

Dilemma and Deliverance

A Sermon

(No. 287)

Delivered on Sabbath Morning, December 4th, 1859, by the

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at the Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens.

“Thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.”—[Psalm 9:10](#).

THERE ARE MANY MEN who are exceedingly well read in heathen mythologies; who can tell you the history of any one of the heathen gods, but who at the same time know very little of the history of Jehovah, and cannot rehearse his mighty acts. In our schools to this day there are books put into the hands of our youth that are by no means fit for them to read—books which contain all kinds of filth, and if not always filth, yet all kinds of fables and vanities, which are simply put into our hands when we are lads, because they happen to be written in Latin and Greek; and, therefore, I suppose it is imagined that we shall all the better recollect the wickedness that is contained in them, by having the trouble of translating them into our own mother tongue. I would that instead of this, all our youth were made acquainted with the history of the Lord our God. Would that we could give them for classics some books which record what he hath done, the victories of his glorious arm, and how he hath put to nought the gods of the heathen and cast them down even into the depths. At any rate, the Christian will always find it to be useful to have at hand some history of what God did in the days of yore. The more you know of God’s attributes, the more you understand of his acts; the more you treasure up of his promises, and the more you fully dive into the depths of his covenant, the more difficult will it become for Satan to tempt you to despondency and despair. Acquaint thyself with God and be at peace. Meditate on his law both day and night, and thou shalt be like a tree planted by the rivers of water; thy leaf shall not wither; thou shalt bring forth fruit in thy season, and whatsoever thou doest shall prosper. Ignorance of God is ignorance of bliss; but knowledge of God is a divine armor, by which we are able to ward off all the blows of the enemy. Know thyself, O man, and that will make thee miserable; know thy God, O Christian, and that will make thee rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Now, this morning, in addressing you, I shall divide my text into three parts. First, I shall note *a certain fiery dart of Satan*; secondly, I shall point out to you *heaven’s divine buckler*, as hinted at in the text—“Thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee;” and then, in the third place, I shall notice *man’s precious privilege of seeking God, and so of arming himself against Satan*.

I. First, then, I am to dwell for a little time upon A CERTAIN FIERY DART OF SATAN WHICH IS CONSTANTLY SHOT AGAINST THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

There are many temptations, there are many suggestions and insinuations; and all these are arrows from the bow of the Evil one. But there is one temptation which exceeds all others, there is one suggestion which is more Satanic, more skilfully used in effecting the purposes of Satan than any other. That suggestion is the one referred to in these words of the Psalmist—viz., this, the suggestion to believe that God has forsaken us. If all the other arrows of hell could be put into one quiver, there would not be so much deadly poison in the whole as in this one. When Satan has used up every other weapon, he always betakes himself to this last, most sharp, moat deadly instrument. He goes to the child of God and pours into his ear this dark insinuation, “Thy God has forsaken thee quite; thy Lord will be gracious no more.”

Now, I shall remark with regard to this arrow, that it is one that is very often shot from Satan’s bow. Some of us have been wounded by it scores of times in our life. Whenever we have fallen into any sin, have been overtaken by some sudden wind of temptation, and have staggered and almost fallen, Conscience pricks us and tells us we have done wrong. Our heart, like David’s heart, smites us. We fall upon our knees, and acknowledge our fault and confess our sin. Then it is that Satan lets fly this arrow, which comes whizzing up from hell and enters into the soul, and while we are making the confession, the dark thought crosses our soul, “God has forsaken thee; he will never accept thee again. Thou hast sinned so foully that he will blot thy name out of the covenant; thou hast stumbled so fearfully that thy feet shall never stand upon the rock again—thou hast stumbled to thy fall; thou hast fallen to thy fell destruction.” Have you not known this, Christian? When for a season you have been led to backslide, when you have lost your first love and have become degenerate, when you have put out your hand to touch the unlawful thing through some sudden surprisal—has not this been thrown in your teeth?” Ah, wretch that you are, God will never forgive that sin: you have been so ungrateful, such a hypocrite, such a liar against the Lord your God, that now—now he will cast you away, throw you upon a dunghill like salt that has lost its savor, and as fit for nothing.” Ah, friends, you and I know what this means. And I dare say David did too. He had to feel all the power of this poisoned arrow after his great sin, when he went up to his chamber and wept and bemoaned himself, and there cried out in agony, “Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.” A select opportunity this for shooting this arrow. Just where the sin has been Satan marks, and then he sends a suggestion. Wherever there is a wound of sin, it is wonderful how this arrow will work, and what a burning it will give to our blood till every vein becomes a road for the hot feet of pain to travel on, and all our flesh is made to tingle with this evil thought, “I have sinned, and the reprover of man has reproved me to my face and cast me from his presence, and he will be gracious to me no more.” Another season when Satan usually shoots this arrow is the time of great trouble. There is a broad river across your path, and you are bidden to ford it. You go in and you find the water is up to your knees. Anon, as you wade on it becomes

breast-high. But you comfort yourself with this thought, “When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.” Cheered with this you go on; but you sink, and the water becomes deeper still. At last, it is almost gurgling in your throat! it is flowing over your very shoulders. Just then, when in the very deepest part of the stream, Satan appears on the bank, takes out his bow and shoots this fiery arrow.—“Thy God has forsaken thee.” “Oh,” saith the Christian, “I feared not as long as I heard the voice saying, ‘Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God.’ But now,” saith he, “my God hath forsaken me.” And now the Christian begins to sink indeed, and if it be not for the mighty power of God, it will not be Satan’s fault if he doth not drown thee in the midst of the flood. What a malicious devil is this, that must always send us a fresh trouble, and most grievous of all, send it when we are in our very worst distress. He is a coward, indeed; he always hits a man when he is down. When I am up and on my feet I am more than a match for Satan, but when I begin to stumble through great trouble, out comes the dragon from the pit, and begins to roar at me, and to draw his sword, and hurl his fiery darts; for now, says he, “man’s extremity shall be my opportunity; *now* that his heart and flesh fails—*now* will I make a full end of him.” You also know, some of you, what that means. You could bear the trouble well, but you could not bear the dreary thought that God has forsaken you in your trouble. Another season, too, in which Satan shoots this fiery dart is before some great labor. I am often vexed and perplexed with this dark thought when I have to appear before you on the Sabbath day; I frequently come here with that ringing in my ears:—“God will forsake thee; thou shalt fall before the congregation; the word shall not go home with power; thou shalt labor in vain, and spend thy strength for nought.” Thousands of times have I preached the gospel, yet to this day does that same arrow come flying up, and still does it vex and perplex my heart. If there be anything greater for a Christian to do, than he has been accustomed to do in former times, it is generally then that Satan levels this battle, when there is a deep soil to be ploughed, and the plough it heavy, and the oxen are faint, and the ploughman thinks he shall not accomplish his weary work, then it is that up comes this dark thought—“The Lord hath forsaken thee, and where art thou now?” The like doth he do at another season, namely, times of unanswered prayer. You have been up to God’s throne asking for a blessing; you have been five, six, twelve times, and you have had no answer; you go again; and you are just wrestling with God and the blessing seems as if it must come; but no, it does not come, and you bring your burden away on your back once more. You have been wont to cast all your cares upon God, and come away rejoicing; but now you find that prayer hath no return of blessing; it seems to be a waste of words. Then up comes Satan, just at the moment, and he says, “God hath forsaken you, if you were a child of God, he would answer your prayer; he would not leave you crying so long in the dark as this, if you were one of his beloved children. Why, he hears his people! Look at Elijah how he heard him. Remember Jacob; how he wrestled with the angel and prevailed. Oh,”

says Satan, "God has forsaken thee." Ah, Satan we have heard that aforetime. "Yes, but," says he, "his mercy is clean gone for ever. The heavens have become like brass, the Shekinah is gone up from between the wings of the cherubim, his house is left empty and void; Ichabod is written on thy closet; thou shalt never have an answer again. Go speak to the winds, spread your griefs to the pitiless sea, for God's ear is shut, and he will never move his arm to work deliverance for thee."

