**BROOKS BY THE TRAVELLER'S WAY - ADDRESSES BY JOHN H. JOWETT**

**10. NO FAILING! NO FORSAKING! by JOHN H. JOWETT**

*"For He Himself hath said He will in no wise fail thee, nor will I in any wise forsake thee, so that with good courage we say the Lord is my Helper, I will not fear; what shall man do unto me?"*

*Hebrews 13:5,6*

"He hath said I will in no wise fail thee," "so that with good courage we say, I will not fear." What a beautiful antiphony! The evangel of the Father awakens the song of the children. Life moves to gladsome music when we appreciate the content of the eternal promise. We walk like kings and queens when we recognise the dignity of our companionship. When the terror goes out of the heart, the uncertainty goes out of the steps, and life marches to the stately measures of bright and triumphant strains. "He hath said" ... "So that we say." Our speech takes its measures from His speech. Our house is built upon the foundation of the divine word. It ought to be a roomy house, for God's promise is very rich and plenteous, and "His commandment is exceeding broad." Let our meditations gather round about both the speeches--the gracious evangel of the Father, and the joyful response of the children.

"I will in no wise fail thee." "I will not wax feeble towards thee when thy difficulties grow mighty. Thy resources shall not run out in the day of stress and strain. I will not fail thee when life approaches some supreme and severe demand." Such appears to be a little of the wealth of the gracious word. The promise proclaims that the crisis shall not find us impoverished. I was recently travelling in an electric car up one of the steep streets of a town in the West Riding, and when we had reached the middle of the ascent the power suddenly failed, and we stuck fast with half the height still to be climbed. This may provide us with a figure by which we may enter into the heart of the promise of God. Power is never to fail us on "the Hill Difficulty." The moment of supreme test is to be the moment of supreme revelation. The most trying conditions of life are to be the seasons when the Father will most be glorified. And so the promise appears to me to have reference to two different classes of conditions through which every soul has to pass. It has reference to the sharp emergency, and to the prolonged monotony.

He will not fail us in the sudden emergency. The rope will not snap at the unexpected tension. The great disappointment shall not destroy our steadfastness. The receipt of bad news shall not extinguish our valour. A sudden bereavement shall not break our hearts. Our resources will be sufficient. The staying power will remain. We shall "stand it well," for "the Lord will in no wise fail us."

He will not fail in the prolonged monotony. Perhaps the test of monotony is more severe than the test of an emergency. Perhaps the long pull tends more to exhaustion than some tremendous but momentary strain. In a cycle journey which I took recently from Oxford to London, I found the latter half of the journey far more trying than the earlier part. The earlier part of the road was full of changes, now climbing, now descending; the latter part was one long, dead, monotonous level. Along the monotonous level I missed the freshening breeze, the expansive outlook, the rest which is born of change. The limbs were apt to tire, the same muscles being unceasingly exercised. The uneven road brought more muscles into play, or changed the posture of the limbs, and out of the variety there came strength. Life which has to trudge along the dead level is in fearful peril of exhaustion. "Because they have no changes they fear not God." When my difficulty faces me daily through many years, or when my pain becomes chronic, or when my anxiety respecting the prodigal child is perpetuated through half my life, I need the presence of rich and most nutritious resources. It is in these dead monotonies that Christ reveals the glory of His power. He can bring blessedness even into drudgery, and the long, long lane, which seems to have never a turning, may become the very "Highway of the Lord." In the stress of startling crises, and in the prolonged strain of a standing trouble, our Father will in no wise fail us.

"Neither will I in any way forsake thee." This adds an emphasis to the preceding word. The Lord will not desert us; He will not leave us behind. He will not drop us when we grow old and are worn out. Our war correspondents tell us very frequently of worn-out horses, which are left upon the line of march to die. Our God will not so forsake His children. The worn-out life He rather "carries in His bosom." "In Thy manifold mercies Thou forsakedst me not." "When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." The frail, the easily-spent are the peculiar care of the Almighty God.

How easily we forsake one another! The lure of gain will make us forsake our friend. The garland of the world draws us into alienation. "Demas hath forsaken Me, having loved this present evil world." The vision of peril will drive a man to forsake his brother. He fears the persecutor, so he takes the way of ease. He turns with alarm from the valley of shadows, and abides in the green pastures. "At my first defence no one took my part; they all forsook me." How beautiful it is when a man stands close by his exhausted brother, and permits no offer of gain or threat of pain to take him away. There is no more beautiful characteristic of a noble man than that which is attributed to Onesiphorus by the Apostle Paul:--"He was not ashamed of my chain." The Apostle's captivity only drew his comrade into closer and more affectionate bonds. His chains were the ministers of a deeper spiritual wedlock. This is the abiding attachment referred to in the text, only in an infinitely exalted degree. The Lord is never repelled by our need; rather is it our need by which He is enticed. "I will in no wise forsake thee."

Now let us look at the children. If they have apprehended the Father's evangel, if the music of His word is in their hearts, if they appreciate the strength of the promise, what will be the issue in their life?

"With good courage we may say, the Lord is my Helper." Mark their fine, inspiring, confident conception of God. "My Helper." The word is suggestive of one who runs with succour at the hearing of a cry. It is the act of a mother, who, perhaps amid much clamour, hears the faint cry of her child in the chamber above, and who runs to bestow expressions of love and of comfort. "His ears are open unto their cry."

What wonderful examples we have of "The Helper" in the New Testament Scriptures! The cry of an aching heart always brought succour from the Helper. The Syro-Phoenician woman came with a breaking heart, and falling at His feet, she cried, "Lord, help me!" and the Helper gave of His resources, and gave abundantly. "Oh, woman, be it unto Thee even as Thou wilt." But perhaps a still more suggestive instance is to be found in the story of the father who brought to the Lord his son, who was afflicted with a dumb spirit. Twice does the father ask for help, and twice the help was given. He prayed that they might be helped in their tragic trouble, and he prayed that he might be helped in his wavering unbelief. The Lord heard both the heart-cries, and the needed succour was given. The Lord can hear cries that never pierce the human ear. There is no sigh so low as to escape His hearing, The faintest breath of an aspiration sounds like thunder in the ears of the King. "He inclined unto me, and heard my cry."

"I will not fear." If the Lord is listening, and heeding, and even anticipating my cry, "I will not fear." I will not be a child of alarms. I will not be a victim of superstition. Rather will I be a child of faith. I will not fear the visible hosts of armed foes, the unseen heights are full of horses and chariots of fire. I will not fear the cloud, for "He cometh in thick clouds," and these seeming portents will be only the vehicles of heavenly benediction. I will not fear my yesterdays, for the "Helper" is my rearguard. "Goodness and mercy shall follow me," and by the ministry of grace shall wipe out my transgressions. I will not fear the lurking snares of to-day, for "He will keep my feet." I will not fear the unknown experiences of to-morrow, for "my times are in His hands." The apprehension of the truth that the Lord is "My Helper" issues in a consequent fearlessness which makes my life the progress of a conqueror.

Now let us finally bring the two extreme clauses of the text together, and we shall obtain the point of view from which all life can be seen in true perspective and proportion. "He Himself hath said... . What shall man do unto me?" Survey the antagonisms of the world with the word of the Almighty sounding through your soul, and the antagonisms will cease to appear insuperable. The colossal barrier will no longer seem impenetrable, and the mountains will melt away like smoke. "I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me." "I will not fear." He is always preparing a place for me, a place where next in my life's journey He will call me to stand. "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain."