

THE LIFE OF PRIME.

Carrie Judd Montgomery.

THE PRAISE OF FAITH

THE keynote of my message this afternoon is found in II. Chron xx. 15.

“Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's.” That is a wonderfully good reason for not being afraid. If we would only stop oftener to think of the reason for courage and confidence we would never get fainthearted in the fight, would we? Jesus said to Jairus, “Fear not, only believe.” The Bible is full of commands and encouragements to cease from our timidity. Our hearts are easily panic stricken, but God tells us to be strong and very courageous. Here we have it again in the seventeenth verse, “Ye shall not need to fight in this battle; set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you.”) Fear not nor be dismayed, tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord will be

with you." This is the secret of strength, "The Lord with us," and the battle being His not ours, we have nothing to do but to set it in array the very best we can and then watch undismayed to see Him work out the victory from seeming defeat. When a great multitude of temptations and difficulties rise up against us, we are too apt to be deluded by the devil into looking at them, as Peter looked at the waves, instead of keeping our eyes on Jesus. We can only endure by seeing Him who is invisible, by looking "not at the things which are seen" but at those that are unseen and eternal!

When Elisha's young man beheld the hosts of Syria encompassing Dothan with horses and chariots, a mighty force sent out with special charge to capture the prophet, he said, "Alas, my master, what shall we do?" "Fear not," rings out the prophet's reply, "Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." "And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man" to behold things

invisible and eternal, "and behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire around about Elisha.")

Is the enemy encamped all round about you, leaving no loophole of escape from trouble? Lift your heads and rejoice! Your Redeemer is strong! You are weak, 'tis true, but what of that? Ye shall not need to fight in this battle! "Fear not; be not dismayed." Some of you have been fighting your own battles all the week instead of trusting them to Jehovah. Will you not yield the struggle and trust? "For' thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: In returning and rest shall ye be sayed, in quietness and confidence shall be your strength."

Isn't that easier than striving and struggling until you are exhausted soul and body, nerves on edge, and face shadowed with dark lines of care and pain and perplexity? "Look unto Me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth." Isn't that easier?

Set your battle in array, then stand

still and see the salvation of the Lord! Oh, when will we learn to cease from our own works and let Jesus do it all, that He may have all the glory?

“And all Judah fell before the Lord, worshipping the Lord.”

When God gives us in these days, such a command as that, to stand still and see His salvation, we do not always bow our heads in worship. Some of us are apt to talk back to Him. We say, “Surely Lord, this thing and that thing can’t take care of itself; I must worry it through somehow.” We feel as though we are very necessary and nothing is going to be done if we keep still. Of course, things can’t take care of themselves, but if you will only cast the care on Him, He will take care of them and of you too.

But instead of doing it we are always so full of reasons and arguments to justify ourselves. God knows what foolish creatures we are, wanting to reason every step of the way, so He accommodates Himself to our weakness, and reasons

with us, "Casting all your care upon Him, because He careth for you." What a sweet reason!

But some of us have got past that reasoning stage. (We have proved Him so often, and come by long intimacy to understand Him so well, that He does not need to give us any more reasons or explanations.) We need only the faintest intimation of His wishes to be ready to obey, and perfectly willing to trust Him to take care of the results.

After worshipping the Lord, Judah stood up to praise the Lord, praising Him by faith before their eyes had seen the victory, and they praised Him with a loud voice.

Early in the morning King Jehoshaphat leads out his army into the wilderness of Tekoa, where to all human foresight certain destruction awaited them, but he encouraged them with his own sublime faith: "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper."

And he appoints singers to the Lord there in the desert, in the face of a foe far superior to his army in numbers; singers to praise the beauty of holiness and to say, "Praise the Lord for His mercy endureth forever."

"Believe," "Only Believe." Some of you tell me you are so sick of hearing that word, "believe." You don't know how to believe. You don't understand what Christian teachers mean by faith, and you wish they would get some easier word. Well, I will give you an easier one, "Let go." It means just the same thing. Can you understand "Let go?" Drop into the mother arms of God, that are always outstretched to take you. As the eagle mother spreads her broad pinions below the nest to catch the young eaglets as they drop out and try to fly, so the wideness of God's mercy is pledged to catch you up, and to hold you, and keep you whenever you will let go of all these other things you are holding on to, and will trust Him alone and entirely.

I seem to see that little handful of an army marching out, shoulder to shoulder, to meet the mighty host of the enemy. What weapons of war will they use? Why they have but one, and that is "praise," victory by faith in God.

They put singers in front to sound God's praises aloud, as they march along. These very notes of victory begin to sow seeds of panic and fear in the enemy's hearts. Wonderful salvation of God! Who would not be willing to stand still from his own works to see it? His name shall be called Wonderful.

The singers were to praise the "Beauty of Holiness," that beauty which belongs only to the Holy One. Whatever of this beauty is seen in us, He puts there. It is only the shining out of the life He lives in us. Have you been trying to exhibit the Beauty of Holiness in your life and countenance, and have you found it a complete failure? And do you wonder why? It is just because brambles cannot bring forth grapes. But if you will die,

if you will let the Holy Ghost consume you to ashes, then He will give you "beauty for ashes, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, and you shall be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified."

You have tried so hard to be holy and you could not, but hear Him whisper, "I can." Take Jesus in your heart as the Overcomer, and praise Him by faith until you have manifest and complete victory.

One brother who was full of the joy of the Lord, said to another who was cast down, ("It is by the praise of faith that we overcome the enemy.") Now you say, 'Praise the Lord.' "I cannot say it until I feel it in my soul," replied the other. "Yes, you can say it by faith." So he said it very faintly and dejectedly, and sorrowfully, "Praise the Lord," (sigh). But the joyful brother made him say it again. And this time it was not quite so much like a dirge. Then the happy brother, pointing to a little hill close by, said, "Are you willing to follow my prescrip-

tion?" "Yes," said the other. "Very well, walk to the top of that hill, and say 'Praise the Lord,' every step of the way."/

He did so and by the time he got to the top he was shouting happy, and they sang the Lord's praises together!

Now, in the twenty-second verse we read, "And when they began to sing and to praise, / the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab and Mt. Seir, which were come against Judah and they were smitten." It was even when they began, when they raised their first notes of praise, that the Lord set ambushments against their enemies.) The Lord began to work as soon as they began to praise and not before! Oh, it is wonderful how Jesus can work when by faith we take the victory as already accomplished and begin to praise Him!

What happened for the deliverance of Jehoshaphat and his people? Why two of the allied armies began to fight the third, and when they had demolished

them they turned upon each other and destroyed one another until all the plain was filled with dead bodies and "none escaped."

God had told them they needed not to fight in that battle. They stood on His promise, and began to praise Him. As soon as you will do that, just so soon your enemies will begin to devour each other, one trouble eating up another trouble, until there is nothing left.

The twenty-fifth verse tells us that "They were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much." Beloved, God never lets a battle or a trial come into our lives but there are spoils with it. Never a real time of trial of faith but there are great riches at the end. Instead of being impoverished by them we get richer by every trial in which our faith shines out clearly and sings praises.

Oh, the idea of complaining when everything is working together for good to us. What ungrateful hearts we have not to praise Him more; His heart toward

us is so full of love He can give us nothing but blessing.

Twenty-sixth verse, "And on the fourth day they assembled themselves in the Valley of Berachah (that is blessing) for there they blessed the name of the Lord."

Every one of us can go into this valley of blessing each day, now. There is a highway to it, a new and living way through Jesus. We go down there in our selfishness, our weakness, our pride, our ingratitude, our carnal-mindedness, and worldliness, and there let Him crucify us to self and raise us again to newness of life in Him.

Twenty-eighth verse, "And they came to Jerusalem with psalteries and harps and trumpets into the house of the Lord."

In II. Chron. v. 13, 14, we read, "It came even to pass as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voices with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord,

saying, For He is good; for His mercy endureth forever, that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the House of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord had filled the House of God."

Why did that supreme glory come? Because of the unity of praise. A great blessing comes to any one soul who praises the Lord all alone; but when these little rivers of praise roll together they make a mighty flood. Then God can come in His Shekinah glory and flood the temple so that the priests cannot stand to minister any longer.

When that glory overpowers our praising soul, we realise that there is something even better than serving Him. It is blessed to serve our God, and to minister to Jesus in the person of His little ones, but even more blessed to have Him minister to us. Once in a while, and just as often as we can bear it, God comes into our souls with overpowering grace, say-

ing, "Come aside and rest awhile/ come into the Mount of Transfiguration with Me, the world shut out, and behold My glory." And the patient Jesus who has been with us all the long and weary day bearing our burdens and answering our prayers stands transfigured before us, the heavenly Bridegroom of our souls/ and we have nought to do but feast on His divine love.

By and by we shall have it all the time. We shall eat with Him and drink with Him and lie on His bosom and rest in His love. Even down here we ought not to be all the time ministering. It is our own blessed privilege to stop sometimes and go to praising Him until the glory comes down and fills our souls with a joy that no language can ever express.

Now, beloved, won't you obey God perfectly and then give the shout of faith whenever foes or trials assail you, and let Him win the battle and you gather the spoils? God bless you all for His dear name's sake. Amen.

THE SACRIFICE OF PRAISE

"Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare His works with rejoicing."
Ps. cvii. 22.

MY subject today is the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving, or of Praise, and we will turn to the Word and see what the Lord says to us about it. First of all, I will call your attention to two verses which the Lord has made full of meaning to my own heart. Deut. xxviii. 47, 48: "Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things, therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies, which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger and thirst and in nakedness and in want of all things." Now you notice that although the word praise or thanksgiving is not mentioned here, yet this is what is conveyed in the thought of serving the Lord with joyfulness and with gladness of heart for the abundance of

all things. And if they failed to serve the Lord in this manner, when He had provided all good things for them, He would be obliged to teach them a severe lesson and take these good things from them, bringing them into a place of hunger and thirst and want of all things. May the Holy Spirit search us today. Nearly all of us here are probably serving the Lord, but are we serving Him with that joy and gladness which He requires?) Are we joyful in all our service for the King, or do we let something prey upon our joy, thus taking away the secret source of divine strength? For the Word says, "The joy of the Lord is your strength." How can we be strong Christians if we are not filled with that "oil of gladness" which was shed upon the head of Jesus, and which He is willing to share with each believer in Him? We read that He was "anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows." and we in Christ, and living the Christ-life, must also be anointed with the same oil of gladness

through the power of the Holy Ghost. And by this kind of Heavenly joy we glorify Him. When we have in our hearts the secret well-spring of divine joy it will not fail to show in our faces, and to come forth from our lips in joyful testimony.

But think of the penalty if we do not serve Him with joyfulness! He will take away from us our blessings, the abundance of good things, in order to teach us to be thankful. Now, beloved, if we have had a murmuring, complaining spirit, let us beware. Let us remember the judgments which the Lord was compelled to send upon the Israelites when they murmured, and let us give that complaining spirit over to Jesus today that He may deliver us from it, and fill our hearts and mouth with His praise.

Now, when is the time to praise? Oh, you say, when everything is going right, and getting into shape, and the troubles of life are vanishing away, then is the time to praise. (Ah, praise comes easy then, but the time to glorify God the

most by praise is when it is the sacrifice of praise.) Not the praise which comes from seeing all things look right, but the praise which comes from simple faith in Jesus, even before the dark clouds have rolled away. Praise at such times is called "the sacrifice of thanksgiving," because it is a real sacrifice, like any other sacrifice which is hard from a natural standpoint, God makes it easy and blessed. Let us take an example from Acts xvi. 23, 26. We read in this passage that Paul and Silas had been cast into prison, after having received "many stripes." Those awful instruments of torture which were used for the stripes would actually plow furrows in their backs. Bleeding and sore they were cast into the inner prison, and their feet made fast in the stocks. Surely they were a picture of perfect misery, and you would not consider this a fit time to praise God. But these two disciples knew God, and trusted Him, and offered to Him the sacrifice of praise. "At midnight Paul and Silas

prayed, and sang praises unto God, and the prisoners heard them.”) And that praise of faith went straight up to glory, and entered into the ears of the Lord, and He sent a great earthquake, “so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed.”)

(I believe they might have prayed all night without having much of an earthquake, but when they took the attitude of deliverance and victory and began to praise the Lord, then came the great earthquake which set them all free.) Beloved, if in the time of your greatest trial you take the attitude of victory and praise the Lord for deliverance before you see it God will send some kind of an earthquake. He will shake things up, and will do something marvelous for you. The very foundations of the prison were shaken, and when you praise by faith the foundations of your prison house will also be shaken.)

—But we must remember that it is after

the obedience of faith that the shout of faith comes.) The hosts of Israel marched around Jericho just as the Lord commanded, and as many times as He commanded before they could shout in faith. And when your whole heart obeys God, then there will come into it the shout of victory through the might of Jehovah. It is not a shout which comes from our own natural heart, but it is wrought within us by the Holy Spirit, when we are fully yielded to Him.) This is the sacrifice of faith. The praise which comes by sight would have said, "O Lord, just make the walls totter a little or loosen a few stones so that we may really know Thou art going to do this mighty thing, and then we will shout Thy praise." But, that would not be faith at all. Lord, help us to have the real faith in Thee, and then we shall give the shout of victory because we cannot help it, and the walls of Jericho will fall, and Thou shalt be honored.) In II. Chron. xx. we read of the great company which came out against King Jehosha-

phat, and how "he set himself to seek the Lord." Then he gathers the people together to ask help of the Lord, and he makes this beautiful prayer, "For we have no might against this company . . . neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon Thee." Now you are thinking of some great trouble in your life, and you are saying, "O Lord, I have no might." Yes, God knows that. "Neither know we what to do." Yes, God knows your helplessness, but will you not do as Jehoshaphat did, get your eyes off from circumstances, and get them upon God?) Can you not say, "Our eyes are upon Thee?" Not upon circumstances, or this great company, but upon Thee. Then comes the answer from the Lord, "Be not afraid: the battle is not yours, but God's." If the battle were ours we would have cause to fear, but because it is God's we may just watch Him gain the victory. We can have our hearts full of song because He always conquers. "Ye shall not need to fight." Verse 17. Oh that we might learn

that. He is saying it to trembling hearts this morning. Will you not take the comfort of it, and "stand still and see the salvation of the Lord?"

Then the word came that they were to put all the singers in the forefront of the battle, and to go out against their enemies. They were to have no weapons except that of praise, and the singers in the front ranks were to sing, "Praise the Lord." in one united strain. That was a strange army, was it not? Have you arrayed yourself thus against the enemy? Is all of your being, the strength of your whole nature gathered together to say in the spirit, "Praise the Lord." Many a time I do not feel like saying it, I do not find it in my emotions, but deep in my spirit I offer the sacrifice of praise. I know no way of deliverance, but God knows, and my eyes are unto Him. I begin to praise Him and then there comes a rift through the dark clouds of difficulty and trouble.

"When they began to sing and to praise

the Lord set ambushments against the enemy." When they "began!" O beloved, let us begin praising Him if we have not begun before, and then He will begin to work wondrously in our lives. Many times the Lord cannot begin to work while we keep pleading and praying, but if we turn the current from prayer to praise He will make us more than conqueror over the difficulties in our path, way.

Now by the help of God will you decide to take the attitude of victory from this day forward, singing and praising until the battle is won, and there is a gathering of great spoil? Lord, fill us with a glorious, victorious faith which cannot help but shout before the walls fall.

THE GARMENT OF PRAISE

WE will take for our subject a Bible reading on Praise, and we will trust God to fill our hearts with praise and gratitude to Him at this Thanksgiving season.

We will take for our first text Ps. 1. 23, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God." This may be rendered, "Whoso sacrificeth thanksgiving glorifieth Me;" and so we see that we are to bring thanksgiving or praise to the Lord as an acceptable service before Him. Some of us have been longing to glorify the Lord, and have wished that we might do something great for the glory of His name, but here we see that the offering of praise glorifies Him, and even the smallest and weakest Christian among us may be able to glorify Him in this way. From the latter part of the

verse, it would seem that the ordering of our conversation aright is to praise the Lord all the time. Surely this is a right and blessed kind of conversation. If we are praising the Lord continually and talking about His wondrous works, we shall not be criticising our neighbor, or blaming some one, or grumbling about circumstances, because our tongues will be in better business. There is a promise here that if we order our conversation aright, we shall be shown God's salvation, and if we feel that we need deeper and higher salvation, let us begin to praise Him and God will reveal Himself to us more fully. This is such an easy way of glorifying our Lord and Master, shall we not praise Him more and more?

Psalm c. 4: "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name."

When we come to God for prayer and communion with Him, our entrance into His gates, or approach unto Him, should

be with thanksgiving. Even before we make known our requests, we ought to pour forth our hearts in praise as a fitting approach unto Him who has shown forth His mercy. In this same Psalm we are exhorted to praise the Lord because of the Lord's goodness and mercy. Circumstances may not be encouraging at the moment, and all may seem dark around us, but the fact still remains "that the Lord is good," and that "His mercy is everlasting." As we continue to wait upon Him with thanksgiving and supplication, He will reveal His enduring goodness and mercy in our lives. No matter how you feel, remember that a fitting approach to His courts is praise.

(Isa. lxi. 3). "To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness . . . That He might be glorified.") Some of us may be in heaviness this morning, but it is our privilege to exchange this spirit of heaviness for the

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garment of praise. How many want this new garment? We may have it if we will trust His Word, and this beautiful garment need not wear out from this Thanksgiving time to the next. The bitter springs are allowed to come into our lives, but the Lord will sweeten them all with His love and tenderness and joy. The Word tells us the joy of the Lord is our strength. How shall we be strong, dear ones, unless we are anointed with the "oil of gladness?" If we keep our eyes off from ourselves and from our circumstances and look at our merciful, loving Lord, we shall surely be clothed from head to foot with the garment of praise, and He shall be glorified.

(Jer. xxxiii. 11). "The voice of joy, and the voice of gladness; the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride; the voice of them that shall say, Praise the Lord of hosts; for the Lord is good, for His mercy endureth forever; and of them shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord." Here is a re-

markable expression, "the sacrifice of praise." What is a sacrifice? It is an offering to God that costs us something. What is a sacrifice of praise? It is to praise the Lord when we don't feel like it, and when it costs us something.) Praise Him the next time you are sorrowful. Begin praising the Lord by faith.) Offer praise as a sacrifice and see how the Lord will bless you in doing it. (We have this same expression in Heb. xiii. 15, "By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.") If we did not know what this expression was intended to mean in the other verse in Jeremiah, we are left without a doubt in this passage, for we are told that it is the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name. It is not enough to praise the Lord in our hearts alone, but we must praise Him with our lips so that the humble may hear and be glad.) How often are we to offer this sacrifice of praise? The Word says, "con-

tinually.) May the Lord so fill us with the spirit of praise that it shall continually ascend from our hearts as precious incense, acceptable through Jesus Christ.

(Acts xvi. 25). Here we read of Paul and Silas who had been thrown into prison for preaching Jesus. They had been placed in the inner prison and their feet had been made fast in the stocks. There in the dark dungeon, with backs all sore and bleeding from the stripes they had received, and with feet fastened in such a way as to place them in the most uncomfortable position, what did they do? Did they begin to murmur and say: "I never thought the Lord Jesus would allow such a thing to come to me. If such results come from my preaching, I am going to stop"? Perhaps some of us might have been faint-hearted enough to say that, but Paul and Silas did not. (They sang praises to God at midnight, and they sang so loud that the other prisoners heard them.) Then God sent a great earthquake which shook the foundations of

the prison and made all the doors fly open, and unfastened the chains that bound the prisoners. (If it is midnight in your experience begin to praise God and continue to praise Him through all the gloom which encircles you, and at last God will send some kind of an earthquake to set you free.

II. Chron. xx. 21: Here we read of Jehoshaphat, who was king over God's people, and a host of enemies came to fight against him. At first Jehoshaphat was greatly frightened, but he set himself to "seek the Lord and proclaimed a fast," and gathered all the people of God in a prayer and consecration meeting. God sent word through a prophet, "Ye shall not need to fight in this battle; set yourselves, stand ye still and see the salvation of the Lord with you." How do you think Jehoshaphat set his army? In the very front, "He appointed singers unto the Lord and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for

His mercy endureth forever.) What a strange battle they were to fight, without swords, or bows, or arrows, but only with the weapon of praise!) We do not read that the Lord began to deliver them until they began to praise Him, but "when they began to sing and to praise" (even at the beginning of thanksgiving), the Lord set ambushments against the enemy and they began to kill each other and none escaped. The dead bodies were covered with precious jewels and they found an abundance of riches with their dead enemies,) so that "they were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much." Thus we see that God's people were much richer at the end of this trial of faith than at the beginning. Likewise, when we have a trial of faith, and we praise the Lord and let Him fight the battle for us, we shall be much richer in our spiritual experience than at the beginning of the trial. Surely these people offered the sacrifice of praise, for they could not have felt very much like singing when they saw the

enemy drawn up in battle array with deadly weapons, waiting to seize an easy prey.) I doubt not that their hearts trembled, and perhaps their voices too, as they went forth singing, but they simply obeyed God and He gave the victory. If our hearts tremble, as we come into some new encounter with the enemy, still let us praise Him and say, "What time I am afraid I will trust in Thee."

II. Chron. v. 13, 14: "It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, For He is good; for His mercy endureth forever, that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God." This was after Solomon's temple was finished and they had brought the ark of the cov-

enant of the Lord into the most holy place; but the glory of God was not poured out until "the trumpeters and singers were as one" in praising God. (I believe if God's people were so united to be as one in their praise to God, His house would soon be filled with the Shekinah glory.) The trouble is that some one is out of tune; some one has a heart lacking in love, and which is not attuned to God's praise.) If each little assembly in Christ's name would wait upon God until they were united in heart and then would begin to praise God in the unity of the Spirit, I believe our hearts would be filled with His glory.]

Shall we not, this day, yield absolutely to Him, that our hearts may be taken possession of wholly by the blessed Spirit of God, who perfects His praise in and through us? Thus shall He be able to pour His glory upon us, so that sometimes even service shall be lost sight of in the joy of communion, and for the time being we shall not be able to minister unto Him,

but shall know unspeakable joy in His ministering to us. I believe the highest form of worship is that wonderful communion of which we have only a foretaste here, but of which we shall know the fullness bye and bye.

• Here on earth these times of unspeakable rapture do not last long, for we must come down from the mountain top, as did the disciples from the Mount of Transfiguration, to new scenes of suffering and to precious ministeries to the sinful and sorrowing; but we are better able to meet these calls because of having entered the the transfiguration glory on the mountain top with our Lord.

May every fresh revelation of God's glory in our souls only prepare us better for ministry in His name to the needy ones around us, and may our hearts and lives be so filled with praise that we shall not merely know one Thanksgiving Day in the year, but three hundred and sixty-five days of the year shall be thanksgiving days!

THE COURAGE OF FAITH

“But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.” I. Sam. xxx. 6.

It is in the Lord Himself that we must find encouragement. If we look at ourselves we are taking our eyes off from Jesus and that inward look brings naught but discouragement. We see ourselves with all our failures and defects. We look around at circumstances. They are usually not encouraging, but if for the moment they are full of hope, they may terribly disappoint us the next moment, for they are like shifting sand and cannot be depended upon. But if we encourage ourselves in the Lord, as David did, all will be well, for He never changes; “His mercy endureth forever.” All circumstances are subject to His control, and as we look to Him by faith He will cause all things, good or seeming evil, to work together for our best advantage. But it is while we keep our gaze steadfastly on

“the things which are not seen,” instead of “the things which are seen,” that our affliction “worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (II. Cor. iv. 17, 18).

The enemy knows that we shall be “more than conquerors” over every situation of trial if we thus keep our gaze turned away from the seen things to the unseen, so when we have started on this life of faith he will use all his arts to make us look at the temporal things instead of the eternal.) He will seek to make the temporal things seem the real, when, in fact, the eternal and unseen things of God are the real, and the things we see are as passing shadows. /

For example, we ask something from God in prayer. We have fulfilled all the conditions; / our heart condemns us not, and we ask according to His revealed will in His Word. According to that Word we believe that we receive when we pray / (Mark xi. 24), and now take an attitude of praise instead of further supplication.

(How often after such a step of faith surrounding circumstances seem to contradict more than ever the truth of God's Word.) Evidence in the things that are seen seems to pile up mountain high against the truth of the unseen things which we have claimed.) Instead of the peace we expected there is a terrific conflict.) This is not strange, for we have entered upon "the good fight of faith," spoken of in I. Tim. vi. 12, and well is it for us if we have the whole armor on. God has provided this armor that we may not be defeated, and He has given us the shield of faith / wherewith we shall be "able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Eph. vi. 16). Have you wondered that the temptations were so subtle and so fiery? God has already told you that they would be "fiery darts." And He has also told us not to think it strange concerning the fiery trial that is to try us. So the next time you find yourself saying, with almost a half murmur: "How strange!" remember that you must not

say it; you must not even think it, but God's command is to "rejoice," and to "count" these temptations "all joy." They do not seem joyful, but grievous, but we must side with God and see things from His standpoint, counting them all joy, and as we count them joy God will turn them into joy.!)

God has told us to add to our faith courage. How can we do this? By keeping the eye of faith steadfastly on the things not seen.!) This brings courage, because it does not permit us to be discouraged by the things we see.!) God gives a promise, based on a condition.!) We fulfil the condition which is our part of the covenant. / Is not God instantly faithful to His part of the covenant?!) You believe He is, but cannot see it.!) Now, which do you choose to believe, His Word or your human sight? "Let God be true and every man a liar." You can afford to seem like a liar to uphold God's faithfulness.)
 (You can afford to look upon your feelings and all adverse circumstances as so many

lies if they contradict God, for as you continue to believe God against all seemings, your feelings and circumstances will sooner or later be obliged to fall into line with God's truth. Hallelujah! "Deceivers, and yet true," said Paul, and this is our attitude as we stand with God and on His Word against all apparent contradiction. We have a God who "calleth those things which be not as though they were," and Abraham, the father of those who believe, was made "like unto God" in this respect. (See Romans iv. 17, margin). Thus may we who walk in the steps of Abraham call those things which be not as though they are, and this faith will move the very arm of Omnipotence, and it shall be done unto us according to our faith.

Let us ever bear in mind that all discouragement is from the enemy of our souls, and we must resist it in the name of Jesus as we would resist any other temptation. Many a time the enemy has thrust at us and wounded our souls through dis-

couragement, when he would have found no way to pierce between the joints of our armor had we not been ignorant of his devices.

David said: "I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord; be of good courage and He shall strengthen thine heart." He was kept from fainting and giving the battle over not because he saw deliverance, but because he "believed to see."

Let us believe to see God's goodness and if the blessing tarries let us "wait on the Lord" with "good courage" until He so strengthens our heart that there is not the least waver or tremble in our position of faith; then shall He pour upon us the fulfilment of all we have believed for; "yea, exceeding abundantly above" all we have known how to ask. Let us be "followers of them who through faith and patience" inherited the promises (Heb. vi. 12), and let us never be impatient over God's delays, for He waits that He may

be gracious, and through the very waiting time He is able to enrich and perfect the blessing which He longs to bestow upon us.)

SONGS OF DELIVERANCE

“**T**HOU shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance,” says the Psalmist, and this sweet assurance finds an echo in my heart, for I well remember when this very verse was verified in my own experience. I had been held a captive for over two years on a bed of pain, and worse than the physical pain was the agony I endured in my soul. I was crying out after a living God and I was like a hart panting for the water brooks, yet it seemed that no answer had come out of the thick darkness in which I was enveloped. “O God, reveal Thyself to me,” I cried again and again, but there was no voice nor answer. The days grew darker, the physical agony and weakness increased. The waters of Jordan rolled at my feet; I shrank back, for God seemed far away, like a stranger to me. I had sought Him but had not found Him, and my heart seemed bleeding to death with

its anguish. I dared not tell others my fears and doubts, but kept them all pent up in my own heart. My precious mother suffered with me in my intense physical pain, and her own soul was pressed with grief as she saw her third daughter fading away from life, as her other two had previously done, but at last, in the midst of the thick darkness, the words came to her like a silver thread of hope, "Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance." What did the sweet, strange message mean? What deliverance could there be? Was not all human hope gone, and must she not relinquish her darling child to the grave? But still the sweet message would follow her at every turn, and she could only wait for the Lord to reveal its meaning. Two or three dear friends were admitted to the silent room to take, as they supposed, a last look at the wasted sufferer. My whispered word to them was almost too faint to be heard at all. I looked in their eyes and saw the good-bye they dared not utter, for they

had been cautioned against showing any emotion. I felt the chill of death creeping over my body; nothing could warm me now. I experienced the strange mingling of the senses that so often precedes death. I was dying, I knew it, and still my soul seemed as keen and intense as ever and my longings for God were unutterable. I held on to life because I was not ready to meet God. I believed that I was His child, but I had never worked for Him, had never brought a soul to Christ. How could I appear before Him without a single sheaf to lay at His feet? Though I knew it not, He had been listening to my cries; He had been working to bring me to the end of myself and self-effort! He had only been hiding Himself that my whole soul might be drawn out in pursuit after Him, and then came the blessed moment of revelation when the "windows of heaven" were opened, the light of God streamed into my soul, the Holy Ghost became a living and blessed personality, and in that delightful mo-

ment of perfect faith it was an easy matter to ask and receive the healing of my body, I seemed, literally, to be made over in spirit, soul and body. I believe I know at least in a measure, how we shall feel on the resurrection morning. I rose in His strength, and ere long was able to go out into the glad sunshine. How brightly it shone! How new the old world looked! I called upon the very trees of the field to clap their hands and rejoice with me. I could say in the language of the little hymn:

Heaven above is softer blue,
Earth beneath is deeper green,
Something lives in every hue,
Christless eyes have never seen,
Birds with gladder songs o'erflow,
Flowers with sweeter beauty shine,
Since I know, as now I know,
I am His and He is mine.

It was blessed to be suddenly well again, to be healed by the power of the Lord, to feel His healing touch thrilling every nerve, to have the suffering spine soothed by His touch until it could ache

no more; to have the new force of life pulsing through every vein; but all this was small in comparison with the unspeakable joy that had taken possession of my soul. I said to my dear mother, "Oh, the glorious liberty of the children of God!" I had never known what liberty meant before. My soul rose "up on wings as eagles," and refused to ever be caged again. My dumb lips were unsealed and have been singing the "new song" ever since. I had been full of worldly ambitions before this blessed experience, but now I had only one aim, which was to dwell forever in the presence of my Beloved, to behold His beauty, and to inquire in His temple. My soul is indeed like a bird escaped from the snare of the fowler; the snare is broken and I am escaped, and now the great problem is, "How can my freed life ever praise and serve my great Deliverer enough?" Surely the days and months are all too short in which to preach the glad tidings of deliverance to other captive souls, but, by His

grace, I labor on, striving according to His mighty working in me.

Only as we know this great deliverance ourselves shall we know how to tell it forth to others. Woe to the soul that knows deliverance and does not seek after other lost ones. God says, "I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Him by faithful testimony, and earnest labor, we shall surely be entangled with the yoke of bondage again.

“BELIEVE THAT YE RECEIVE”

GOD is holding out to us marvelous blessings, which are all included in the supreme gift of His dear Son, but we are continually grieving Him by our lack of receptivity. It is shown by the Word of God that we possess already this quality of receptivity in our souls, and that we must exercise it if we are to come into possession of the wonderful blessings God has bestowed upon us in Christ. Failure to apprehend our true position on this line causes us much grief and disappointment; and far worse than this, we are grieving the heart of our loving heavenly Father. We read His promises, and pray that we may receive the fulfilment of them according to our need. We pray and wait; we wait and pray. Our prayers seem to be unheard and unanswered, and we grow heartsick and weary. What is the trouble? God has provided the gift in Christ, and is holding it

out to us all the day long. He says, "When ye pray, believe that ye receive" (or take, lit. translation). Mark xi. 24. What more can He do? He has given, and He is waiting for you to take. He would not tell you to receive or take if He had not already given you power to do this. In one sense our will has a great deal to do in the matter of exercising faith. The line of the old hymn, "I can and I will and I do believe," is right to the point, and on the line of God's Word. I can, because He would not tell me to do what I cannot; I will, because God has given me my will and expects me to exercise it in the direction of His truth; I do, because God's gifts are always ready for present-tense faith, and as now is God's accepted time, I will also make it my accepted time.

But, you object, I may be inclined to "take" from the Lord something which is not His will to give me, and which if received would prove a curse instead of a blessing. Let us go to the Word for

light on this important point. Read again Mark xi. 24: "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray," etc. What things are we to believe that we take when we pray? Listen to the answer: "What things soever ye desire." How precious to be a child of God and capable of being trusted to desire what is His will to give us, or rather, to have His Holy Spirit work in us His own desires. What a sweet intimation of His will in prayer to feel his own intense and holy desires springing up in our hearts, and all the time to feel perfectly without choice so far as our own natural inclinations are concerned. We have no desire, we ask His will, and then we feel His pure, intense desire beginning to have birth in our souls. I believe that we ought to see more clearly than we have done in the past that His will is often communicated to us by such heaven-born desires. And I do not mean only desires for spiritual blessings, but for all such other things as our Father knoweth that we

have need of. He will not only desire within us that we shall be filled with the Holy Spirit and all spiritual blessings in Christ, but He shall desire within us all such temporal good as we shall be enabled to make use of for the glory of Christ. And if we have a desire in prayer the source of which we are not perfectly sure of, we may ask that if it is of God it shall grow and intensify, and if it is not of God that the desire shall be entirely removed from us.

This thought of taking or appropriating faith is also brought out in the invitation in Revelation xxii. 17: "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." In the previous chapter it is written, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of water of life freely" (Revelation xxi. 6). "I will give;" here is the supply: "Let him take;" here is our responsibility to avail ourselves of the supply. The gift is ready. Do we will to take it? It is freely given, and He requires that we shall "take" freely. Surely

it is not our tender Father's will that we shall have a stinted portion of His bounty. It is unbelief which stints us and keeps us from the fulness of blessing which He is longing to pour upon us. Shall we grieve Him longer by refusing His gifts? Shall we not rather ask and receive (literally take), that our joy may be full? (John xvi. 24).

Again, we have the words of our Lord Jesus: "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink." If we thirst, if we feel a deep sense of need, and an inexpressible desire for the Holy Spirit, then Jesus invites us to come and drink. This thirst is in itself blessed, for it is wrought in us by God Himself, and He is waiting to satisfy it with living water. But the thirsty soul must drink. It must exercise the will, and by a decisive act of faith receive the living water so freely given. Then shall there be no lack, but rivers of living water shall flow forth from the innermost life. "But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him

should receive" (John vii. 39). I have been impressed lately with the thought of these rivers flowing from us. We drink by an effort, or act of faith, but when the waters flow from us it is a spontaneous free-outpouring without effort on our part. Oh, that the rivers of God's life and blessing might constantly flow through us as unobstructed channels for the salvation of others, and the refreshing of His heritage! What hinders? Only this, that we do not take, or drink, the ever-flowing waters.

There are many other texts which might be quoted on this line of truth. We will refer at present to only one more. "He breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive (literally take) ye the Holy Ghost" (John xx. 22). Here we have our Lord's direct command, and to this command, as to any others, there must be first the unqualified assent of our will. How many times in the face of God's commands we have hesitated and argued, pleading our own unworthiness and lack

of faith as a reason why we cannot obey the command to receive. But God will not accept such excuses. "His commands are His enablings." He has sent the Comforter. The Holy Spirit has been freely given. Will you not freely receive Him, dear thirsty one? Delay no longer. His accepted time is now, and this now in the original means the present instant of time, that tiny point of time which is just now here. Believe, receive, and praise Him. Resist the devil with his doubts and discouraging suggestions. Do not parley with him. Resist him when you hear his first word, and the Spirit of the Lord shall raise up a standard against him. I believe this is often why we lose the victory. After taking our stand of faith and receiving the promise in Christ's name, we dare to listen to Satan's insinuations. Resist, resist him, and he shall flee. Believe that you receive (literally take) and you shall have, and shall know the present and eternal blessedness of setting to your seal that God is true.

BELIEVING AND RECEIVING

LET us look at the 5th chapter of I. John, beginning at the ninth verse: "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness which He hath testified of His Son; He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar;) because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son.

I was seeking to lead a sister to Christ the other day; I talked to her about the necessity of yielding up all to Jesus, got her to the place where she said she would and did yield herself as a living sacrifice to Christ, thought it was all settled, and was astonished and grieved to hear her say shortly after that it was all dark in her soul, because, although she had given herself to Jesus, He had not accepted her. I told her that she made God a liar by not believing that He accepted her, when

she had met all His conditions. "He that believeth hath the witness in himself." It is absolutely necessary for us to believe that God accepts us when we come according to His will and way. He says, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." So when we come through the shed blood of Jesus, we must believe that according to His own Word He does not cast us out but immediately receives us. If we thus believe the record that God gave of His Son, we have the witness in our own hearts that we are saved. There may be some people here today who are refusing to believe God's record of His Son. I know that this meeting is usually on the line of the higher Christian life, but for some reason I feel distinctly led at this time to speak about salvation and about the necessity of appropriating Jesus by simple faith.) The trouble with this young lady was, that she watched her own heart for some wonderful emotion instead of believing God's Word.

Therefore, she got into awful darkness. This may be the trouble with some one here today. You have not believed that God has accepted you, because of His good Word of promise which cannot fail. Let us read the record in the next verse, and see what God requires you to believe. "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son."

Now, here is the simple record that God requires you to believe unless you would make Him a liar. Eternal life is a gift that cannot be earned by our prayers, or our faith, or our good works. This eternal life is vested in the great Gift, God's blessed Son. How this does simplify things! "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.")

If you have accepted Jesus as a gift, and accepted eternal life in and through Him, then you have eternal life abiding in you. I suppose that most of the dear friends here are Christians, but, undoubt-

edly there are some in our midst who do not belong to Christ. I look at you and you all seem to be alive, but God looks down and searches hearts with His eyes of flame, and sees two classes. One dead in trespasses and sins, and one alive in Jesus. If you have Jesus you have eternal life: if you have not Jesus you have no life at all, and you stand every moment in danger of eternal damnation. I care not what good works you have done, nor how generous and philanthropic you have been, if you have not Jesus abiding in you, you have not eternal life.

And just as we believe in Jesus for salvation we must believe in Him for sanctification. As you have taken Him simply at His word in order to be saved, so you must believe in Him for sanctification. You must not wait to feel the cleansing, but must believe that the blood of Jesus Christ does now cleanse you from all sin. (I. John i. 7). I find also in the matter of physical healing that I have to take the record in the same way. We read in Matt.

viii. 17, that "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." If Jesus healed those people who came to Him in such multitudes, in order to fulfil the prophecy in Isaiah that He had borne their sicknesses, then He will heal me because He has borne my sicknesses, for He is no respecter of persons. I have to believe the record and to say in faith, "Since Jesus bore my sicknesses on the Cross of Calvary, therefore I need not bear them, and I am healed." You will find that all of God's gifts are given to faith, and only to faith, and it is only as you realise that they are already yours through Jesus Christ that you can have them at all.

Beloved, do you believe that Jesus has borne your sins in His own body on the tree, and that He has borne them so far away from you that they may not only be forgiven, but rooted out of your heart? We read in the third chapter of I. John: "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not." Strong words! But they are God's words.

What are you going to do with them? Do you believe that Jesus is able to keep you from falling? Let Jesus reign in your heart, and He, the Sinless One, will continually live out His holiness in and through you. This blessing of sanctification is a most precious and definite work of grace in the heart, and it is necessary that we should testify definitely to this blessing if we want to abide in such a precious experience. With the heart we believe, and with the mouth we confess, as in every other blessing.) If you are not willing to confess that Jesus Christ has saved you, you have not got salvation, or have so little that it will all leak away. When you get sanctified you must confess it as definitely as you confess salvation. People have come to me in great sorrow, saying, "I used to have the blessing of sanctification, but I have lost it." And when we probe deep to find the reason, we find very often that it is because of failure to testify.

And it is the same with divine healing.

If people are not willing to testify to the healing power of the Great Physician, they are very apt to lose their health again. Also, I would warn you not to wait for certain feelings or emotions before you testify to the work which God has wrought in your heart or in your body. "Faith is the evidence of things not seen," and if we really believe God's Word we shall not be afraid to stand upon it, and to tell all the world of its truth. Are you not willing to believe absolutely God's Word, and to count it worth more than any fitting emotion? You must first stand upon God's truth, and God's Holy Spirit will then come and witness to that truth. God will give you plenty of feeling sooner or later, but He first requires you to stand upon His naked Word.

Let us look at the next verse in this passage: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." That ye

may know, not think so, with some degree of certainty, not guess so, or hope so, but that ye may *know* that ye may have eternal life. How many here know this beyond the possibility of a doubt? You may all know today by believing God's record of His Son. And when we are assured of our salvation, we get confidence and power in prayer (verses 14 and 15). "And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will He heareth us; and if we know that He hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him." Praise God! That is a big bank note for us today of priceless value. This check is unlimited. I can put the figures in myself, and I can put them in to the extent of heaven's fulness, if only I have the faith to do it. How rich this makes me feel! I may ask whatever I will, but, oh, how sweet to realise that as we abide in Him, we desire only His will, and that we are not in the least danger of asking anything that He would

not like to give us. As we wait upon Him, He creates in us His own prayer and then works in us His own faith.) I am so glad that we do not have to ask according to our own feeble understanding, but that “we have the mind of Christ,” and He thinks so much greater thoughts of blessings for us than ever it would be possible for us to think for ourselves.) How He surprises us with His bounty! Not half the kingdom, but the whole of it. “Fear not, little flock, it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom, will you not please Him by accepting it? (verse 18) “We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.” This book of I. John is full of the word “know.” Here we have another precious word about sanctification. Why is it that, as Dr. Carradine says, so many sinners get saved when he is preaching about sanctification? Because sinners readily see the consistency of such a life.

So many have been stumbled because they have seen the inconsistent walk of those who call themselves by the name of Christ. It is absolutely necessary, if we would glorify God, for us to take the provision of His holiness that He has wrought for us in Jesus Christ. It does not glorify God for you to give a sweet testimony in a prayer meeting and then go home and be disagreeable and irritable to those around you. Unbelievers would soon say, "I would not like to be such a Christian as you. I would rather be none at all."

But when they see your life lived out as an epistle of Jesus Christ, when they see you always patient, always lovable and gentle, then there is a reality in your Christian life that makes other people irresistibly drawn by the cords of Jesus' love right to His very heart. O beloved, will you not trust Jesus to guard you round about with the armor of His holiness and perfect love? The chapter closes with these words: "Little children, keep

yourselves from idols." That is, keep yourselves from everything and from everyone that you could possibly love or prefer before God. Let Jesus have the first place. Let Him reign in your will and affections and you will know His holiness. You will know what it is to sweetly abide in Him, to have His continual comfort and blessing, and to be yourself a blessing to everyone around you.

"ONLY BELIEVE"

TRUE faith counts on God, and believes before it sees. In Mark (xi. 24) we are commanded to believe that we receive when we pray. Naturally we want to have some evidence that our petition is granted before we believe, but when we walk by faith we need no other evidence than God's Word. He has spoken, and according to our faith it shall be done unto us. We shall see because we have believed, and this faith sustains us in the most trying places, when everything around us seems to contradict God's Word.

The Psalmist says, "I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living" (Ps. xxvii. 13). He did not see as yet the Lord's answer to his prayers, but "be believed to see," and this kept him from fainting.

If we have the faith that believes to see, it will keep us, likewise, from growing

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faint and discouraged. We shall "laugh at impossibilities," we shall watch with delight to see how God is going to open up a path through the Red Sea when there is no human way out of our difficulties. It is just in such places of severe testing that our faith grows and strengthens. We ask God to increase our faith. We are not prepared for the answer which comes, in the shape of increased difficulties, until, like Paul, we sometimes feel we are "pressed out of measure, beyond strength, insomuch that we despair even of life" (II. Cor. i. 8). The mountains rise before us, the seas roar, and we are brought into straits we never dreamed of. We see no way of escape; human resources avail nothing; and there, with no visible help on the right hand or left, we learn to look up, to lift our eyes to the God who made heaven and earth, and who can move all adverse conditions to our help.