Now, am I not justified in saying that this arrow is very often shot. I may not have mentioned all the instances in which it has been shot at you, but I am certain that if you are a child of God, there have been times and seasons when this desperate insinuation has come up from hell—"God hath forgotten thee: he hath cast thee off: thou art left to thyself, and thou shalt perish." At any rate, if you have never said it, remember it is written in God's word that Zion saith "My God hath forgotten me;" and call to your recollection that gracious answer "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." The arrow; then, is often shot.

Then let me remark with regard to this arrow, again that it is most grievous. Other troubles only wound the Christian's flesh; they do but pierce with skin deep wounds; but this is a shot that goes right deep into his heart. When Satan is shooting other arrows we can laugh at him, for they rattle against our buckler; but this one finds out the joints of the harness, and it goes right through from one side to the other, till we are compelled to say, "As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach one; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?" This is hitting the target in the very center. This is skillful riflery, indeed, when Satan is able to send this arrow right into the eve of the soul. Other troubles are like surface storms. They toss the ocean into an apparent storm, and there are big waves on the top, but all is still and calm down in the caverns beneath. But this dark thought makes the ocean boil to its very bottom; it stirs the soul up until there is not one place in which there is rest; neither a cavern of the heart, nor a corner of the conscience in which the spirit has peace. This arrow, I say, is one of hell's masterpieces, there is more craft and skill in it than aught else Satan has ever done. It is the worst of his arrows because it grieves the Spirit exceedingly. And there is another thought I must throw out. Not only is this arrow grievous, but it is very dangerous. For if, my brethren, we believe this accusation against God, it is not long before we begin to sin. Let the Christian know that his God is with him, and temptation will have little power, but when God has forsaken us, as we think that he has, ah! then, when Satan offers us some back door by which to escape from our troubles, how very easily shall we be tempted to adopt his expedients. A merchant who knows that his God is with him, may see trade going from him, and his house verging to bankruptcy, but he will not do a dishonest thing. But let him imagine that God is against him, then Satan will say, "See, merchant, one of God's children, you have been deceived, he will never help

you;” and then, he is tempted to do something which in his conscience he knows to be wrong. “God will not deliver me,” he says; “then I will try to deliver myself.” There is great danger in this. Take heed to yourself then that ye “take unto you the whole armor of God,” and “above all, take the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.” I will make but one other observation upon this fiery dart; and that is, it bears the full impression of its Satanic maker. None but the devil could be the author of such a thought as this—that God has forsaken his people. Look it in the face, Christian, and see if it has not got the horns of the Evil One stamped on its brow? Does not the cloven foot peep out? Look at it; why, it is the devil’s own child. Why, bethink thee, Christian, this Evil One is making thee doubt thy own Father. He is bidding thee distrust a faithful God. He is calling in question the promise which says, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” He is making you accuse God of perjury. As if he could break his oath, and run back from the covenant which he has made with Christ on thy behalf. Why, none but the devil could have the impudence to suggest such a thought as that. Cast it from thee, believer; fling it away to the very depths of the sea; it is unworthy of thee to harbor it for a moment. Thy God forsake thee? Impossible! He is too good. Thy God forsake thee? It is utterly impossible! He is too true. Could he forsake his children, he would have forsaken his integrity; he would have ceased to be God, when he ceased to succor and help his own. Rest thou, then, in that, and ward the fiery dart off; for hellish, indeed, it is, and the name of its maker is stamped upon it legibly.

II. In the second place, let me notice THE DIVINE BUCKLER WHICH GOD HAS PROVIDED FOR HIS CHURCH AGAINST THIS FIERY DART. Here it is; it is the fact that God never has forsaken them that fear him, and that, moreover, he never will do so.

Ah, my brethren, if we could but once believe the doctrine that the child of God might fall from grace and perish everlastingly, we might, indeed, shut up our Bible in despair. To what purpose would my preaching be—the preaching of a rickety gospel like that? To what purpose your faith—a faith in a God that cannot and would not carry on to the end? To what use the blood of Christ, if it were shed in vain, and did not bring the blood-bought ones securely home? To what purpose the Spirit, if he were not omnipotent enough to overcome our wandering, to arrest our sins and make us perfect, and present us faultless before the throng of God at last? That doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints is, I believe, as thoroughly bound up with the standing or falling of the gospel, as is the article of justification by faith. Give that up and I see no gospel left. I see no beauty in religion that is worthy of my acceptance, or that deserves my admiration. An unchanging God, an everlasting covenant, a sure mercy, these are the things that my soul delights in, and I know your hearts love to feed upon them. But take these away, and what have we? We have a foundation of wood, hay, straw, and stubble. We have nothing solid. We have a fort of earth-works, a mud hovel through which the thief may break and steal away our treasures. Nay,

this foundation stands sure—"The Lord knoweth them that are his;" and he doth so know them that he will certainly bring them every one to his right hand at last in glory everlasting.

But to return to our text, and to offer you some few words of comfort which may tend to quench the fiery dart of the wicked one. The psalmist says, "Thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee." I call up before you now, one by one as witnesses, the saints of God in the olden time. You are in great trouble to-day and Satan suggests that now God has forsaken you. Come hither, Jacob! we read thy testimony. Wast thou a man of trouble? "Ah," saith he, "few and evil were my days." Evil, man?—what meanest thou? "I mean that they were full of sorrow, full of perplexity, full of fear and trouble." And what is thy testimony, Jacob? We have heard that thou didst seek God in prayer. Didst thou not wrestle with the angel at the brook Jabbok, and prevail? Speak, man, and tell these doubting hearts, did God forsake thee? Methinks I see that hoary patriarch lifting up his hands, and he cries, "I trembled to meet my brother, Esau. I stayed at the brook Jabbok, and I said, 'Lord, give deliverance from him whom I think bloodthirsty.' I crossed the brook full of fear and trembling, but tell it, O let it be known for the comfort of others in like trouble with me, I met my brother Esau, and he fell upon my neck and kissed me. He would not take the tribute which I offered him. He became my friend and we loved each other. God had turned his heart, and he took no vengeance upon me. But," continued the patriarch, "I was always a doubting man, I was always a careful man; I had so much cunning and craft about me that I could not trust anything in the hands of my Covenant God, and this always brought me into care and trouble. but," says he, "I bear my witness that I never had need to have troubled myself at all; if I had but left it all in the hand of God, all would have been well. I remember," saith he, "and I tell it to you now, when my son Joseph was sold into Egypt what sorrow I had in my heart, for I said, 'My grey hairs shall be brought with sorrow to the grave, for Joseph my son is, without a doubt, rent in pieces.' And then it happened on a day that Simeon was taken away from me; and there came a message out of Egypt that Benjamin must go down. And I remember well what I said 'Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and now they will take Benjamin away. All these things are against me.' But they were not against me," says the old man, "they were for me, every one of them. Joseph, that I said was not, *was*; he was sitting upon the throne; he had prepared for me a habitation in Egypt. As for Simeon, he was a hostage there; and that was not against me, for perhaps I should scarce have sent my sons down at all if it had not been for the hope that they would bring Simeon back. And now," says Jacob, "I retract every word I have said against the Lord my God, and I stand before you to bear my testimony that not one good thing hath failed of all that the Lord God hath promised. My shoes were iron and brass, and as my days so was my strength."

I hear a mourner say, "Mine is not a case of trouble and sorrow; mine is a case of duty. I have a duty to perform that is too heavy for me, and I am afraid I shall never accomplish it." Here comes another of the ancients to bear his witness. It is Moses; let him speak. "I

thought,” said he, “when God called me from keeping the flocks of my father in the desert by the mount of Horeb, I thought I never could be strong enough for the office to which I had been ordained. I said unto my Lord, who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh? And I said unto him again, Lord, thou knowest I am not eloquent; the children of Israel will not believe me, for I shall not have skill enough in oratory to persuade them to follow my words. But the Lord said, Certainly I will be with thee. And lo,” says Moses, “as my days so was my strength. I had strength enough to stand before Pharaoh, strength enough to shake the whole land of Egypt, and strength enough to divide the Red Sea and drown all Pharaoh’s hosts. I had strength enough to endure with an evil generation forty years in the wilderness, strength enough to take their idol god and grind it in pieces, and make them drink the water upon which I had strewn the atoms. I had strength enough to lead them on from day to day, to command the rock and it gushed with water, to speak to the heavens and they sent down the manna. And when I went up at last to my grave, and looked from the top of Nebo, I, who had once been fearful, saw with transport the land to which the Lord’s people had been brought, and my soul was taken away with a kiss, and I departed in peace.” Hear that, then, O laboring one; the God that helped Moses will help thee. Moses sought God, and God did not forsake him; nor will he forsake thee.

But saith another, “I am exposed to slander, men speak evil of me; no lie is too bad for them to utter against me.” Ah, my friend, permit me to refer you to another ancient saint; it is the saint who wrote this psalm—David. Let him stand up and speak. “Ah!” saith he “from the first day when I went forth to fight Goliath even to the end of my life I was the subject of shame and slander. Doeg the Edomite, Saul, and multitudes of men, the men of Belial, like Shimei, all accused me. I was the song of the drunkard; I was the harlot’s jest. Nothing was too bad for David. All mine enemies went round about the city like dogs, that bay all night and rest not even at morning.” And what didst thou do, David? “Oh,” said he, “I said, ‘My soul, wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him.’” And didst thou prove that God was thy deliverer? “Ah, yes—yes,” saith he, “I have pursued my enemies, and I have overtaken them.’ ‘Thou hast smitten all my enemies upon the cheek-bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.’” And so shall you find it, my hearers, God has not forsaken you, even though you be slandered. Remember it is the lot of God’s greatest servants to bear the worst character amongst worldlings. Whose character is safe in these days? What man among us may not be accused of any indecency? Who among us can hope to stand immaculate when liars are so rife, and charges are so abundant? Be content and bear the slander. Remember, the higher the tower the longer will be the shadow; and often, the higher a man’s character the fouler will be the slander that comes out against him. But remember, “no weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.”

If ye need any other witnesses I could bring them. Let Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego come forth. Ye Hebrew children, ye stood in the midst of coals when the furnace was white with heat; did God forsake you? “No,” they say, “our hair was not singed, nor had the smell of fire passed on our garments.” Speak, O Daniel! Thou didst stand a night in the midst of the furious lions, who had been starved for days that they might devour thee in their hunger; what sayest thou? “My God,” saith he, “hath sent his angel to shut the lions’ mouths; my God, whom I serve, hath not forsaken me.” But time would fail me if I should tell you of those who have “shut the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, obtained promises, wrought victories, put to flight the armies of aliens; “yet we might enlarge for a moment upon the history of great martyrs. Has God left one of them? They have suffered at the stake; their limbs have been stretched on the rack; every nerve has been strained; every bone has been dislocated. They have had their eyes plucked out; they have had their flesh rent away piecemeal to the bone with hot pincers, they have been dragged at the heels of horses, burnt on gridirons, hung up before slow fires. They have seen their infants cut in pieces before their eyes, their wives and daughters ravished, their houses burned, their country laid desolate. But has God forsaken them? Has the world triumphed? Has God left his children? “Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Another question is suggested, however, for your comfort, Christian; I have brought many witnesses to prove that Christ does not forsake his children; let me ask you to step into the witness box. You say that God has forsaken you—I will put a question or two to you. When your wife lay sick, and there were three little ones in the house and she approached to death, and you cried in agony to God and said, “God, thou hast forsaken me. My business fails me, and now my wife is to be taken from me! what shall I do with these little ones?” Answer this question; did God forsake you then? “Nay,” you say, “my wife still lives, she was restored to me.” But when one of your children lay a-dying and the others were seized with fever, you then said, “My wife again is sick; what shall I do with this house of sickness? Now, God has forsaken me. I shall never bear this trial.” Did you bear it? “Oh, yes,” say you, “I passed through it and I can say, ‘Blessed be the name of God, the affliction was sanctified to me.’” Do you recollect the heavy loss you sustained in business? Not one but many; loss came after loss; every speculation in which you had been engaged broke down under you. You had many bills coming in, and you said. “Now, I shall not be able to meet them; and as a Christian man you shuddered to think of bankruptcy. You even went up with your wife into your chamber—and you two went on your knees and poured out your case before God, and asked him to help you. Did God leave you? “No,” say you, “as by a miracle I was delivered I cannot tell how it was, but I came out of it clean.” And yet again, another question to an-

other one of you. Do you remember when you were in sin, before you had received pardon, your guilt was heavy upon you, and you sought God and cried to him. Did God deny you? “No,” you say, “blessed be his name, I can remember the happy day when he said ‘your sins which are many are all forgiven.’” Well, you have often sinned since then. But let me ask you, when you have made confession of sin, have you not been restored? has he not lifted up upon you once more the light of his countenance? “Well,” you say, “I must say he has.” Then, I ask you in the name of everything that is true and holy, nay, in the name of everything that is reasonable, how dare you say that God has forsaken you now? Retract the word! Slay the thought! It cannot, must not be—

“Each sweet Ebenezer you have in review,
Confirms his good pleasure to help you quite through.”

He would not have done this much for you, if he meant to leave you. Thus, it cannot be, that he who has been with you in six troubles will leave you in the seventh. He has not brought you through so many fires to let you be burned at last. Nay, take heart—

“His grace shall to the end
Stronger and brighter shine,
Not present things, nor things to come,
Shall quench the spark divine ”

within thy heart; much less quench the fire even which still burns in his infinite breast.
God hath not forsaken thee as yet.

Still further to drive the thought away, I will very rapidly run through a few precious things. Were you not cold on your way hither this morning. Did you not see the snow upon the ground, and do you dare to doubt God? He hath said, “While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, summer and winter, cold and heat shall never cease;” and he keeps his word. And yet you think, though he keeps that word he will forget the word that he has spoken concerning you. You come here in trouble this morning. Do you not see that God is true? that your very trouble is a proof that he has not forsaken you? If you never had any trouble, then God would have broken his promise, for did not Jesus Christ leave you it as a legacy? “In the world ye shall have tribulation.” There, you have got it. That proves that God is true. *Now*, you have a part of the legacy, you shall have the rest:—“In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” So that the very weather without, and your troubles within, ought to forbid your doubting the faithfulness of your God. But look here. Has not God made you a promise, saying, “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee?” Would you like to be called a promise-breaker? Shall I point my finger at you, and say, “There’s a man whose word is not to be relied on?” Will you point that same finger to God, and say, “His word is not to be taken, he is not to be trusted?” What! do you think your God is dishonorable? that he will give a promise and break it? not keep it? forget it? fail to remember it? What! God, the God of glory, prove dishonorable? It must not, cannot

be. Recollect, again, he has given you his oath. Can you think that he will break that? Because he could swear by no greater he sware by himself. Shall God be perjured? You would not think that of your meanest fellow-creature; will you think that of your greatest and best friend? Again, would you leave your child? would you forsake it utterly? You might hide your face from it for awhile to do it good, because it had been disobedient. but will you chasten your child always? never kiss it, never caress it, never call it your loved one? It is not in a father's heart to be always angry with his child. And will God forsake you? Will he cast you out into this wide, desolate world and let you die and become the prey of his great enemy? Oh, think not so hardly of your Father. If any man should come to me, and tell me that my father had said such-and-such things about me unkind and disrespectful, I would show him the door, and say, "Get thee gone! my father would never do that: he loves me too much to do that." And when the devil comes and says, "Your Father has forgotten you," tell him to begone—you know too much of your Father ever to believe that. Say to him, "Get thee gone! it cannot be; get thee gone, Satan! Tell it to thy own companions, but tell it not to the heir of heaven." Then again, Christian, Thou believest that God has loved thee from before the foundation of the world; and yet after having loved you so long he has left off loving you now. Strange thing! Love without a beginning, yet such love to have an end. Singular thing! Eternal at one end and temporal at the other. Strange supposition! Put it away from thee. Besides, again, can Christ forget thee! Art thou not a member of his body, of his flesh and his bones? Has the Head forgotten a finger? Has he, who did hang upon the tree and who wrote thy name in wounds upon his hand and on his side, has he forgotten? What! Jesus thy own brother, thy husband, thy head, thy all, what! he forget? he forsake? Down blaspheming thought! Back to the hell from which thou dost spring! Down! down! down! My soul lifts up her head triumphantly, and cries, "Thou Lord hast not forsaken them that seek thee," nor wilt thou do so, world without end.

III. I now come to the third and last point, and on this I shall dwell very briefly—MAN'S PRECIOUS PRIVILEGE TO SEEK GOD IN HIS DAY OF TROUBLE.

To what use, to what purpose is the buckler if we wear it not? Of what service the shield if it be permitted to rust in the house? We must take hold upon the promise of a faithful God; we must seize the comfort which he offers; but how is it to be done? Why, in prayer. Seek ye the Lord ye tried and troubled ones, and ye shall soon find your troubles stayed, your trials sweetly alleviated. We go rambling round, and round, and round, to find peace. Would that we could stay at home in our closets with our God; we should find peace much better there. We go to our neighbors, we call our friends, we tell them our woes and ask their sympathy

“Were half the breath that’s vainly spent,
To heaven in supplication sent,
Our cheerful song would oftener be,

Hear what the Lord hath done for me.”

Go Christian brother in your troubles and seek God. It is not possible that you can perish praying. If you could perish singing, you could not perish praying on your knees. Think ye that while you can plead a Father’s love, and cry with the Spirit of adoption to him, that you can be forsaken? If you forsake the throne, then may you indeed have a fear that you are forsaken. But when the Spirit draws you to the mercy-seat, such a fear must vanish, for if thou art at the mercy-seat, God is there too. God loves the mercy-seat better than thou dost. He dwelleth between the cherubim; thou only goest there sometimes. But that is his abiding-place, his mercy-seat, where he always sits. Go thou, then, I tell thee, and thou canst not be destroyed; thy ruin is impossible, whilst thou dost cry, “Let us pray!”

And have I here this morning some that are oppressed with guilt? Dear hearer, however great your sins may have been, if thou dost seek God, thou canst not perish, for “thou Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.” Methinks, I hear some one say, “Oh, that just suits me. I fear I have no faith; I am afraid I don’t repent as I ought. But I know I seek Christ; I am sure I am seeking him.” Ah! so then this promise is thine. Take it home with thee. Suck it; get at its juice. Here, indeed, is a cluster full of new wine for thee. Take it home with thee:—“Thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.” Seek, and ye shall find, knock, and the door shall surely be opened to you.

May God now grant his blessing, for Jesu’s sake. Amen.