

LECTURE XI

The Minister's Fainting Fits

AS it is recorded that David, in the heat of battle, waxed faint, so may it be written of all the servants of the Lord. Fits of depression come over the most of us. Usually cheerful as we may be, we must at intervals be cast down. The strong are not always vigorous, the wise not always ready, the brave not always courageous, and the joyous not always happy. There may be here and there men of iron, to whom wear and tear work no perceptible detriment, but surely the rust frets even these; and as for ordinary men, the Lord knows, and makes them to know, that they are but dust. Knowing by most painful experience what deep depression of spirit means, being visited therewith at seasons by no means few or far between, I thought it might be consolatory to some of my brethren if I gave my thoughts thereon, that younger men might not fancy that some strange thing had happened to them when they became for a season possessed by melancholy; and that sadder men might know that one upon whom the sun has shone right joyously did not always walk in the light.

It is not necessary by quotations from the biographies of eminent ministers to prove that seasons of fearful prostration have fallen to the lot of most, if not all of them. The life of Luther might suffice to give a thousand instances, and he was by no means of the weaker sort. His great spirit was often in the seventh heaven of exultation, and as frequently on the borders of despair. His very death-bed was not free from tempests, and he sobbed himself into his last sleep like a great wearied child. Instead of multiplying cases, let us dwell upon the reasons why these things are permitted; why it is that the children of light sometimes walk in the thick darkness; why the heralds of the daybreak find themselves at times in tenfold night.

p 168 Is it not first that *they are men*? Being men, they are compassed with infirmity, and heirs of sorrow. Well said the wise man in the Apocrypha,* “Great travail is created for all men, and a heavy yoke on the sons of Adam, from the day that they go out of their mother’s womb unto that day that they return to the mother of all things—namely, their thoughts and fear of their hearts, and their imagination of things that they wail for, and the day of death. From him that sitteth in the glorious throne, to him that sitteth beneath in the earth and ashes; from him that is clothed in blue silk, and weareth a crown, to him that is clothed in simple linen—wrath, envy, trouble, and unquietness, and fear of death and rigour, and such things come to both man and beast, but sevenfold to the ungodly.” Grace guards us from much of this, but because we have not more of grace we still suffer even from ills preventible. Even under the economy of redemption it is most clear that we are to endure infirmities, otherwise there were no need of the promised Spirit to help us in them. It is of need be that we are sometimes in heaviness. Good men are promised tribulation in this world, and ministers may expect a larger share than others, that they may learn sympathy with the Lord’s suffering people, and so may be fitting shepherds of an ailing flock. Disembodied spirits might have been sent to proclaim the word, but they could not have entered into the feelings of those who, being in this body, do groan, being burdened; angels might have been ordained evangelists, but their celestial attributes would have disqualified them from having compassion on the ignorant; men of marble might have been fashioned, but their impassive natures would have been a sarcasm upon our feebleness, and a

* [Ecclus 40:1, 2, 3, 4, 5-8](#).

C. H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to my students: a selection from addresses delivered to the students of the Pastors' College, Metropolitan Tabernacle.*, vol. 1 (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1875).

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mockery of our wants. Men, and men subject to human passions, the all-wise God has chosen to be his vessels of grace; hence these tears, hence these perplexities and castings down.

Moreover, *most of us are in some way or other unsound physically*. Here and there we meet with an old man who could not remember that ever he was laid aside for a day; but the great mass of us labour under some form or other of infirmity, either in body or mind. Certain bodily maladies, especially those connected with the digestive organs, the liver, and the spleen, are the fruitful fountains of despondency; and, let a man strive as he may against their influence, there will be hours and circumstances in which they will for awhile overcome him. As to mental maladies, is any man altogether sane? Are we not all a little off the balance? Some p 169 minds appear to have a gloomy tinge essential to their very individuality; of them it may be said, “Melancholy marked them for her own;” fine minds withal, and ruled by noblest principles, but yet most prone to forget the silver lining, and to remember only the cloud. Such men may sing with the old poet*—

“Our hearts are broke, our harps unstringèd be,
Our only music’s sighs and groans,
Our songs are to the tune of *lachrymæ*,
We’re fretted all to skin and bones.”

These infirmities may be no detriment to a man’s career of special usefulness; they may even have been imposed upon him by divine wisdom as necessary qualifications for his peculiar course of service. Some plants owe their medicinal qualities to the marsh in which they grow; others to the shades in which alone they flourish. There are precious fruits put forth by the moon as well as by the sun. Boats need ballast as well as sail; a drag on the carriage-wheel is no hindrance when the road runs downhill. Pain has, probably, in some cases developed genius; hunting out the soul which otherwise might have slept like a lion in its den. Had it not been for the broken wing, some might have lost themselves in the clouds, some even of those choice doves who now bear the olive-branch in their mouths and show the way to the ark. But where in body and mind there are predisposing causes to lowness of spirit, it is no marvel if in dark moments the heart succumbs to them; the wonder in many cases is—and if inner lives could be written, men would see it so—how some ministers keep at their work at all, and still wear a smile upon their countenances. Grace has its triumphs still, and patience has its martyrs; martyrs none the less to be honoured because the flames kindle about their spirits rather than their bodies, and their burning is unseen of human eyes. The ministries of Jeremiahs are as acceptable as those of Isaiahs, and even the sullen Jonah is a true prophet of the Lord, as Nineveh felt full well. Despise not the lame, for it is written that they take the prey; but honour those who, being faint, are yet pursuing. The tender-eyed Leah was more fruitful than the beautiful Rachel, and the griefs of Hannah were more divine than the boastings of Peninnah. “Blessed are they that mourn,” said the Man of Sorrows, and let none account them otherwise when their tears are salted with grace. We have the treasure of the gospel in earthen vessels, and if there be a flaw in the vessel here and there, let none wonder.

p 170 *Our work, when earnestly undertaken, lays us open to attacks in the direction of depression*. Who can bear the weight of souls without sometimes sinking to the dust? Passionate longings after men’s conversion, if not fully satisfied (and when are they?), consume the soul with anxiety and disappointment. To see the hopeful turn aside, the godly grow cold, professors abusing their privileges, and sinners waxing more bold in sin—are not these sights enough to

* Thomas Washbourne.

C. H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to my students: a selection from addresses delivered to the students of the Pastors’ College, Metropolitan Tabernacle.*, vol. 1 (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1875).

crush us to the earth? The kingdom comes not as we would, the reverend name is not hallowed as we desire, and for this we must weep. How can we be otherwise than sorrowful, while men believe not our report, and the divine arm is not revealed? All mental work tends to weary and to depress, for much study is a weariness of the flesh; but ours is more than mental work—it is heart work, the labour of our inmost soul. How often, on Lord's-day evenings, do we feel as if life were completely washed out of us! After pouring out our souls over our congregations, we feel like empty earthen pitchers which a child might break. Probably, if we were more like Paul, and watched for souls at a nobler rate, we should know more of what it is to be eaten up by the zeal of the Lord's house. It is our duty and our privilege to exhaust our lives for Jesus. We are not to be living specimens of men in fine preservation, but living *sacrifices*, whose lot is to be consumed; we are to spend and to be spent, not to lay ourselves up in lavender, and nurse our flesh. Such soul-travail as that of a faithful minister will bring on occasional seasons of exhaustion, when heart and flesh will fail. Moses' hands grew heavy in intercession, and Paul cried out, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Even John the Baptist is thought to have had his fainting fits, and the apostles were once amazed, and were sore afraid.

Our position in the church will also conduce to this. A minister fully equipped for his work, will usually be a spirit by himself, above, beyond, and apart from others. The most loving of his people cannot enter into his peculiar thoughts, cares, and temptations. In the ranks, men walk shoulder to shoulder, with many comrades, but as the officer rises in rank, men of his standing are fewer in number. There are many soldiers, few captains, fewer colonels, but only one commander-in-chief. So, in our churches, the man whom the Lord raises as a leader becomes, in the same degree in which he is a superior man, a solitary man. The mountain-tops stand solemnly apart, and talk only with God as he visits their terrible solitudes. Men of God who rise above their fellows into nearer communion with heavenly things, in their weaker p 171 moments feel the lack of human sympathy. Like their Lord in Gethsemane, they look in vain for comfort to the disciples sleeping around them; they are shocked at the apathy of their little band of brethren, and return to their secret agony with all the heavier burden pressing upon them, because they have found their dearest companions slumbering. No one knows, but he who has endured it, the solitude of a soul which has outstripped its fellows in zeal for the Lord of hosts: it dares not reveal itself, lest men count it mad; it cannot conceal itself, for a fire burns within its bones: only before the Lord does it find rest. Our Lord's sending out his disciples by two and two manifested that he knew what was in men; but for such a man as Paul, it seems to me that no helpmeet was found; Barnabas, or Silas, or Luke, were hills too low to hold high converse with such a Himalayan summit as the apostle of the Gentiles. This loneliness, which if I mistake not is felt by many of my brethren, is a fertile source of depression; and our ministers' fraternal meetings, and the cultivation of holy intercourse with kindred minds will, with God's blessing, help us greatly to escape the snare.

There can be little doubt that *sedentary habits* have a tendency to create despondency in some constitutions. Burton, in his "Anatomy of Melancholy," has a chapter upon this cause of sadness; and, quoting from one of the myriad authors whom he lays under contribution, he says—"Students are negligent of their bodies. Other men look to their tools; a painter will wash his pencils; a smith will look to his hammer, anvil, forge; a husbandman will mend his plough-irons, and grind his hatchet if it be dull; a falconer or huntsman will have an especial care of his hawks, hounds, horses, dogs, &c.; a musician will string and unstring his lute; only scholars neglect that instrument (their brain and spirits I mean) which they daily use. Well saith Lucan, 'See thou twist not the rope so hard that it break.' " To sit long in one posture, poring over a

book, or driving a quill, is in itself a taxing of nature; but add to this a badly-ventilated chamber, a body which has long been without muscular exercise, and a heart burdened with many cares, and we have all the elements for preparing a seething cauldron of despair, especially in the dim months of fog—

“When a blanket wraps the day,
When the rotten woodland drips,
And the leaf is stamped in clay.”

Let a man be naturally as blithe as a bird, he will hardly be able to [p 172](#) bear up year after year against such a suicidal process; he will make his study a prison and his books the warders of a gaol, while nature lies outside his window calling him to health and beckoning him to joy. He who forgets the humming of the bees among the heather, the cooing of the wood-pigeons in the forest, the song of birds in the woods, the rippling of rills among the rushes, and the sighing of the wind among the pines, needs not wonder if his heart forgets to sing and his soul grows heavy. A day's breathing of fresh air upon the hills, or a few hours' ramble in the beech woods' umbrageous calm, would sweep the cobwebs out of the brain of scores of our toiling ministers who are now but half alive. A mouthful of sea air, or a stiff walk in the wind's face, would not give grace to the soul, but it would yield oxygen to the body, which is next best.

“Heaviest the heart is in a heavy air,
Ev'ry wind that rises blows away despair.”

The ferns and the rabbits, the streams and the trouts, the fir trees and the squirrels, the primroses and the violets, the farm-yard, the new-mown hay, and the fragrant hops—these are the best medicine for hypochondriacs, the surest tonics for the declining, the best refreshments for the weary. For lack of opportunity, or inclination, these great remedies are neglected, and the student becomes a self-immolated victim.

The times most favourable to fits of depression, so far as I have experienced, may be summed up in a brief catalogue. First among them I must mention *the hour of great success*. When at last a long-cherished desire is fulfilled, when God has been glorified greatly by our means, and a great triumph achieved, then we are apt to faint. It might be imagined that amid special favours our soul would soar to heights of ecstasy, and rejoice with joy unspeakable, but it is generally the reverse. The Lord seldom exposes his warriors to the perils of exultation over victory; he knows that few of them can endure such a test, and therefore dashes their cup with bitterness. See Elias after the fire has fallen from heaven, after Baal's priests have been slaughtered and the rain has deluged the barren land! For him no notes of self-complacent music, no strutting like a conqueror in robes of triumph; he flees from Jezebel, and feeling the revulsion of his intense excitement, he prays that he may die. He who must never see death, yearns after the rest of the grave, even as Cæsar, the world's monarch, in his moments of pain cried like a sick girl. Poor human nature cannot bear such strains as heavenly triumphs bring to it; there must come a [p 173](#) reaction. Excess of joy or excitement must be paid for by subsequent depressions. While the trial lasts, the strength is equal to the emergency; but when it is over, natural weakness claims the right to show itself. Secretly sustained, Jacob can wrestle all night, but he must limp in the morning when the contest is over, lest he boast himself beyond measure. Paul may be caught up to the third heaven, and hear unspeakable things, but a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him, must be the inevitable sequel. Men cannot bear unalloyed happiness; even good men are not yet fit to have “their brows with laurel and with myrtle bound,” without

enduring secret humiliation to keep them in their proper place. Whirled from off our feet by a revival, carried aloft by popularity, exalted by success in soul-winning, we should be as the chaff which the wind driveth away, were it not that the gracious discipline of mercy breaks the ships of our vainglory with a strong east wind, and casts us shipwrecked, naked and forlorn, upon the Rock of Ages.

Before any great achievement, some measure of the same depression is very usual. Surveying the difficulties before us, our hearts sink within us. The sons of Anak stalk before us, and we are as grasshoppers in our own sight in their presence. The cities of Canaan are walled up to heaven, and who are we that we should hope to capture them? We are ready to cast down our weapons and take to our heels. Nineveh is a great city, and we would flee unto Tarshish sooner than encounter its noisy crowds. Already we look for a ship which may bear us quietly away from the terrible scene, and only a dread of tempest restrains our recreant footsteps. Such was my experience when I first became a pastor in London. My success appalled me; and the thought of the career which it seemed to open up, so far from elating me, cast me into the lowest depth, out of which I uttered my *miserere* and found no room for a *gloria in excelsis*. Who was I that I should continue to lead so great a multitude? I would betake me to my village obscurity, or emigrate to America, and find a solitary nest in the backwoods, where I might be sufficient for the things which would be demanded of me. It was just then that the curtain was rising upon my life-work, and I dreaded what it might reveal. I hope I was not faithless, but I was timorous and filled with a sense of my own unfitness. I dreaded the work which a gracious providence had prepared for me. I felt myself a mere child, and trembled as I heard the voice which said, “Arise, and thresh the mountains, and make them as chaff.” This depression comes over me whenever the Lord is [p 174](#) preparing a larger blessing for my ministry; the cloud is black before it breaks, and overshadows before it yields its deluge of mercy. Depression has now become to me as a prophet in rough clothing, a John the Baptist, heralding the nearer coming of my Lord’s richer benison. So have far better men found it. The scouring of the vessel has fitted it for the Master’s use. Immersion in suffering has preceded the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Fasting gives an appetite for the banquet. The Lord is revealed in the backside of the desert, while his servant keepeth the sheep and waits in solitary awe. The wilderness is the way to Canaan. The low valley leads to the towering mountain. Defeat prepares for victory. The raven is sent forth before the dove. The darkest hour of the night precedes the day-dawn. The mariners go down to the depths, but the next wave makes them mount to the heaven; their soul is melted because of trouble before he bringeth them to their desired haven.

In the midst of a long stretch of unbroken labour, the same affliction may be looked for. The bow cannot be always bent without fear of breaking. Repose is as needful to the mind as sleep to the body. Our Sabbaths are our days of toil, and if we do not rest upon some other day we shall break down. Even the earth must lie fallow and have her Sabbaths, and so must we. Hence the wisdom and compassion of our Lord, when he said to his disciples, “Let us go into the desert and rest awhile.” What! when the people are fainting? When the multitudes are like sheep upon the mountains without a shepherd? Does Jesus talk of rest? When Scribes and Pharisees, like grievous wolves, are rending the flock, does he take his followers on an excursion into a quiet resting place? Does some red-hot zealot denounce such atrocious forgetfulness of present and pressing demands? Let him rave in his folly. The Master knows better than to exhaust his servants and quench the light of Israel. Rest time is not waste time. It is economy to gather fresh strength. Look at the mower in the summer’s day, with so much to cut down ere the sun sets. He pauses in his labour—is he a sluggard? He looks for his stone, and begins to draw it up and down

his scythe, with “rink-a-tink—rink-a-tink—rink-a-tink.” Is that idle music—is he wasting precious moments? How much he might have mown while he has been ringing out those notes on his scythe! But he is sharpening his tool, and he will do far more when once again he gives his strength to those long sweeps which lay the grass prostrate in rows before him. Even thus a little pause prepares the mind for greater service in the good cause. Fishermen must p 175 mend their nets, and we must every now and then repair our mental waste and set our machinery in order for future service. To tug the oar from day to day, like a galley-slave who knows no holidays, suits not mortal men. Mill-streams go on and on for ever, but we must have our pauses and our intervals. Who can help being out of breath when the race is continued without intermission? Even beasts of burden must be turned out to grass occasionally; the very sea pauses at ebb and flood; earth keeps the Sabbath of the wintry months; and man, even when exalted to be God’s ambassador, must rest or faint; must trim his lamp or let it burn low; must recruit his vigour or grow prematurely old. It is wisdom to take occasional furlough. In the long run, we shall do more by sometimes doing less. On, on, on for ever, without recreation, may suit spirits emancipated from this “heavy clay,” but while we are in this tabernacle, we must every now and then cry halt, and serve the Lord by holy inaction and consecrated leisure. Let no tender conscience doubt the lawfulness of going out of harness for awhile, but learn from the experience of others the necessity and duty of taking timely rest.

One crushing stroke has sometimes laid the minister very low. The brother most relied upon becomes a traitor. Judas lifts up his heel against the man who trusted him, and the preacher’s heart for the moment fails him. We are all too apt to look to an arm of flesh, and from that propensity many of our sorrows arise. Equally overwhelming is the blow when an honoured and beloved member yields to temptation, and disgraces the holy name with which he was named. Anything is better than this. This makes the preacher long for a lodge in some vast wilderness, where he may hide his head for ever, and hear no more the blasphemous jeers of the ungodly. Ten years of toil do not take so much life out of us as we lose in a few hours by Ahithophel the traitor, or Demas the apostate. Strife, also, and division, and slander, and foolish censures, have often laid holy men prostrate, and made them go “as with a sword in their bones.” Hard words wound some delicate minds very keenly. Many of the best of ministers, from the very spirituality of their character, are exceedingly sensitive—too sensitive for such a world as this. “A kick that scarce would move a horse would kill a sound divine.” By experience the soul is hardened to the rough blows which are inevitable in our warfare; but at first these things utterly stagger us, and send us to our homes wrapped in a horror of great darkness. The trials of a true minister are not few, and such as are caused by ungrateful p 176 professors are harder to bear than the coarsest attacks of avowed enemies. Let no man who looks for ease of mind and seeks the quietude of life enter the ministry; if he does so he will flee from it in disgust.

To the lot of few does it fall to pass through such a horror of great darkness as that which fell upon me after the deplorable accident at the Surrey Music Hall. I was pressed beyond measure and out of bounds with an enormous weight of misery. The tumult, the panic, the deaths, were day and night before me, and made life a burden. Then I sang in my sorrow—

“The tumult of my thoughts
Doth but increase my woe,
My spirit languisheth, my heart
Is desolate and low.”

From that dream of horror I was awakened in a moment by the gracious application to my soul of the text, "Him hath God the Father exalted." The fact that Jesus is still great, let his servants suffer as they may, piloted me back to calm reason and peace. Should so terrible a calamity overtake any of my brethren, let them both patiently hope and quietly wait for the salvation of God.

When troubles multiply, and discouragements follow each other in long succession, like Job's messengers, then, too, amid the perturbation of soul occasioned by evil tidings, despondency despoils the heart of all its peace. Constant dropping wears away stones, and the bravest minds feel the fret of repeated afflictions. If a scanty cupboard is rendered a severer trial by the sickness of a wife or the loss of a child, and if ungenerous remarks of hearers are followed by the opposition of deacons and the coolness of members, then, like Jacob, we are apt to cry, "All these things are against me." When David returned to Ziklag and found the city burned, goods stolen, wives carried off, and his troops ready to stone him, we read, "he encouraged himself in his God;" and well was it for him that he could do so, for he would then have fainted if he had not believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Accumulated distresses increase each other's weight; they play into each other's hands, and, like bands of robbers, ruthlessly destroy our comfort. Wave upon wave is severe work for the strongest swimmer. The place where two seas meet strains the most seaworthy keel. If there were a regulated pause between the buffetings of adversity, the spirit would stand prepared; but when they come suddenly and heavily, like the battering of great hailstones, the pilgrim may well be amazed. The last ounce [p 177](#) breaks the camel's back, and when that last ounce is laid upon us, what wonder if we for awhile are ready to give up the ghost!

This evil will also come upon us, we know not why, and then it is all the more difficult to drive it away. Causeless depression is not to be reasoned with, nor can David's harp charm it away by sweet discoursings. As well fight with the mist as with this shapeless, undefinable, yet all-beclouding hopelessness. One affords himself no pity when in this case, because it seems so unreasonable, and even sinful to be troubled without manifest cause; and yet troubled the man is, even in the very depths of his spirit. If those who laugh at such melancholy did but feel the grief of it for one hour, their laughter would be sobered into compassion. Resolution might, perhaps, shake it off, but where are we to find the resolution when the whole man is unstrung? The physician and the divine may unite their skill in such cases, and both find their hands full, and more than full. The iron bolt which so mysteriously fastens the door of hope and holds our spirits in gloomy prison, needs a heavenly hand to push it back; and when that hand is seen we cry with the apostle, "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." [2 Cor. 1:3, 4](#). It is the God of all consolation who can—

"With sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse our poor bosoms of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart."

Simon sinks till Jesus takes him by the hand. The devil within rends and tears the poor child till the word of authority commands him to come out of him. When we are ridden with horrible fears, and weighed down with an intolerable incubus, we need but the Sun of Righteousness to rise, and the evils generated of our darkness are driven away; but nothing short of this will chase away the nightmare of the soul. Timothy Rogers, the author of a treatise on Melancholy, and

Simon Browne, the writer of some remarkably sweet hymns, proved in their own cases how unavailing is the help of man if the Lord withdraw the light from the soul.

If it be enquired why the Valley of the Shadow of Death must so often be traversed by the servants of King Jesus, the answer is not far to find. All this is promotive of the Lord's mode of working, which is summed up in these words—"Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." Instruments shall be p 178 used, but their intrinsic weakness shall be clearly manifested; there shall be no division of the glory, no diminishing the honour due to the Great Worker. The man shall be emptied of self, and then filled with the Holy Ghost. In his own apprehension he shall be like a sere leaf driven of the tempest, and then shall be strengthened into a brazen wall against the enemies of truth. To hide pride from the worker is the great difficulty. Uninterrupted success and unfading joy in it would be more than our weak heads could bear. Our wine must needs be mixed with water, lest it turn our brains. My witness is, that those who are honoured of their Lord in public, have usually to endure a secret chastening, or to carry a peculiar cross, lest by any means they exalt themselves, and fall into the snare of the devil. How constantly the Lord calls Ezekiel "Son of man"! Amid his soarings into the superlative splendours, just when with eye undimmed he is strengthened to gaze into the excellent glory, the word "Son of man" falls on his ears, sobering the heart which else might have been intoxicated with the honour conferred upon it. Such humbling but salutary messages our depressions whisper in our ears; they tell us in a manner not to be mistaken that we are but men, frail, feeble, apt to faint.

By all the castings down of his servants God is glorified, for they are led to magnify him when again he sets them on their feet, and even while prostrate in the dust their faith yields him praise. They speak all the more sweetly of his faithfulness, and are the more firmly established in his love. Such mature men as some elderly preachers are, could scarcely have been produced if they had not been emptied from vessel to vessel, and made to see their own emptiness and the vanity of all things round about them. Glory be to God for the furnace, the hammer, and the file. Heaven shall be all the fuller of bliss because we have been filled with anguish here below, and earth shall be better tilled because of our training in the school of adversity.

The lesson of wisdom is, *be not dismayed by soul-trouble*. Count it no strange thing, but a part of ordinary ministerial experience. Should the power of depression be more than ordinary, think not that all is over with your usefulness. Cast not away your confidence, for it hath great recompense of reward. Even if the enemy's foot be on your neck, expect to rise and overthrow him. Cast the burden of the present, along with the sin of the past and the fear of the future, upon the Lord, who forsaketh not his saints. Live by the day—ay, by the p 179 hour. Put no trust in frames and feelings. Care more for a grain of faith than a ton of excitement. Trust in God alone, and lean not on the reeds of human help. Be not surprised when friends fail you: it is a failing world. Never count upon immutability in man: inconstancy you may reckon upon without fear of disappointment. The disciples of Jesus forsook him; be not amazed if your adherents wander away to other teachers: as they were not your all when with you, all is not gone from you with their departure. Serve God with all your might while the candle is burning, and then when it goes out for a season, you will have the less to regret. Be content to be nothing, for that is what you are. When your own emptiness is painfully forced upon your consciousness, chide yourself that you ever dreamed of being full, except in the Lord. Set small store by present rewards; be grateful for earnestness by the way, but look for the recompensing joy hereafter. Continue, with double earnestness to serve your Lord when no visible result is before you. Any simpleton can follow the narrow path in the light: faith's rare wisdom enables us to march on in the dark with

infallible accuracy, since she places her hand in that of her Great Guide. Between this and heaven there may be rougher weather yet, but it is all provided for by our covenant Head. In nothing let us be turned aside from the path which the divine call has urged us to pursue. Come fair or come foul, the pulpit is our watch-tower, and the ministry our warfare; be it ours, when we cannot see the face of our God, to trust under THE SHADOW OF HIS WINGS.