

The Forgetful Servant

by Thomas Bradbury

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the relationship between the servant and God, and the distinction between service and sonship, highlighting the covenant relationship and imputed service of God's righteous servant, Jesus Christ.

Scripture: Psalm 139:23

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Faithfulness To God"

Description

Thomas Bradbury preaches about the privilege of being guided by the Holy Spirit to understand the experiences set before us in the book of Psalms, contrasting genuine Spirit-breathed experiences with those dictated by human religious authorities. He emphasizes the varied experiences of God's children, highlighting the soul's dependence on God despite declaring Him as King and God. Bradbury delves into the forgetfulness of God's servants, the need to remember His Word, and the plea to establish hope in His promises.

Transcript

"Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope." (Psalm 119:49)

Great and unspeakable is the privilege to be guided by God the ever-blessed Spirit into a true understanding and appreciation of that experience which He has set before us in the book of Psalms. It is a God-begotten, Spirit-breathed, and genuine experience, which stands the test of toil, trial, temptation, and tribulation, from whatever source or combined sources these may spring. It is an experience vastly different to those set before us in what is termed "the various schools of religious thought" - a term which my soul hates. I speak advisedly on this matter, and say again, a term which my soul hates, because the schools of thought and experience are generally under the patronage supervision, and dictation of one poor, weak, erring, and presumptuous mortal, who declares his approbation or veto of persons and their experiences with as much authority as though a sovereign God had deigned to make him His deputy. Numbers of God's poor and afflicted ones groan under this petty spiritual tyranny, and sigh for the enjoyment of that liberty which is experienced when the blessed Spirit reveals a precious Christ as the lost sinner's only Saviour, the ignorant sinner's patient Teacher, and the needy sinner's All in all. I believe what I have stated from my own heart's experience and personal observation, and here I would leave on record that the experience of the true-born children of God is not to be gauged or regulated by any man's order of things, but by God the Holy Ghost, the Witness of the covenant, according to the will, purpose, and

pleasure of the Father arranged and settled before all worlds, and flowing into the hearts of elect pilgrims just at the right time. The experience of the different members of the mystical body of our Lord Jesus Christ is as varied as the features of their faces, or the circumstances in the midst of which they are placed.

In thus speaking let me direct your attention to that painful, pleasant, and profitable experience described at the commencement of Psalm 5. Here we meet with a soul on pleading terms with God, yet deeply humbled and exercised before Him: "Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my meditation. Harken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto Thee will I pray." It is our mercy to know that our God catches every sigh, every groan, every longing and desire of His children.

They groan being burdened. They sigh being troubled. They pray being poor. They cry being helpless. Notice the three "mys," "My cry, my King, my God." This to some is a paradox! A helpless, weak, and wanting sinner with the language of assurance upon his lips, yet for the time being not in the rich experience of God's lovingkindness and tender mercy. There are those in these degenerate days who will tell you that the sinner who is brought into the possession of the grace and strength which is in Christ Jesus, and is entitled to say, "My King, and my God," can at all times live in full assurance, and exercise faith in the promise and declarations of God's most Holy Word.

But this is contrary to the experience of the household of faith. Mark you! "My King, and my God, unto Thee will I pray." Thou hast revealed Thyself to me as my God in covenant relationship, and my King in Thy inward and spiritual kingdom, yet this morning, in my judgment, feelings, and experience, I am as dependent upon Thee as ever I was. The more I seek Thee, and the more I experience Satan's assaults and temptations, the enmity of my carnal mind, the incorrigibility of my will, the deceitfulness of my heart, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

Lord, I have not a stock of grace in hand to live upon. My spiritual and eternal all is treasured up in my great and glorious Head. I have no hope, no trust, no confidence but in Thy faithfulness to Thy covenant promise, to open up and reveal in me Thy fullness of grace, supplying my necessity and filling my emptiness. "My King, and my God, unto Thee will I pray." A very blessed and precious experience which reminds of that covenant promise in Deut. 33:25: "Under thy shoes shall be iron and brass."

Mark well what I said; not, "thy shoes shall be iron and brass," for we in these Northern climes would not like to wear shoes of such material. Consult the marginal reading of this precious portion, and you will see it is as I have repeated it to you, "Under thy shoes shall be iron and brass;" but, "your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace." (Eph. 6:15) Why is it "Under thy feet shall be iron and brass?" To secure a firm footing for feeble faith. Iron and brass illustrating the omnipotence and faithfulness of JEHOVAH as displayed in the salvation and security of His people.

Is my journey to the land where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest, along the beaten track of trial amid tribulation? He will prove to me that it is paved with exceeding great and precious promises, and that in every promise His power and faithfulness are pledged for my everlasting welfare. O what a mercy it is for me, a poor, broken-hearted sinner before Him, to know, and that by the teaching of His own Spirit, and by His providential dealings with me, that every step I take is upon His unalterable and unbending promise, Under thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be."

Nine times out of ten these words are misquoted thus: "As thy day thy strength shall be," which means as is thy day's need and trial, so will be thy strength. That is true but it is not the truth of the promise. This is

the truth, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be," or, as it is in an old version, "Thy strength shall continue as long as thou livest." Blessed be God, the last of thy days, which may be to poor nature labour and sorrow, will have His strength accompanying it as much as today.

Religious high-flyers here presume and say: With such a promise you have no occasion to doubt, fear, or experience anything like perplexity. But, my dear friends, there are days of affliction, darkness, desertion, temptation, trial, and persecution, all designed for the testing of the faith of God's elect, and for the proving of the promises which the Holy Ghost has made both life and power in our hearts. When all is dark around thee, He will verify His promise: "The LORD shall be thine everlasting light."

When weakness is thy lot He will be true to His Word, "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness." (Isa. 41:10) Today may be one of joy; but tomorrow is in His hands and will bring its bitters or sweets, doubts or confidence, fears or trust. "The LORD knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever" (Psa. 37:18). Well, then, with these preliminaries, let us look at the portion which I have read for our meditation, and may it prove for our instruction and comfort. We will notice -

THE PERSON SPEAKING - "Thy servant."

HIS CHARACTER - A forgetful servant, implied in the word, "Remember."

HIS WANT - "The Word."

HIS PLEA - "The Word, upon which Thou has caused me to hope."

I. THE PERSON SPEAKING - "Thy servant." We find this expression repeated many times in this Psalm: "Deal bountifully with Thy servant, that I may live, and keep Thy Word." (ver. 17) He does not say, Raise me up to a little hope, or, Let me have a little faith to cling to Thee, or, Give me a little evidence of Thy life, or faint glimmer of Thy light! These are precious things, and blessed to experience in the hearts of God's children, but none of them can fully satisfy a living soul. Such cannot be satisfied with small things. The yearnings of the Divine nature within are for Divine, eternal, infinite realities - in fact, with nothing short of God Himself. The experience of the Psalmist in felt want and necessity caused him to cry, "Deal bountifully with Thy servant, that I may live." It may be there are some of God's servants within these walls this morning who are feeling that which makes such a portion as this, through the anointing of the Holy Ghost, very acceptable. What is your experience? You answer, Barrenness, leanness, deadness. But your sigh and cry is, "that I may live, and keep Thy Word." "Keep," through the indwelling of the great Remembrancer, in experimental possession, "Thy Word" - whatever that Word may have reference to, or in whatsoever state or condition the child of God may be.

But what is a servant? One employed to wait upon another, one in subjection to another, one in a position of dependence, whose time, labour, and will is at the bidding of a superior. Mark that! Whose will is at the bidding of a superior. Such is the truth taught in God's blessed Word. We, with our ideas of service, fall far short of God's mind, will, purpose, and pleasure, in respect to the same. Service in these days differs vastly from that rendered to superiors in Biblical times.

Then, a servant was the property of another in person, will, and work. Now, where are we this morning, in reference to our standing before a just and holy God, who sits as sovereign Ruler over all things in

heaven, on earth, and in hell? This is a terrible truth to a newly awakened child of God who realizes not his true position in the Father's household: "All are Thy servants." All? Yes, all. Elect and reprobate, angels fallen and unfallen - all in infinite space serve Him.

But the question with us is this: What is the relationship to God of the servant mentioned in the text, and what is the nature of his service? There are different grades of service revealed in God's Word in connection with the work of grace, which He carries on in the hearts of His elect children. When the first beam of light dawns on the mind of a vessel of mercy, the first ejaculation is in connection with service. Look through your Bibles and you will find this to be the case almost invariably.

See! Mark 10:17-22. The young ruler comes to Jesus running, kneeling, asking. There is zeal seen in his running, humility in his kneeling, want in his asking. "He asked Him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" The Master answered according to the nature of his question. If he would escape death, and experience life on the ground of doing, there was ample scope for him. "Thou knowest the commandments." He directs his mind to the second table of the Decalogue, omitting intentionally the last and tenth command.

The young man answered, "Master, all these have I observed from my youth." Morality and amiability may say the same in respect, not to the first table of the law, but to the second which enjoins duty to our neighbour. But even here failure awaits all doing for life. "Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me."

This was the thrusting home of the command, "Thou shalt not covet," without which he had not known lust. This slew him, for "he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possession." Now, very many quote this as a case of neglected opportunity and salvation rejected, that the young ruler had the opportunity to embrace salvation, but he would not and went his way. Now, what did the Lord Jesus in His teaching set before the man? Let us look at this honestly and fairly in the face, and we shall see that not one word of Gospel fell from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The young man was for doing! Jesus laid the law before him, which served its own purpose, working conviction in the young man's mind. Was he vexed? No. Was he opposed to Christ? No! "He was sad at that saying, and went away grieved." Sad! Grieved! Would to God that we could see scores going away sad and grieved under a sense of their inability to obey God's holy, just, good, and spiritual law. Jesus loved that young man, He loves him now in the heights of glory, leaning upon His bosom free from all sadness and grief, and rejoicing in the glorious fact that Jesus did all for him. "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them to the end." (John 13:1).

Now, if you will turn with me to Acts 2, you will see that as Peter preached God's Gospel, which was profuse with quotations from the Old Testament Scriptures, the three thousand heard, "were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Turn to chapter 16, verse 30. The Philippian jailer awakened, fearing, trembling, asks Paul and Silas, "Sirs, what must I do be saved?" You see the question in the mind of these awakened ones is that of doing and serving. We have another illustration of this in that beautiful part of the threefold parable in Luke 15, which describes the return and restoration of the lost son. A son. Mark that! Not a hired servant in the father's house, but a real son. In a far off land, wanting and weary, he remembers his father's home, and thus soliloquizes, "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with

hunger? I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." He would rather be a hired servant well fed, than a starving son. "He fain would have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat;" but that could never be, for the living children can never be satisfied with free-will trash, or Arminian husks. "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off." This is a beautiful description of the son's feelings and experience, for the God and Father of His people can never be a great way off from them. "But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." Why does he not continue to express the whole of his former determination? Ah, my dear friends, we oftentimes determine to do and say things that God never intended, and in His gracious providence He stops our mouths and teaches us that He has better things in store for us. The son cannot say, "make me as one of thy hired servants." How is this? Because he had received the kiss of reconciling love, the kiss of unchanging affection, the kiss of approbation. He felt himself a son by gracious communication and communion, and was taken into the house, not to wait, but to be waited upon. The hired servants must bring forth the robe, the ring, and the fatted calf, but the son must sit at the father's table.

Look at that precious portion, Gal. 4:6, 7: "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father: wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." How blessed it is for us to know that we stand before God in covenant relationship with Him, not on the ground of personal service, but on the ground of imputed service! This is the service of God's righteous servant, the obedience of Him in whom all elect sinners are eternally justified and accepted.

Do, do, do! Work, work, work! is the cry of the religious world. What are you doing for the Lord? is the demand of the self-righteous and self-sufficient; but the language of the tempted, tried, and truly-taught children of God is, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul." (Psalm 66:16) Does not this latter suit you better? Yes! is the response of every weary, way-worn pilgrim who has been taught to praise the Lord in the language of the Psalmist: "All Thy works shall praise Thee, O LORD; and Thy saints shall bless Thee.

They shall speak of the glory of Thy kingdom, and talk of Thy power; To make known to the sons of men Thy mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of Thy kingdom." (Psalm 145:10-12) May I ask you individually, to be answered in the secret of your own heart before Him: What is the Lord doing for you this morning by the power of the Holy Ghost in the person of His Son? Have you the witness of the Spirit that you are born of God, and that His doings for you, in you, and by you, are based upon His covenant purposes, and flow through His covenant promises, in which no flaw, failure, or imperfection can be found?

And here I would have you notice this very important distinction: The order of this day of profession is, "Do and live;" but the order of the Gospel day is, "LIVE AND DO!" and all by the grace and indwelling of God the Holy Ghost. But what are we to do? That which a loving Father commands in respect to His glory in doing good to all, especially those of the household of faith. Do not let us lose sight of that, "do good to all." We receive not the glorious doctrine of election according to the erroneous judgment of the carnal mind, as a cold, crude notion, which binds and cramps us in our operations, sympathies, and feelings.

It is not that; but when God communicates the precious fact to our hearts that He has elected, saved, and accepted us in the Son of His love, our bosoms glow with gratitude, and if we could, we would bring all

with whom we come in contact into the enjoyment thereof. If I could, and it is a mercy I cannot, I would convince all that come within the sound of my voice. I remember the days of my youthful spiritual vigour, when I had more zeal than judgment, being so simple as to think I could convince those who would allow me to converse with them of the truth of these eternal verities.

I was sadly and sorely mistaken. But how blessed it is for us to feel and know that there is service unknown to all outside God's family! it is the service of sons, children whose existence, honour, and glory are identical with His; the child, by the Spirit of life, love, and liberty in Christ Jesus, delighting to toil and labour in those predestined paths which He alone reveals.

"Thy servant." Let us look at this still more minutely. Go to the history of Abraham, and you will find he had his servants, some bought with his money and others born in his house. (Gen. 17:12,13) Consider this in a spiritual sense! Have we been bought with His money? (1 Peter 1:18,19) "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ." That is the money! Have you been bought with blood? Have you the blood-red mark of redemption upon you? I do not ask you what are your views upon redemption - particular or general! I do not ask you that; but have you the witness of the Spirit that you are redeemed by blood from Satan, sin, and self? Can you remember the spot where His Word came home with sweetness and power, telling you that He suffered, bled, and died for you? See! Men may chatter and contend for the doctrine of particular redemption right down to the very depths of hell; but you cannot be blessed with the experience of your own personal redemption from sin which you hate, guilt which you fear, condemnation which you shun, and self which you loathe, and fall short of the possession of that glory which He has laid up with undisturbed security for His eternally loved, elect, and redeemed people.

Personal redemption must be particular, never general, or universal; while general and particular may be contended for where there is no personal interest in the Redeemer or experience of His love. A very remarkable circumstance is set before us in the account of the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priestly office - a very lively type of Christ and His Church, the Redeemer and the redeemed. "And thou shalt kill the ram, and take of his blood, and put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about. And thou shalt take of the blood that is upon the altar and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him; and he shall be hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him" (Exodus 29:19, 20). What does all thus typify? "You are not your own: for ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Cor. 6:19, 20) "NOT YOUR OWN!" Galling declaration to the natural man. Precious truth to the spiritual man, to the killed and risen again believer! Ay, precious indeed to be bought by blood, sought by love and brought by power into the knowledge of the fact, that I am sanctified or separated to His service, that I am the servant of my Lord and my Redeemer, who has bought me and marked me with His blood. The blood was put upon the ear. What are you doing with your ear? What are you listening to? In ninety-nine cases out of every hundred the ear is listening to gossip, scandal, backbiting, or defamation. Does a child of God slip in his walk? Is there a hole in the coat of a saint? Miss Precise cries aloud, Could you have thought it? While Mrs. Prudence exclaims, I knew very well what it would come to! Did I not tell you, dear? O, my dear friends, may your finger be kept from pointing to the hole in the coat of any child of God, and especially from poking your finger in to make the rent worse! May He keep your ears open to the necessities of His

tried and tempted ones, and cause your heart to burn in listening to the gracious outpouring of those spirits which are broken through a sense of sin, and daily and hourly infirmity. May He keep your feet in the good and right way, and fix your eyes upon Himself alone. Too often we are looking at the workings of the flesh in others and see not the fruits of the Spirit.

"Born in His house." "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:13) This is the regenerating grace of God which His children long to be more acquainted with. Am I a true-born child in the house of my Father-God? Am I born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever? Have I such an experience as this? "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." (Gal. 2:20) Then my chief desire will be to be devoted to His service who loved me, bought me, quickened me, and brought me to know and feel that -

"Love so amazing, so Divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

His servant in life! His servant in death! Yes, when my eyelids are closing in death, when this poor frail tabernacle is dissolving and my ransomed spirit is gasping for its native air and home, even then may He own me as His servant and messenger of grace, comfort, and encouragement to those who may surround my bed, His servant of love, life, and liberty to those who may be anxiously looking on, and who in after years may cry from the depths of their exercised hearts: - Lord, remember the word which came with living power from the faltering lips of Thy dying servant. "Thy servant." O how blessed it is for us to know that His service which is perfect freedom, is not confined to the narrow limits of this mortal life!

II. THE CHARACTER OF THIS SERVANT - Forgetful, as implied in the word, "Remember." Is not this proof positive that God's servants are very forgetful? Yes, it is. Let us look at the description He gives of them in that wonderful Psalm 78. Read the 34th verse: "When He slew them then they sought Him." That is as true today in the experience of God's servants as it was when the Psalmist penned it; for it is only when we are killed, feelingly and experimentally in the flesh, that we live in Him.

This is a paradox, but God's poor children understand it. "When He slew them, then they sought Him, and they returned and inquired early after God. And they remembered that God was their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer." God slays His children when He smashes their hopes and expectations of earthly good. Now He has used the means to bring them to remember Him, surely they will be more mindful for the future? No, they wont, they are made of the wrong sort of stuff and so am I.

See! "Nevertheless they did flatter Him with their mouth, and they lied unto Him with their tongues." What an awful lot! Wait. We can discern our own characters and dispositions in theirs. I find that my mouth has flattered and my tongue has lied as much as any in the world. Have trouble, anxiety, distress, and anguish come upon us? O how ready we have been with our vows and promises! We have told the Lord, and told His saints, that if He only would deliver and comfort us, and give us a sweet assurance of pardon from His lips, how very careful and prayerful we would be for the future.

But we have lived to prove our ignorance and weakness in these matters. Don't be in a hurry, my friend, in promising God anything. Your prayers, not your promises He looks for. Mark this! "For their heart was not right with Him." Is yours? That is the question! But a greater question than that I want settling in my heart

every day: - Is His heart right with me? "Neither were they steadfast in His covenant." Neither are we; yet "He will ever be mindful of His covenant." (Psa. 111:5) "But He, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not; yea, many a time turned He His anger away, and did not stir up all His wrath."

Will not that do for some of us this morning? He sees and knows what poor weak creatures we are in ourselves. "For He remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again. How oft did they provoke Him in the wilderness, and grieve Him in the desert!" When I consider how a gracious and long-suffering God has put up with me, and borne with my manners in the wilderness these many years, I am constrained to be careful in what I may have to say concerning the failures and falls, imperfections and infirmities of any of His children.

"Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel. They remembered not His hand." Tell me, is not this the experience of your hearts? Are your memories as retentive as you would have them in respect to the delivering and providing hand of your God? You know how like Ephraim, you are: "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness (mercy or kindness - margin) is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away." (Hos. 6:4) "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." (Heb. 2:1) For we are at the best but as leaking vessels. This reminds me of the saying of an old woman: "My mind is like a riddle for holding water; but it's a mercy to get the wires wet."

"Remember!" Turn with me to Psa. 25:6, 7, where you will find something that a child of God does not want God to remember: "Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions." But see! there is something He must remember: "According to Thy mercy remember Thou me for Thy goodness sake, O LORD." Sins and follies which we could tread under our feet like worms in the days of our youth, when, as "Satan's blind slaves, we sported with death," when we would have gone post-haste to hell but for His restraining grace, now trouble and distress in the conscience as so many biting fiery serpents. We may well cry, "Remember not the sins of my youth." The children of God, having treacherous memories and oftentimes forgetful of their Father's manifold mercies, are apt to think that He is of the same disposition toward them. See! "Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee." (Deut. 32:18) "I will say unto God my Rock, Why hast Thou forgotten me?" (Psa. 42:9) "Hath God forgotten to be gracious?" (Psa. 77:9) No! "Remember these, O Jacob, and Israel; for thou art My servant, I have formed thee; thou art My servant: thou shalt not be forgotten of Me" (Isa. 44:21). "But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." (Isa. 49:14,15) JEHOVAH has pledged His Word, given His promise, and sworn by an oath that He will remember His holy covenant by the presence and power of the gracious Remembrancer in the hearts of His people. Is Noah surrounded on every hand with the waters of judgment and death? "And God remembered Noah" (Gen. 8:1). Is Lot in the midst of danger? God remembered the intercession of Abraham. (Gen. 19:29) Mark that precious portion in Isa. 62:6 - "Ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence" - "Ye that are the LORD'S remembrancers" (margin). "Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons, and concerning the work of My hands command ye Me." (Isa. 45:11) It is a marvellous mercy to be taught that Jesus our Great High Priest is our Remembrancer in His sweet intercession to the Father; the blessed Spirit is the Father's Remembrancer in our hearts, and His wrestlers and preveilers remember each other before the throne of His heavenly grace. We now glance at -

III. THE SERVANT'S WANT - "The Word." What is this Word? Not simply the written Word, but the covenanting (Hag. 2:5), creating (Psa. 33:6), quickening (Psa. 119:50), incarnate (John 1:14), and living Word. (Heb. 4:12-14) Look at the Word in Jer. 31:31-34, quoted by Paul in Heb. 8:8-12, and 10:16, 17. "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." A forgetting God in reference to the sins of His people. A remembering God whenever they are in necessity or distress. Does Abraham experience danger and necessity? "The Word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, I am thy Shield and exceeding great Reward." Is God's Israel sick and afflicted? "They cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He saveth them from their distresses. He sent His Word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions." (Psa. 107:19, 20) Does the Psalmist's soul cleave to the dust of death? He cries, "Quicken Thou me according to Thy Word." (Psa. 119:25) God's Word quickening sinners from a death in trespasses and sins, and which still quickens those who have been quickened and who need quickening again. This quickening Word is God's Christ. Listen to the plaintive language of Peter: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the word of eternal life." (John 6:68) "He cast out the spirits with His Word, and healed all that were sick." (Matt. 8:16) What a precious word of comfort and consolation is that which comes with power from the lips and from the once broken but now sympathizing heart of a precious Saviour by the power of the covenant Remembrancer, God the Holy Ghost.

"Remember the Word." I sometimes remember the days that are past and gone for ever when the words of life, light, and love fell with sweetness from the anointed lips of God's own ministering servants into my anxious heart. Never can the words of suffering oneness with the Man of sorrows, which flowed from the exercised heart of Patrick Joseph O'Leary be lost to me. Oh! how I love to have remembered to me the words of faithfulness, fearlessness, and feeling which graced the ministry of the valiant William of Openshaw. And I would if I could remember the words of grace and truth which He Himself has spoken to my heart in this very spot; but I am taught to leave Him to do His own work while I mourn over my forgetfulness: "Remember the Word unto Thy servant." Now and again I remember how Psalm 89 was made very precious to me as I listened to the faithful testimony of a servant of God in Blackpool parish church, and I have not lost the savour of it to this day. "Thou rulest the raging of the sea; when the waves thereof arise, Thou stillest them." JEHOVAH holding all things in His hand, and causing them to work together for the good, the comfort, and consolation of His tried, tempted, and tempest-tossed people. Such words as these have come home to our hearts cheering, reviving, and encouraging, giving us the possession of a hope which cannot be shaken, and the knowledge of a place in His affections from whence we can never be dragged by men, devils, and all hell combined. Oh, how blessed to know that we have a remembering God! We forget, we lose sight of His covenant truths; but He has provided and secured to us a covenant Remembrancer, and here we find a little encouragement. If we were not forgetful and unmindful there would be nothing for the Holy Ghost to do in His office of covenant Remembrancer. Blessings be upon His sacred Name and Person. He does "Remember the Word unto His servant, upon which He has caused him to hope."

IV. THE SERVANT'S PLEA - "The Word upon which Thou hast caused me to hope." Just a hint here - no more. God's Word of promise is a preveiling plea. It begets, excites, and encourages "a good hope through grace." It teaches the heirs of promise to wait for the accomplishment thereof. "Thou hast caused me to hope" for life, salvation, grace, and glory; "And now, O LORD God, the Word that Thou hast spoken concerning Thy servant, and concerning His house, establish it for ever, and DO AS THOU HAST SAID." (2 Sam. 7:25) It is a blessed thing to be lifted up to a little hope in His covenant His truth - HIMSELF.

May He add His blessing for His Word's sake. Amen and Amen.

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