole current of Scripture, to those in humbling circumstances, is, "not to cast away their confidence, but to hope to the end;" and that for this good reason, "that it shall not be in vain. " "Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the Lord. " "For they shall not be ashamed that wait for Me. "

2. The promises of the word, by which heaven is expressly engaged for a lifting up to those that humble themselves in humbling circumstances: "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up;" "And he that humbles himself shall be exalted " It may take a time to prepare them for lifting up, but that being done it is secured. "Lord, You have heard the desire of the humble; You will prepare their heart; You will cause Your ear to hear " They have His word for deliverance. And though they may seem to be forgotten, they shall not be always so; the time of their deliverance will come. "For the needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish forever." "He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer. "

3. The examples of the word sufficiently confirming the truth of the doctrines and promises. "For whatever things were written before, were written for our learning: that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. " In the doctrines and promises the lifting up is proposed to our faith, to be reckoned on the credit of God's word; but in the examples it is, in the case of others, set before our eyes to be seen. "Behold, we count them happy which endure. You have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy. " There we see it in the case of Abraham, Job, David, Paul, and other saints; but above all in the case of the man Christ.

4. The intercession of Christ, joining the prayers and cries of His humbled people, in their humbling circumstances, insures a lifting up for them at length. Be it so, that the proud cry not when He binds them; yet His own humbled ones will certainly cry to Him. "Deep calls to deep at the noise of your water-sprouts; all your waves and your billows are gone over me. Yet the Lord will command His loving-kindness in the daytime, and in the night His song shall be with me, and my prayer to the God of my life. " And though unbelievers may soon be worn out and give it over altogether, surely believers will not do so. But even if they do so in a fit of temptation, dropping their hands in hopelessness, they will find it necessary to take it up again "Then I said, I will not make mention of Him nor speak His name any more. But His word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with holding back, and I could not stay. " They will cry night and day unto him, knowing no time for giving it over till they be lifted up. "My eye trickles down and does not cease or have any intermission until the Lord looks down and beholds from heaven." Now, when Christ's intercession is joined with these cries, there cannot but fail to be a lifting up.

And Christ's intercession is certainly joined with the cries and prayers of the humbled in their humbling circumstances, "And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given to him much incense, so that he might offer it with the prayers of all saints on the golden altar which was before the throne. " They are helped to groan for relief by the Spirit, and the prayers and groans which are through the Spirit are certainly to be made effectual by the intercession of the Son. And you may know they are by the Spirit if it happens that you are helped to continue praying, hoping for your relief on the ground of God's word of promise. For that praying which is by nature is a pool that will dry up in a long drought. The Spirit of prayer is the lasting spring. "In the day when I cried, You answered me and strengthened me with strength in my soul. " Truly there is an intercession in Heaven, on account of the humbling circumstances of the humble ones, "Then the angel of the Lord answered and said, O Lord of hosts, how long will You not have mercy on Jerusalem, and on the cities of Judah, against which You

have had indignation these seventy years?" How then can they fail to get a lifting up in due time?

Christ is in deep earnest in His intercession for His people in their humbling circumstances. Some will speak a good work in favor of the helpless, that would not be concerned if they succeed or not, but our Intercessor is in earnest in behalf of His humbled ones. For He is touched with sympathy in their case, "In all their affliction He was afflicted." A most tender sympathy has He; "For he that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye. " He has their case upon His heart, where He is in the holy place in the highest heavens, and He keeps an exact account of the time of their humbling circumstances, however long it may be. And it is His own business. The lifting up which they are to have is a thing that is secured to Him in the promises made to Him on account of the blood He shed for them. So not only are they looking on earth, but the man Christ is in Heaven looking for the accomplishment of these promises, "But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God; from that time on expecting until His enemies should be made His footstool. " How is it possible, then, that He should be frustrated? Again, these humbling circumstances are still His own sufferings, though not in His person, yet in His members. "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body's sake, which is the church." Therefore there is all ground to conclude that He is in deep earnest.

His intercession is always effectual, "And I know that You hear Me always. " It cannot fail to be so, because He is the Father's well-beloved Son. His intercession has a plea of justice for its ground, "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. " And He has all power in Heaven and in earth lodged in Him And, finally, He and His Father are one, and their will is one. So both Christ and His Father desire the lifting up of the humble ones, but yet only in due time.

I now proceed to a more particular view of the point: We will consider the lifting up as brought about in time, which is the partial lifting up. This lifting up does not take place in every case of a child of God. One may be humbled in low circumstances from which he is not to get a lifting up in time. We would not from the promise presently conclude that we, being humbled under our low circumstances, shall certainly be taken out of them and freed from them before we get to the end of our journey. For it is certain there are some humiliating things which we can by no means be rid of while in this world, such as our imperfections, our sinfulness, and our mortality. And there are particular humbling circumstances the Lord may bring about us, and keep about us, until we go down to the grave. Yet at the same time He may lift up another from the same circumstances. Heman was pressed down all along, from his youth onward; but others have been pressed down all their lifetime.

Objections: If that is the case, what about the promise to lift us up? Where is the lifting up if one may go to the grave under the weight?

Answer: If there were no life after this, there would perhaps be ground for such an objection. But since there is another life, there is no valid objection to be made. In the other life the promise will be accomplished to those who have been humbled. Consider that the great term for accomplishment of the promises is the other life, and not this one--"These all died in the faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off; and they were persuaded of them and embraced them. "Whatever accomplishment of the promise is here it is not of the nature of a stock, but it is but a sample or a pledge.

Question: But then may we not stop praying for the lifting up in that case?

Answer: No, because we do not know when that is our case. For a case may be past all hope in our eyes and in the eyes of others, yet God may design a lifting up in time. This was Job's case, "What is my strength that I should hope? And what is my end that I should prolong my life?" But, be that as it may, we should never give over praying for the lifting up, since it will certainly come to all that pray for it--if not here, then hereafter. The promise is sure, and that is the commandment; therefore such praying cannot fail to have a happy issue at length, "Call on Me in the day of trouble. I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me." The whole life of a Christian is a praying, waiting life. And we are given temporal deliverances as pledges to encourage us to it. "And not only they, but ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, that is, the redemption of our body. " And whoever observes that full lifting up at death to be at hand must certainly rise, if he has given over his case as hopeless.

However, there are some cases in which this lifting up does not take place. God gives His people some notable deliverances, even in time raising them out of remarkably humbling circumstances. The storm is changed into a calm, and they remember it as waters that fail.

Some may be in humbling circumstances very long, heavy and hopeless circumstances, and yet a lifting up be held back for a long time. This is sometimes the case with the children of God who are set to bear the yoke in their youth as it was with Joseph and David; or of those that get it laid on them in their middle age, as it was with Job, who could not have been less than forty years old when his trouble came; but afterwards he lived one hundred and forty years. God by such methods prepares a man for peculiar usefulness.

Others may be in humbling circumstances, heavy and long, and may be quite hopeless in the ordinary course of providence, yet they may get a lifting up before they come to their journey's end. The life of some of God's children is like a cloudy and rainy day, in which the sun breaks out from under the clouds in the afternoon, shining fair and clear a little, and then it sets. ("And it shall happen in that day that the light shall not be clear nor dark. But it shall happen that at evening time it shall be light. ") Such was the case with Jacob in his old age, brought in honor and comfort into Egypt, to his son, and then he died.

Yet whatever liftings up they may get in this life, they will never lack some weights to hang on them for their humbling. They may have their singing times, but their songs while in this world will be mixed with groanings, "For we that are in this tabernacle groan, being burdened." The unmixed dispensation is reserved for the other world. But this one will be a wilderness to the very end, where there will be howlings alongside of the most joyful notes.

All the liftings up which the humbled meet with now are pledges, and only pledges and samples of the great lifting up which awaits them on the other side. And they should look upon them as such, "And I will give her her vineyards from there, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope. And she shall sing there as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. " Our Lord is now leading His people through the wilderness, and the manna and the water of the rock are earnest of the milk and honey flowing in the promised land. They have not yet come home to their Father's house, but they are travelling on the road. And their elder brother Christ is with them, bearing their expenses, taking them into inns for rest by the way, and as it were, refreshing them with partial liftings up. But then they must get on the road again. And that entertainment by the way is but a pledge of the full entertainment He will give them when they arrive at their eternal home.

Objection: But people may get a lifting up here in time, yet there is no pledge of a lifting up on the other side. How then shall I know it is a pledge?

Answer: That lifting up which comes by the promises is certainly a pledge of the full lifting up in the other world. For, as the other life is the proper time for the accomplishing of the promises, so we may be sure that when God once begins to clear His bond, He will certainly hold on until it is fully cleared. "The Lord will perfect that which concerns me." So we may say, as Naomi said to Ruth, when she received the six measures of barley from Boaz, "He will not rest until he has finished the thing today." There are liftings up that come by common providence and these indeed are single, not being pledges of more. But the promise chains mercies together, so that one received is a pledge of another to come; yea, of the whole chain to the end.

Question: But how shall I know that the lifting up comes by way of the promise?

Answer: That which comes by the way of the promise comes in the low way of humiliation, the high way of faith, or believing the promise, and the long way of waiting hope and patient continuance, "Therefore, be patient, brothers, to the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, and he has long patience for it, until he receives the early and latter rain." Humility prepares for the accomplishment of the promise, faith sucks its breast, and patient waiting hangs by the breast until the milk comes flowing forth abundantly.

But no liftings up of God's children here are any more than pledges of lifting up. God gives worldly men their stock here, but His children get nothing but a sample of theirs here. Even as the servant at the term gets his fee in a round sum, while the young heir gets nothing but a few pence for spending money. The truth is, this same spending money is more valuable than the world's stock "You have put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased." But though it is better than that and their services too and worth more than all their waiting, yet it is below the honor of their God to put them off with it, "But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one; therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. "

We shall now consider what they will get by this lifting up promised to the humbled ones. They will get:

1. A removal of their humbling circumstances. God having tried them a while humbling them and bringing down their hearts, will at length take their burden off, remove the weight that has hung on them so long, and so will take them off that part of their trial joyfully. And He will let them get up, though their back has been long bowed down. And this He will do in two ways: either in kind, or by a total removal of the burden. Job got such a lifting up when the Lord turned back his captivity, increased again his family and substance, which had both been desolated. When his persecutor Saul fell in battle, David was brought to the kingdom after many a weary day, yet he had expected one day to fall by his hand. It is easy with our God to make such turns in the most humbling circumstances.

Or the equivalent good, removing the weight of the burden so that it does not press them down any more, even though it remains. "And He said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, I will rather glory in my infirmities, so that the power of Christ may rest on me. Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities. " Though they may not yet be to the shore, yet their head is no longer under the water, but lifted up. David speaks feelingly of such a lifting up, "For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion. In the secret of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me on a rock. And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies round about me. Therefore I will offer

sacrifices of joy in His tabernacle. I will sing, yea, I will sing praises to the Lord." Such an experience overwhelmed the Hebrews in the fiery furnace: the fire burned, but it could burn nothing but their bonds; they had its warmth and its light, but nothing of the scorching heat.

2. A comfortable sight of the acceptance of their prayers which they put up in their humbling circumstances. While prayers are not answered, but trouble continued, they are apt to think they are not accepted or regarded in Heaven, because there is no change in their case, "If I had called, and He had answered me, yet I would not believe that He had listened to my voice, for He breaks me with a tempest." But that is a mistake! They are accepted immediately, even though there does not seem to be an answer to prayer, "And this is the confidence we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us." The Lord does with them as a father with the letters coming thick from his son abroad, He reads them one by one with pleasure and carefully lays them up to be answered at His convenience. And when the answer comes, the son will know how acceptable they were to his father.

3. A heart-satisfying answer to their prayers, so that they shall not only get the thing, but see they have it as an answer of prayer. And they will put a double value on the mercy. Accepted prayers may not be answered for a long time; in Abraham's and David's case it was many years, but they cannot miscarry or be unanswered at length. The time will come when God will count it out to them according to the promise, and they shall change their note and say, "I love the Lord, because He has heard my voice and my supplication:" looking on their lifting up as bearing the signature of the hand of a prayer-hearing God.

4. Full satisfaction' as to the conduct of Providence, in all the steps of the humbling circumstances, and the delay of the lifting up, however perplexing these were before. Standing on the shore and looking back to what they have passed through, they will be made to say, "He has done all things well. " Those things which are bitter to Christians in the passing through are very sweet when we reflect on them (Samson's riddle is then verified in their experience).

5. They get the lifting up, together with the interest for the time they lay out of it. When God pays His bonds of promises, He pays both principal and interest together: the mercy is increased according to the time they waited, and the expenses and hardships sustained during the dependence of the process. The fruits of common providence are soon ripe, soon rotten. But the fruit of the promise is often a long time ripening, but then it endures. And the longer it takes to ripen, the more valuable it is when it comes. Abraham and Sarah waited for the promise about ten years, and at length they thought of a way to hasten it. It soon took, in the birth of Ishmael, but he was not the promised son. They were coming into extreme old age before the promise was brought forth. But when it came, they got it with an addition of the renewing of their ages. The most valuable of all the promises was the longest in being fulfilled, namely, the promise of Christ, being about four thousand years.

6. The spiritual enemies that flew thick about them in the time of the darkness of the humbling circumstances, these will be scattered at this lifting up in the promise.

"And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoices in the Lord, my mouth is enlarged over my enemies. They that were full have hired out themselves for bread, and they that were hungry ceased" Formidable was Pharaoh's host behind the Israelites, while they had the Red Sea before them; but when they were through the sea, they saw the Egyptians dead on the shore. Such a sight will they that humble themselves under humbling circumstances get of their spiritual enemies when the time comes for their lifting up.

We come now to the due time of His lifting up. That is a natural question of those who are in humbling circumstances, "Watchman, what of the night? " And we cannot answer it to the humbled soul, but in the general.

The lifting up of the humbled will not be lonesome, considering the weight of the matter; that is to say, considering the worth and value of the lifting up of the humble; when it comes, it can by no means be reckoned long to the time of it. When you sow your corn in the fields, though i

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