In Psalm xviii. we have such a beautiful picture of the way God's compassion is moved upon at our cry. The Psalmist

tells us (verses 4 and 5) of the "sorrows of death" and "the floods of ungodly men" which made him "afraid." Then he says, "In my distress I cried unto my God; He heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry came before Him, even into His ears." Now, what happens when He hears that cry of distress from His little one? O, how His heart is moved! "Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken because He was wroth . . . He bowed the heavens also and came down." Then follows a description of the majesty and swiftness of His approach toward His distressed one: "And He rode upon a cherub and did fly; yea, He did fly upon the wings of the wind." We read of the thunder, hailstones, lightning, and coals of fire with which He "discomfited" His enemies. Then the result: "He sent from above, He took me, He drew me out of many waters.) He delivered me from my strong enemy. He brought me forth also into a large place; He delivered me

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because He delighted in me.” How can we doubt His love? He is watching us in the hard places. He will not allow a trial too many; He will only let the dross be consumed, and then He will come gloriously to our help. Even now your cry has entered into His ears, and He is preparing to deliver you. His compassion longs to set you free; His love will delight in your deliverance, for He is more tender than any earthly parent. Do not grieve Him by doubting His love. Listen to His words to Daniel: “From the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard; yet there had been a delay of three weeks, while the enemy had sought to hinder the angel of the Lord from making his way to Daniel’s help.”

You have been waiting upon God, dear troubled one, during long nights and weary days, and have perhaps feared you were forgotten. Nay, lift up your head, and begin to praise Him even now for

the deliverance which is on its way to you. From "the first day" that ye began to humble yourself at His feet, and to call upon Him, He took notice of your prayer, and has been preparing you to receive a gracious answer.

If your all is on God's altar, and your petition is in accordance with God's revealed will in His Word, you may "believe that you receive" when you pray. Seek the help of the Holy Spirit in prayer and He will pray within you "the effectual fervent prayer" that "availeth much." And it often avails much more than we have even asked or thought, so that we are abundantly rewarded for the delay which has tried our faith. God "calleth those things which be not as though they were," and Abraham was made "like unto Him whom he believed" (Romans iv. 17, margin) in this respect. And as we learn to "walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham," we too shall be able to call those things which be not as though they were. Turning resolutely away from

what we see to contradict our faith, we shall believe, because we are looking at the things not seen (II. Cor. iv. 18), the real, eternal truths of our unchangeable, covenant-keeping God.

So shall we receive according to our faith, and glorify Him as the Hearer and Answerer of prayer.

A LIFE ON WINGS

“**A**ND I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! For then would I fly away and be at rest.”

This plaintive cry is from the lips of King David, the sweet singer of Israel, and we find it recorded in the 55th Psalm, 6th verse. The two previous verses describe his heart-sorrow and unrest. “My heart is sore pained within me; and the terrors of death are fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me.”

In the midst of this sad experience comes the desire for a better life, a higher life, a holier life than he had ever yet known. With great pathos and longing he then cries, “Oh, that I had wings like a dove!” “I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest.” This cry of David voices the longing of unsatisfied souls in all ages, and even today, in this dispensa-

tion of the Holy Spirit, you will still find here and there, among all denominations of Christians, this cry uttered by sorrowing and yearning souls. They belong to Christ, and yet there is a divided heart. Somewhat of self is left, and consequently there is unrest. Because they are not entirely anchored in God, they are oppressed and perplexed by care and anxiety, they bear their own burdens instead of casting them upon the Lord, and their souls become so weary and sorrowful that they long to fly away—away—into the wilderness and be at rest.

Beloved, are you thus longing to fly away? It is the blessed Spirit of God putting that desire into your heart. But He knows that earthly wings would not do you any good. You could not fly far enough with them to get away from your troubles. (Your own heart, with all its aches and burdens, would still be with you, though you would fly to the farthest bounds of the world, or take refuge in the uttermost parts of the sea.) It is the

Holy Ghost who is making you cry out for spiritual wings that shall lift you out of yourself, and above all the cares and sorrows of the crawling existence you have hitherto known. The blessed Spirit has the wings all ready for you, and He will teach you how to use them. There is a wonderful description of this wing life in Deut. xxxii. 11. What a picture is this of the eagle, and it is true to life. When the little eaglets will not fly, when they shrink back from the yawning precipice, and refuse to use their wings, then the mother eagle "stirreth up her nest." She knows that the nest is too cramped, and the young eagles have no room to grow. A minister was an eye witness to such a scene as is described here. He had climbed to a neighboring mountain craig, and he saw the mother eagle, with her strong beak, tear in pieces the nest in which the little ones had reposed so long. Then, one by one, she pushed them off the craig, balancing herself beneath them to catch them as they fell. She "spread-

eth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings," and the Word adds, applying the illustration to Jacob, "So the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him. He made him ride on the high places of the earth.")

Dear ones, is this the way that God has been dealing with you? Has He been tearing up your nest, breaking up that reposeful place which you had made for yourself, and in which you expected to stay all your life? He wants to force you out of that poor, narrow nest which was cramping your wings that He may teach you to fly abroad through the clear, sweet atmosphere of His unbounded grace, singing His praise. Fear not to venture on God, for the Everlasting Arms are underneath you, and shall bear you up as on eagle's pinions. The little eaglet can fall nowhere except upon its mother's wings. Beloved, can you not trust your Father's love? Do not look at the black gulf which yawns below you, but consider

the strength of the Everlasting Arms which are ready to catch you if you falter or fall. Then use your wings bravely, mount up and soar onward and sunward, higher and still higher, for it is God's promise to you, "They shall mount up on wings as eagles." May God give the wonderful peace and joy of this wing-life to each of you! (He gave it to me some time ago, and I have never lost the comfort of its blessed reality.) He taught me to mount up by simple faith. He taught me that I must reckon myself dead indeed to sin and alive to God, and as I reckoned this to be true, on the authority of God's word, He made the reckonings of faith real to me. He came to live within me and to live out through me His own purity, so that I got free from the old self-life by mounting up on the wings of His holiness. (But I wanted not only purity but power.) There is a baptism of the Holy Spirit's power which can make the feeblest human instrumentalities filled with heavenly dynamite, and I longed for

it. I had been so useless all the past years of my Christian life, never testifying for Him, and not leading one soul to Christ, but, oh, when I surrendered to God in absolute consecration, He filled me in overflowing measure with His Spirit of power. When the heart is so full it must run over, and mine has been running over in testimony ever since.

Beloved, have you these eagle wings? Have you waited on the Lord with a perfect consecration and an earnest expectation of receiving them? Are you dead, and is your "life hid with Christ in God?" Can you say, "Not I but Christ liveth in me?" If you live no longer, and Christ alone lives in you, He will meet and overcome temptation for you at every point. As long as the self-life continues, I shall yield more or less to doubt and sin, but with self crucified, and Jesus reigning, my Strong Deliverer repels every foe. May God search your hearts by the Holy Ghost. You know whether this experience is true of you or not. You may rise

in a meeting and give a happy testimony, but you know whether this is your testimony all the day long. You know in your own consciousness whether or not you are soaring on wings above all your daily cares. Even after my sins were forgiven I used to fret and worry. I used to believe that some things worked together for my good, but now I know that all things do. The lives of some Christians are filled with regrets and remorse, but in this wonderful wing-life there can be no regret. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God." We trust Him to lead us, and believe He does lead us, and therefore we need never look backward with regret.

X God will take away from your heart all selfishness, and you will not think so much about getting joy in your heart as to give joy to the heart of Jesus. You will seek not your own honor, but His honor. You are not your own. You are espoused to Christ, and if you belong to Him entirely, you will never take your-

self back again long enough to give yourself to Him over again. Will you not this very moment yield yourself unreservedly to Christ, determined by His grace nevermore to live the old life, and never to lose your wings?!

PRAYING AND NOT FAINTING

“And He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.” Luke xviii. 1.

THIS sounds so tender and sweet, doesn't it? The dear Lord knows how apt we are to “faint in the day of adversity,” and so He gives us a parable to this very end, that when the answers to prayer seem delayed, and the troubles grow thicker and blacker, we are to keep on praying and believing and “not to faint.” The very time when the enemy tries hardest to make us faint, is when we have prayed and watched and waited, and the Lord has not seemed to hear our cry at all. I have no doubt that some one who will read these lines feels just this very temptation today, and it is to you, dear one, that Jesus speaks in this parable, to the end that you may not faint. You know the story so well, but

let us review it together, and may the Holy Spirit make the application of its tender truth to your weary, wavering heart.

The judge was a godless, heartless, cruel man. The one who plead with him for justice was a poor widow helpless and alone. "He would not for awhile." We can imagine the anxious watching and waiting, the eager longing and expectancy of this poor woman as day after day passed by and still the delay. But afterward he said, "Though I fear not God, nor regard man, yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me." Out of purely selfish considerations, lest he should be wearied by her constant visits, in order to get rid of her, he grants the poor widow's plea.

Now, dear one, this parable is one of strong contrast. "Hear what the unjust judge saith," but our God is the righteous Judge, and shall He not "avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto

Him?" This unjust judge says, "This widow troubleth me." But our blessed Father, God, never counts it a trouble to have us come to Him, but invites us in hundreds of different ways, in tenderest strains of love, to come unto Him, to cast our burden upon Him, to cast all our care upon Him, because He careth for us.) The unjust judge answers tardily and unwillingly, it is said of the righteous Judge, "I tell you that He will avenge them speedily." *Prayer God Aug 1906*

"But," you answer, "He has not answered speedily in my case. I have prayed and waited and watched for many a year, and still the answer has not come." Dear one, is there not a ray of light in the words, "Though He bear long with them?" Has He not had to bear long with your unbelief, because in your heart you have not really understood His character? You have thought in your secret heart that He was a little like that unjust judge who had to be importuned and wearied into answering your peti-

tion. Have you not been taking your position as a poor "widow," alone and defenseless, instead of coming up to your privileges as the Bride of the King, knowing that all things are yours because you are Christ's? He has had to bear long with you because of all this, and yet as soon as you let Him conquer all these difficulties, the answer shall come "speedily." But praise God that He has been willing to bear with us through all our slowness of heart to believe. Praise Him that He has kept us from fainting, and has enabled us to pray in a lesser degree of faith even before we could reach up to the high altitude of victorious faith described in Mark xi. 24: "~~What things so ever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.~~"

It seems somewhat remarkable that right in the midst of penning this article news should be brought me which comes as a most beautiful and wonderful answer to prayer, and which has been delayed for nearly three years.

In April, 1894, I was led after prayer to make definite claim of faith, standing on the promise in Mark xi. 24, and believing that I then and there received, for the Lord's own glory and for the furthering of His cause and kingdom, this request made in His name. The trial of faith in the matter has been long, but the Lord has kept me from fainting, and has beautifully sustained my faith when tempted to waver. I have the little paper now before me, and in addition to the first date of April 29, '94, when it was drawn up and signed on my knees, it bears two other dates. On each of these, viz., October 30, 1895, and August 6, 1896, I have written, "Still trusting." And now, today, the manifest answer to that petition is at hand, and I praise Him with joyful lips, but I believe that my praise of faith during these three long years of waiting has perhaps glorified Him more than any praise I can offer today.)

Has your hope been deferred, dear child of God, and is your heart sick and faint?)

(Fear not.) He who fainteth not, neither is weary, doth give power to the faint, and He will empower you to trust Him with renewed confidence as you lean your whole weight upon His might and love.)

The Psalmist says, "I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living" (Psalm xxvii. 13). Many people are trying to see in order to believe. This is reversing God's order, and will cause them to faint and to lose heart. But the Psalmist gives, as a reason for not fainting, that he "believed to see," that is, he believes first and expects to see afterwards.

Let us no longer grieve His loving heart by limiting the Holy One of Israel, but let us pray and believe and restfully expect from the Lord, and "not faint." †

GREAT FAITH AND LITTLE FAITH

IN God's Word we have examples given us of great faith and of little faith.

Let us consider some of these passages and not the characteristics of little faith and of great faith.

In Matt. xiv. 31, we read that our Lord said to Peter, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" It would seem at first like a great wave of faith to leave the comparative safety of the little boat to walk out upon the tempestuous waves of the stormy sea. But Jesus called Peter's faith a "little faith." Why was this? (Because "when he saw the wind boisterous he was afraid.") Little faith takes its eye off from Jesus to look at circumstances. Little faith trembles if circumstances seem unfavorable. (Little faith has an element of doubt mixed with it.) Little faith may make a good beginning, but does not hold out, and, there-

fore, in the midst of its walk on the sea begins to sink.

But, however weak Peter's faith was, it is noticeable that "he walked on the water to go to Jesus." That walk on the stormy sea had Jesus as its goal. Over stormy waves and through turbulent winds, Peter aimed "to go to Jesus." And the dear Master knew this well, so when He saw Peter's little faith giving out, and heard his cry of distress, He was quickly at his side, holding him up in His strong, tender grasp (So, dear timid one of little faith, if in your stormy walk your one aim is "to go to Jesus" and to realise the fulness of His power and love, be assured He will not fail you.) He will bear with the little faith until it has increased to the great faith which pleases and honors Him.

How comforting is the thought that at Peter's cry of fear the Lord ("immediately stretched forth His hand and caught him,") and this too before He asked the question, "O thou of little faith, where-

fore didst thou doubt?" When we cry to Jesus, even in fear and partial distrust, He is immediately near us to help and reassure. The question asked of Peter remains in the Word an unanswered one. Evidently Peter made no reply, except with the other disciples to worship Him as the Son of God. Surely what reason could there be for doubting with the Sovereign of wind and wave so close at hand? But Peter had failed to catch the inspiration of the Saviour's words uttered just before, "It is I; be not afraid," and so he had disobeyed the tender command, and had been afraid after all. Oh, how dull of spiritual vision are we who, like Peter, apprehend the power of surrounding circumstances more than we do the power of the Son of God!) But the day came at last when, by the infilling of the Holy Spirit, Peter's "little faith" was changed into "great faith," and he could bid the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the temple to arise and walk in the name of Him whose strong uphold-

ing he had experienced in the tossing wave. (Beloved, press on through doubts and fears until the inspiration of the blessed Spirit, through your fully surrendered will, shall work a mighty faith which shall command the mountains to be removed for His glory.)

In Matt. viii. 26, we again hear Jesus saying, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" The "great tempest" had suddenly arisen on the sea, so that the ship was covered with the waves, but Jesus was asleep. The terrified disciples awoke Him with the cry, "Lord, save us; we perish." In the majesty of His almightiness the Master "arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm." Oh, the unspeakable calm which comes to tempest-tossed souls when Jesus arises to deliver, and His voice is heard quieting the adverse circumstances which threaten to overwhelm! But in the midst of such a calm how often we have wondered with shame and sorrow why we have been so fearful and why our faith has been so

small. In this lesson we see again that fear is a sign of little faith.

In Matt. xvi. 8, Jesus says to His disciples, "O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves?" Here we see that another accompaniment of little faith is reason. Great faith does not reason things out.) It blindly follows the Lord; that is, it obeys God without regard to consequences.) Perfect faith does not judge after the sight of the eyes nor the hearing of the ears. (It fears not, doubts not, and reasons not.) It has, however, one supreme reason for its course of action; that is, God has spoken. When God's Word is contradicted by all that appeals to natural sight and sense, still faith wavers not. It deliberately refuses to believe contradictory circumstances and depends alone on God's unchanging Word.

In Luke xii. 28, little faith is again referred to in these words: "If then God so clothe the grass, which is today in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven;

how much more will He clothe you, O ye of little faith?" Then is added the admonition, not to be occupied in seeking after things to eat and drink, because our Father knoweth that we have need of these things. The words, "Neither be ye of doubtful mind," are translated in the margin, "Live not in careful suspense."

X Little faith is full of suspense and anxiety in regard to temporal as well as spiritual things. Great faith is always perfectly restful, dropping all anxious care "because He careth." Great faith seeks first the kingdom of God and His righteousness in every thought and move, and therefore it finds all necessary things added. It is a delight to watch the sweet providence of God in directing and shaping our temporal affairs while we are occupied with the matters pertaining to His kingdom.

During all trials of faith and seeming losses, He provides for each need at just the right moment, and in such a way as shows His blessed hand most clearly. He

keeps before us a continual revelation of His watch-care over us, and keeps us, in the sweetest ways possible, in touch with His never-failing love.

There are two notable cases of great faith recorded in the Gospels, one is the centurion's faith and the other that of the Canaanitish woman. From these let us see the characteristics of great faith. See Luke vii. 2-9. (Great faith is always humble.) The elders of the Jews had told Jesus that the centurion was "worthy," for he "loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue." But when Jesus was near the house, the centurion sent friends to Him saying that he was neither worthy to come to Jesus nor to have Him come under his roof. Great faith always takes this position, "I am not worthy," but it bases its plea on the great foundation, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." (Rev. v. 12.) The centurion's faith was so great that it did not demand any sign or wonder, not even the visible presence of Jesus, but he said, "Speak the word only,

and my servant shall be healed." How sad it is that when the word of promise has been so abundantly spoken unto us, our faith is so small that we are ever requiring signs and wonders before we will believe.

We get the same lesson of humility as an element of great faith in the story of the Canaanitish woman. (Matt. xv. 22-28.) She took, without hesitation, the lowly place of a little dog under the table, willing to pick up the crumbs which the children wasted, but because of her humility and faith the Master said to her, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Thus she had given her not merely the crumbs, but a whole loaf of "the children's bread." Her great faith is also shown in her refusal to take any denial and in her persistency when He "answered her not a word." How many times when we have heard no answer to our urgent cries, we have gone away discouraged and uncomforted, while if we had refused to depart, even when other disciples would have

pressed us back, we would have secured an abundant blessing. The woman's great faith is further shown in the fact that when He did answer her with a seeming denial, she came and "worshipped Him." ~~X~~
How precious is this spirit of loving submission. She would worship Him any way as her Lord and her King even though He should continue to deny her request. This is always a necessary accompaniment to true faith, the worshipful surrender which loves the Lord Himself more than any of His gifts, and this very spirit gives us an insight into the heart of love which encourages us to draw nearer and to urge our plea. X

Beloved, let us press closer, in persistency, in full surrender, in worship, in the faith that stands on the Word only, and in the humility that makes the worthiness of Jesus Himself our only plea. Then shall we hear Him saying unto us, "And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John xiv. 13).

THE DESIRES OF THINE HEART

IN Mark xi. 24, we read, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them."

This promise, made by our blessed Lord, is so boundless in its grace, so unlimited in its rich provision, that weak faith often staggers before it. We feel like saying, "Can it be possible that God means just what this verse says?" Can He be willing to grant me all my heart's desire, and to give me liberty to believe that I receive whatever I desire when I pray? I am only a frail human being. How can He trust me to have right desires, so that He can thus fulfil them all?" These questionings have undoubtedly gone through all of our hearts at one time or another. Let us take up this question of our desires and see from God's Word what conditions must first be fulfilled be-

fore we can fully comprehend and realise our blessed privileges as set forth in Mark xi. 24.

In Ps. xxxvii. 4, we read, "Delight thyself also in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart."

Here again we are promised that our heart's desires shall be granted, but there is a condition preceding the promise, viz., to delight ourselves in the Lord. Now, it is one thing to delight in the Lord's mercy and in His gifts, and it is entirely another thing to delight ourselves in the Lord Himself in the possible absence of all His gifts. The bride who with true heart has given herself to her beloved is sure to receive from him many gifts of love, but her heart is not set upon these.

If her delight is not unselfishly set upon the bridegroom himself, he will not consider her worthy of his love or his gifts; but because she loves him for himself alone, it is his delight to shower his gifts upon her. This illustration may perhaps serve to make more clear the meaning

of the text. Delighting ourselves in the Lord alone,) our hearts are purified and our desires are His own desires within us. In the self life human desires are strong, and in the past we have often erred greatly in desiring what would only have brought us distress had those desires been granted. (We read in Psalm cvi. 15, "He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul.") It is a terrible thing to persevere so wilfully in having our own desires that God will at last grant them to our spiritual hurt.) It is recorded in Psalm lxxxi. 12, "So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust (or desire) and they walked in their own counsels." Nothing could be more terrible than to be thus given up by God to the desires and counsels of our fleshly nature.) In the death to self these desires are taken away,) and a new set of heavenly desires are given us by the Spirit of God.) In a perfectly yielded life we have often noticed that self desires are so purged out of us that in praying about a mat-

ter we find no particular desire within our souls except the longing cry, "Thy will be done." This is most blessed, and many souls stop at this point, believing that they have arrived at the state of submission and faith most acceptable to the Lord. There is a command, however, in Eph. v. 17, "Be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." From these words it would seem that after we have been emptied of all self desire, we must open our heart to be definitely filled with Christ's own desires, that we may thus understand His will in each matter, and have His own intercession poured through us by the Holy Ghost.)

I do not know that I can make this point as clear to my readers as it has recently been made to my own soul. The new light which has been given to me by the Lord upon this subject has been very blessed. Let each reader seek the Spirit's teaching, that he may not fail to know His highest will right at this im-

portant point. / It seems to me that it is not the highest place to be so passive as to know no definite desire in prayer, but this is a necessary stepping-stone to the "fervent, effectual prayer," which is wrought in us by the Holy Spirit. Have you been brought to a place of lowliness and submission, where "Thy will be done" seems the only desirable expression of prayer? Then press on to have that will made clear, that you may know what Christ is longing for, and His own longing shall take possession of your heart. Then there will be new meaning to the words, (What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.) Having no longer any doubt about the will of God in each matter of prayer, you will be able to press your claim boldly, and to "believe that you take" (lit. translation) whatsoever ye desire. The same thoughts are brought out in I. John v. 14, 15, "If we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us! And if we know that He

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hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him."

Notice again, God's order in prayer: first, emptied of all our own desires, then filled with Christ's desire, thus being filled with boldness to claim the fulfilment of these Spirit-born desires, and to "know that we have the petitions we desired" by an assurance of faith before we see or feel the answer. This is solid ground in prayer, and we shall be thus kept from wavering during any trial of faith which may follow.) In fact, there is joy and wonderful glory in a trial of faith when we have the perfect confidence that we are already more than conquerors, and we are able to smile at Satan's vain attempts to overthrow our faith. "He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him" (Ps. cxlv. 19). And as "King Solomon gave unto the Queen of Sheba all her desire/ whatsoever she asked, besides that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty" (I. Kings x. 13), so a "greater

than Solomon") is our King,) and His "royal bounty") shall so far exceed what we ask or think as to make us constantly amazed and delighted with His goodness.)

Only bow in sweet submission at His feet,) acknowledging Him as your King of kings, and He will teach you the secret of faith, the blessedness of prevailing in prayer for His own glory.)

COMFORT AND DELIVER- ANCE

WE will take our lesson today from the first chapter of Second Corinthians.

“Blessed be God, even 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.”

I find so many people seeking for comfort. (They say it is the comfort of the Holy Ghost they want, yet many of them are seeking it for selfish purposes.) They desire to be comforted of God—not that they may become ministers of comfort in their turn, but so that they may have a good time, and be free from pain and trouble, and be at ease in Zion.)

Dear ones, if you really desire the comfort of the Holy Ghost, and communion with the Father, in order that you may

use it as Jesus used it, it is for you, and those that seek shall find, but if you get this heavenly comfort, it will cause you to reach out in all directions to comfort others with the same comfort wherewith you have been comforted. You will not wait for opportunities, you will go where the opportunities are, among the halt and lame, the sick and the blind, as Jesus did, and you will learn this remarkable fact, that as you impart your comfort it increases. The law of giving differs from all other mathematics. The more you spend the more you have. Gifts of grace multiply by division.

“Is your cruse of comfort failing? Rise and share it with another.”)

“Scanty fare for one is a royal feast for two,”) in God’s arithmetic. When you find yourself growing comfortless, go quickly and share what you have left with some one who has less than you, and you shall return with your own cup running over.)

It is very necessary to our growth in grace that every mite of comfort we get,

and every new thing we learn of God's Spirit should be passed on to others.) Sometimes in studying God's Word, I get a wonderful new ray of light.' The very next opportunity I tell it to some one else, and the more I tell it, the more its circle of light enlarges till its arch is like a rainbow, and it glows with the very light of the throne./

"But," you say, "I have no gift of language; I don't know how to talk it out." But God is able to enrich you in utterance as well as in anything else. If He could give me utterance, He certainly can give it to you. I was utterly dumb in regard to the things of God, but after the blessing got too big for my heart, I had to talk! Ask Jesus to fill your little earthen vessel/so full it will be compelled to run over./

Verses 8 to 10: "For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure/above strength,) insomuch that we despaired even of life."

“But we had the sentence of death in ourselves,¹ that we should not trust in ourselves,¹ but in God which raiseth the dead: /

“Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver,¹ in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us.”¹

May the Lord by His Holy Spirit give you as much comfort out of these three verses as He has given me. This Word says that Paul was “pressed,” and the pressure was so great he could not measure it. Only the Crucified Hand could measure Paul’s trouble. But He who suffered even unto death Himself was watching, with His measuring scale in hand, ready to make the way of escape before the trial should become too grievous to be borne. Some of you have been going through just such a pressure. God knows what it is. Your trial might not be a trial to another, but it weighs you down “above strength.” “Beloved, think it not strange concerning this fiery trial which cometh upon you to prove you (as the Re-

vised Version reads), but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that at the revelation of His glory ye may rejoice with exceeding joy!"

We have been through all these pressing processes in which we "despaired even of life." I remember a good many in my life, especially during my long illness. It was not only the terrible pain, but the crushing sense of helplessness, and thought of the dear ones who suffered so much with me.

Two years and two months I lay in that agony, but in looking back upon it now, how I thank God for the pressing process! A great deal of self had to be pressed out of me before I was ready to receive the "life more abundantly." The pressure seemed above strength and out of measure, and I despaired even of life.) All human resources failed; we had the sentence of death in ourselves.) I was not only suffering unutterable anguish in my body, but clouds of doubts and fears were rolling over my spirit.) I had sought and

struggled long for the full assurance of faith in Christ, and finally came to the conclusion that I was different from other people, and the blessing was not for me; that I was so stony-hearted it was not possible for God to work in my heart to His glory, and give me peace and joy and victory. I was sure I must be the wrong kind of material, and I could discover nothing but the "sentence (or answer) of death" in myself. But God which "raiseth the dead" delivered my soul, and filled me with peace and victory, and also healed my body as by a miracle, in answer to the prayer of faith. The God of Paul is able to deliver you from "so great a death," no matter what your trial may be. !

Will you not rest in Him today and realise that you have nothing to do in this battle but to keep still—keep still and trust in God which raiseth the dead, who "delivered" and "doth deliver," and will "yet deliver." !

As fast as you die to your own works

and your own resources and your confidence in yourself, just so fast you will be raised to newness of life. Christ will give you "beauty for ashes," and "the oil of joy for mourning."

God will let everything fail in which you have trusted, especially all your own natural goodness. People who have always been amiable frequently pride themselves upon it, and God has to teach them that all they count good in themselves has to die the same as all that they count vile. Nothing, nothing at all of the natural heart will be accepted of God, none of your natural gifts or attainments or graces. Christ must be all, that in all things He may have the pre-eminence.

Cain brought a gift of the fruits of the ground to the Lord, but on them was no blood-shedding, no acknowledgement of the necessity of atonement, and God rejected Cain's offerings, and accepted Abel's which was offered in recognition of and faith in the "Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world."

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God showed me He would never use anyone for His glory until all their natural gifts had died.) All has to pass under the blood-shedding, and Jesus then resurrects it as He will, to His own glory! "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God" (II. Cor. iii., 5).

Are you willing not to think a thought unless God thinks it in you? Although we may be willing to own our deficiency on all other lines it is hard to admit that we are incapable of doing our own thinking and planning, but God tells us not to lean to our own understanding, but to acknowledge Him in all our ways.

Even when it seems as though the way you had committed to God had gone completely wrong, still rest and trust. Soon you will see the manifestation of your blessed Lord's working.) If Jesus leads, you cannot go astray, and "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

If we depend on Jesus for His heavenly

wisdom, it will defeat all the worldly-wise counsel of Ahithopel. / "That we should not trust in ourselves;" / will you say this the next time the devil tells you to trust in your own wisdom, or your own prayers, or your own faith? Say, "I have the answer of death in myself, but I will trust in God who raiseth the dead." Say, "I will die, Lord, entirely, and never have any more life unless Thou dost raise me up and put it in me by Thy own mighty power which raised Jesus from the dead."

/ "Who delivered us from so great a death." / When Paul was willing to die he was delivered. / Three deliverances, of the past, of the present, and of the future. Deliverances all along the way.) He who has delivered thee in six troubles will allow no evil to touch you in the seventh. / Can't you trust Him now in the swellings of Jordan?)

Here I'll raise my Ebenezer,
 Hither by Thy help I'm come;
 And I know by Thy good pleasure,
 I shall safely reach my home.

Praise God there are Ebenezer altars all along the way, and every evening as we pitch the tent, we can say, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped me"

People sometimes say to me, "Oh, if God had raised me up from my dying bed as He has you, I would never doubt again!" Yes, you would—your heart would be mean enough to doubt Him the very next time unless He continually kept you by His grace.) Our hearts are so hardened we remember not His miracles unless they are kept tender by the constant influx of His love.) It is not the miracles that bind our faith, it is Jesus! He works a constant miracle to do it. Have I abundant faith? It was not because I was raised up from death, but because I have Jesus all the way along abiding in me to be my faith.) If you will take Him as your life, you will have a wonderful experience of what He is able to do in all emergencies.) He will surprise you all the time with His miracle-working power, above all that you are able to ask or even

to think. / Although the blessing of one time is exceedingly abundant, the next blessing will mark a higher flood of glory, and so the tide keeps rising, and will rise to all eternity. /

/ How many will say "Amen" today to all His promises and come and take of the Water of Life freely? Not according to your deserts, but "according to His riches in glory." / "Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it."

VICTORY THROUGH DEFEAT

I WILL tell you what gave me the keynote for this Bible reading this morning. It was a little sentence. It was a little sentence that I heard Mr. Montgomery read, that "God gets His greatest victories out of apparent defeats." Very often the enemy seems to triumph for a little, and God lets it be so, but then He comes in and upsets all the work of the enemy, overthrows the apparent victory, and, as the Bible says: "Turns the way of the wicked upside down." Thus He gives a great deal larger victory than we would have known if He had not allowed the enemy seemingly to triumph in the first place. We will look into the Word of God for illustrations of this truth. Turn to the third chapter of Daniel. This story is familiar to you. Here was an apparent victory of the enemy! You remember that Nebuchadnezzar the king, had made a great image of gold, and he com-

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manded that all the people should worship the image,¹ and his decree was that all the people who did not bow down to worship the image should be cast into a fiery furnace.

You remember also that there were three men who served God with all their hearts and they would not obey this command, and, therefore, Nebuchadnezzar was very angry. He had these three men brought before him and asked them if it were true that they dared disobey his command. These three brave men of faith answered, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. (If it be so, our God whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But, if not, be it known unto thee, O king, we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." We read that Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury and commanded that the furnace should be heated seven times hotter.¹ Things looked

pretty dark for these three men. Then he commanded the most mighty men in his army to bind them and cast them into the furnace, and the fire was so hot that the very men who cast them into the furnace were burned up by the flames, and these three Hebrew children fell down bound in the midst of the burning fiery furnace. It looked as if the servants of the living God were going to have a terrible defeat, and their enemies watched to see them burn up in that awful fire. We have all been in places where it seemed as though we were defeated and the enemy rejoiced, and we can imagine what a complete defeat this looked to be. They fell down in the flames, and Nebuchadnezzar watched them and began to be very much astonished, so that he could not trust his own memory, and he asked his counselors, "Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" And they said, "True, O king." "Well, but what is this? I see four men. I see them loose and walking about. They are not

bound either, but are walking around in the fire, and they seem to be enjoying themselves, and the form of the fourth is like unto the Son of God.) Even poor heathen Nebuchadnezzar had it revealed unto him that this was the Son of God.) And so we may fall down in the fiery furnace of affliction, but the fire will only burn the bands that hold us captive, and we shall rise to newness of life. And even the worldly people gazing upon us shall behold that the Lord our God is with us, and that when we walk through the fire "the flames shall not kindle upon us." Praise God for trouble, for suffering, and affliction, because in all these things He makes us more than conquerors through Him that loved us. Well, they remained in the fire until Nebuchadnezzar called them out of it. When I was telling this story to my little girl one day, she asked me, "Don't you think they were sorry when they had to come out, because Jesus was there with them?" They were having a blessed time, communing with

their Lord! I have no doubt but that the atmosphere around them was the atmosphere of heaven, pure and cool and refreshing.!

Nebuchadnezzar told them to come forth, and when they "came forth out of the midst of the fire" their enemies saw that their hair was not even singed, "neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them."

Nebuchadnezzar was so affected by the power of the Lord that he said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent His angel and delivered His servants that trusted in Him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies that they might not serve nor worship any god except their own God." And then he sent forth a decree that every nation or people that spoke anything against the God of these three men should be cut in pieces, "because there is no other god that can deliver after this sort."

God's power ("changed the king's

word.”¹ The word goes forth from the kings of the earth and from those who have the power in this land to harm the children of God,¹ but God changes that word because they trust in Him and have determined not to serve any god but their own God.¹ This apparent defeat resulted in a marvelous victory.¹ Suppose that these three men had lost their faith and courage and had complained, saying, “Why did not God keep us out of the furnace?”¹ They would have been burned, and God would not have been glorified.¹

We read in the sixth chapter of Daniel that Daniel had found favor in the king’s sight, and that they could find no fault with him “except they found it against him concerning the law of his God.” Oh, that people could not find any fault with us except that we served God too faithfully!¹ Then the governors and princes “consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever should ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days,¹ except from

the king, should be cast into a den of lions. / And they took the decree to the king and he signed it. Now when Daniel heard it, do you think he said, "Well, I can pray in my closet and not let those people know that I am praying to God today; I will be circumspect and cautious?" No; he dared to show his colors. His enemies came and found him "praying and making supplication before His God."

/ Therefore they accused him before the king, who "was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him." / He was reminded, however, by his princes that the law of the Medes and Persians could not be changed, and Daniel's fate was sealed. King Darius had one ray of hope left, and he said unto Daniel, "Thy God whom thou servest continually, He will deliver thee." /

Apparently the enemies of the Lord had triumphed, and it seemed like a tremendous defeat to His cause, but as we have seen before God gets His greatest victories out of what seem like the great-

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est failures, and it was so in this case. Daniel must have had a night, not of anxiety and trouble, but of great joy, for his testimony the next morning was, "My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths that they have not hurt me." With the companionship of that bright visitor from heaven, how blessed must have been that night of testing! His deliverance was because of his overcoming faith, for we read, "No manner of hurt was found upon him because he believed in his God." The king was "exceeding glad," and he commanded that Daniel's accusers should be cast into the den of lions, and then he wrote a decree that in all his kingdom men should "tremble and fear before the God of Daniel;" "for He is the living God," "He delivereth, and rescueth, and worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth." Oh, shall we not learn the lesson that in all the hard places God brings us into, He is making opportunities for us to exercise such faith in Him as will bring about

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blessed results and greatly glorify His name?'

Let us turn to the book of Esther for still another illustration of this same truth. You remember this history of Queen Esther, and how Haman was plotting for the downfall of Mordecai and the destruction of the whole Jewish people. One night the king could not sleep, and "he commanded to bring him the book of records of the chronicles, and they were read before the king." It was written that Mordecai had saved the king's life when two of his chamberlains had sought to lay hands on him, and the king said, "What honor and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this?" They answered that no reward had been given him. Haman came in at that moment intending to ask permission to hang Mordecai, but the king asked him, "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor?" Haman thought that it must be himself whom the king wanted to honor, so he planned a very great thing. He advised

that the royal apparel be brought that the king used to wear, and the king's crown be set upon his head, and that he ride through the city on the king's horse, a noble prince leading him, and proclaiming, "This is the man whom the king delighteth to honor.")

How frightened and humiliated was Haman when he found that it was Mordecai whom the king desired to honor!

The king acted on his suggestion, and moreover appointed Haman to be the prince who should lead him in triumph through the city.

When Queen Esther knew the plot against the Jews, and how the king had been persuaded by Haman to sign a writing for the destruction of her people, she risked her life and went before the king without being called, saying, "If I perish, I perish." God gave her favor in his eyes, so that he held out the golden scepter to her and said he would grant her request unto the half of his kingdom. God changed the defeat of His people into a mighty

victory, for when the king learned of Haman's wickedness, he commanded that Haman should be hanged on the gallows that he had erected for Mordecai. But Mordecai went out of the king's presence in royal apparel, and with a crown of gold on his head. The writing of the king could not be changed, but another writing was sent throughout all the provinces, permitting the Jews "to stand for their life," and to destroy all who tried to hurt them. "And many of the people of the land became Jews, for the fear of the Jews fell upon them." In the ninth chapter, first verse, we read that when the time came that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have power over them, "it was turned to the contrary, and the Jews had rule over them that hated them." In the third verse we see that instead of the rulers hurting them they helped them, "because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them." The Jews had rest and quietness and honor in the land such as they had never had before. In the fourteenth verse

we read that their sorrow was turned into joy! and they feasted and sent "portions one to another, and gifts to the poor."

What a mighty victory out of what seemed at first a terrible defeat! So God turns our sorrow into joy; He takes the very trial and makes use of it to bring about great results for our good, and His glory.)

(Shall we not be more trustful and patient when we do not immediately understand His plans for us? /

Now look at Numbers xxiii: Balak, the king of Moab, had hired Balaam to curse the children of Israel. / But God rebuked Balaam, / and the dumb beast upon which he was riding perceived the angel that stood in the way, and spoke to Balaam.

God permitted Balaam to go, but said:

"Only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak." / Instead of

cursing the children of Israel, Balaam began to bless them. Balak was horrified,

and said: "What has thou done unto me?"

(I took thee to curse mine enemies, and behold thou hast blessed them all together."

Then Balak brought him to another place, and wanted Balaam to try again. Balaam's answer was, "Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel." The heathen king took him to a third place to see if he would not have better results in cursing them there, but Balaam pronounced a greater blessing than ever, so that Balak was very angry. After the second trial Balak had said to Balaam,

"Neither curse them at all nor bless them at all." When Balak failed to have the curse brought about, he wanted that at least they should have no blessing, but it is not God's way to neutralise a curse upon His people, but to overcome it altogether, so that we receive blessing for cursing. In Deut. xxiii. 5 it is recorded,

"Nevertheless the Lord thy God would not hearken unto Balaam, but the Lord thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto them because the Lord thy God loved them." God can take the curse and the venom that the devil has in his heart

against you, and that he is trying to work out in your life, and change it into the most glorious victory, if you will but trust Him. When Satan sees that God turns his evil work into blessing in our lives, undoubtedly he is sorry that he tried to curse us, and he would like to say to the Lord, "I will take it all back; don't bless them, and don't curse them; just leave them alone." But God has given us that wonderful promise in Rom. viii. 28, and as long as that word stands, evil will not be neutralised to God's children, but made to "work together for good."

Some one has said that apparently the greatest defeat in this universe was the defeat of Calvary, when the blessed Son of God was crucified by His enemies. The two disciples on their way to Emmaus were very sad as they "communed together and reasoned," and they said to Jesus, not knowing it was their risen Lord, "We trusted that it had been He who should have redeemed Israel." But out

of that ignominious death and defeat of Calvary came the resurrection of the Son of God, and through that death and resurrection, eternal life to all who will accept Him.

If there is a great trial and defeat in your life today, beloved, do not own it as defeat, but continue, by faith, to claim the victory through Him who is able to make you more than a conqueror. At one time of great testing in my life, the enemy put to me the question, "How long will you believe that the victory is yours?" And in the face of all the difficulty I said, "I will believe all the days of my life, even though I should never see any human evidence of victory." With that God-given faith, which would not quail before the taunts or lies of the devil, a glorious victory was soon apparent.

Beloved, trust Him to turn the curse into a blessing for His glory. Amen

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HEARKENING DILIGENTLY

THE thought has been coming to me with ever-increasing force of late, that God wants the careful attention of His children that they may hearken diligently to His voice, and thus know His will and do it. I find that many dear ones are anxious to do God's will, but they are often in doubt about what that will is, and instead of waiting upon Him long enough to find it out, they run hither and thither and make sad mistakes and bring much confusion and trouble into their own lives, as well as failing to glorify God.)

There are very many passages in the Word of God in which He calls upon us to hearken to His voice, and many times also He laments the fact that His people will not hearken and thus miss the good which He had intended to shower upon them.

From the many texts upon this import-

ant subject, I have selected a few which I trust will bring both warning and comfort to my readers, and I hope they will afterwards take Bible and Concordance in hand and study the many other passages on hearkening which they will find for themselves.)

In I. Sam. xv. 22, we read, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry."

The story is familiar to us all, how King Saul failed to hearken and obey, when sent to destroy the Amalekites and their possessions, and how he preserved ("the best of the sheep and of the oxen" to sacrifice unto the Lord.) Ah, how many times God's children try to excuse their failure to hearken and obey under the pretext of doing something gracious for the Lord's cause and kingdom, while all the time they are displeasing Him by going their own ways instead of His. For this one act of disobedience Saul's king-

dom was rent from him, and can we fail to hearken and obey without suffering great loss, spiritually at least?

In Isa. xlvi. 18, we hear the sad complaint of "the Holy One of Israel," "O that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments, then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea."

Do we need peace, beloved, deep peace, broad and full and glorious as a mighty river? Then let us hearken to Christ until we are so well acquainted with His voice that we shall not miss a single whisper. Are we saddened over our sins and failures and do we need that righteousness which shall break in great billows upon our longing souls? Then let us hearken diligently to His commandments, with our ears closed to the tumult of earth, and giving all our attention to His Word and His Spirit. He longs, dear one, that you shall have this rich experience, for He says again in Ps. lxxxi. 8, "O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto Me,"

there shall no strange god be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god.”¹ And again there is the wail of disappointed love, “But My people would not hearken to My voice, and Israel would none of Me; so I gave them up unto their own hearts’ lusts, and they walked in their own counsels. / Oh, that My people had hearkened unto Me, and Israel had walked in My ways! ²I should soon have subdued their enemies and turned My hand against their adversaries.” (Ps. lxxxi. 11-14.) Does this sound as though God wanted you to have a hard time? Does it not sound rather like a tender mother grieving because her children are determined to go their own way, against her counsel, and thus suffer the hardships she would willingly have saved them from? ³Is this not tender, wonderful language from the God of Love? He says if they had only hearkened He would soon have subdued their enemies. ⁴ Have you failed in the past to hearken, beloved, and is this the cause of the long delay in an-

swered prayer, when it seems as though the Lord does not hear your cry or care any more? For there are very solemn words recorded in Zech vii. 11, *But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law / . . . Therefore it is come to pass that as He cried, and they would not hear, so they cried and I would not hear, saith the Lord of Hosts.”)

This is a picture of very great obstinacy and unfaithfulness, which I trust none of us have been guilty of, but even if some dear reader believes this to be a picture of his own heart, he can even yet find mercy from our all-pitiful Lord.) For there is the greatest comfort to be found II. Chron. xxxiii. 10-13.

Manasseh and his people “would not hearken,” and so God was obliged to send great trouble upon the King, and he was carried away into Babylon. But we read

that "when he was in affliction he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers and prayed unto Him; and He was intreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord He was God." Praise God for His abundant mercy! He will always meet and bless the contrite soul which humbles itself greatly under His correction.

It is most interesting and profitable to note how many times the word "hearken" occurs in the Bible in connection with the subject of divine healing for the body.

In Ex. xv. 26, where God gave the covenant of healing to His ancient people, the conditions of healing are to hearken diligently and to obey. Also in Deut. vii. 12, the mercies (including healing; see verse 15) which follow were to be given "if ye hearken to these judgments and keep and do them." In Lev. xxvi. we see the judgments pronounced upon those

who fail to hearken, and in Deut. xxviii. we have a long list of blessings for those who "hearken diligently," and a still longer list of curses (including many kinds of sickness) which would come upon those who failed to hearken. This diligent hearkening implies far more than the heedless attention which a careless child often gives its mother, and which causes many a mistake and the errand to be done unfaithfully. It implies that closest, all-absorbing attention which we give the objects of our dearest love, when to know and obey their wishes is the sweetest thing to our hearts; or it means the intense listening, with bated breath, for the sound of a well-known and expected footstep. Oh, that we might thus listen for the voice of our beloved Lord; that our hearts might be so filled with love that His commands should no longer fall upon careless and inattentive ears. Not merely the hearkening given by servants to their masters, but the loving attitude of the faithful and devoted bride as she lis-

tens to every accent of her beloved bridegroom.

Silence our hearts, O Thou blessed Saviour, shut out all the other voices that are in the world, and do Thou by Thy Spirit's power gain our fixed and unwavering attention. Then shall we hear Thee always, and always do the things that please Thee, and we shall hear Thy sweet voice saying, "Hearken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness."