

A Mighty Plea

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"You have been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me." [Psalm 27:9](#).

IN times of distress it is somewhat a difficulty to have a choice of helpers, because while we are making our selection, the danger may have overtaken us. While the fox was considering which way to run, the hounds had seized him. While the sick man was selecting the physician and considering the medicine, his disease carried him off. It is well to be shut up to one sole help, if that help is all we need. It is for our good, in such a case, to have no alternative, but to have, as the old proverb has it, Hobson's choice—that or none.

The Believer is exactly in that condition. He must trust in his God or remain without hope. He dares not look to others as he once did, for he has discovered their incompetence. He cannot rely upon himself as once he was foolish enough to do, for he has learned, by bitter experience, the folly of self-confidence. He is compelled to look to the Lord, alone. Blessed is that wind which drives the ship into the harbor. Blessed is that wave which washes the mariner upon the rock of safety, and blessed is that distress which forces a man to rest only in his God! Such was the condition of the Psalmist when he wrote the text. His spirit looked to God, alone.

In his past experience the goodness of the Lord shone forth as the pole star of his life's voyage and, therefore, as to the future, he fixed his eyes steadily on that one sure guiding light, and trusted in the God of his salvation. In supplicating the Lord it is well to have a plea ready for use, a plea available under all circumstances and conditions—a plea of our own—not borrowed from the mouths of other men and perhaps but half suitable to ourselves. We need a plea which wells up from our inner consciousness and is our own personal plea, felt to be weighty in our own souls and therefore confidently urged before the Throne of Grace.

It is well to have a simple plea and one which we can understand, ourselves, for when we are in doubt we are like men in a mist and must have plain directions or we miss our way. If we have a chart in a fog we want it to be a very clear one, or else we shall not be able to see it. And when we plead with God in trouble we want the plea to be a very plain one, or else our minds may be so confused we shall not be able to urge it. A soul in sore distress is in no fit condition to puzzle itself over deep and dark reasonings—it needs a child's plea, just as Dr. Guthrie, when near dying, needed "Bairn's hymns."

Blessed, then, is it, if we have a plea like this of the text, "You have been my help," for this is a homely, personal, suitable, simple argument not fetched from afar by subtle wit,

but grown at home in our own experience. He that runs may read it, and poor wayfaring men may comprehend it. The illiterate can use it as well as the learned. "You have been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me." Besides, this plea is good and full of real power. And I hope, before we have done this morning, we shall be able to show that there is much heavenly logic in it and that it is eminently full of that kind of argument which is most sure to prevail with the Host High.

Perhaps it may be well, here, to confess that the plea before us is not one which would ordinarily be available with our fellow creatures, for if they have helped us before, they generally conclude that the next time we ought to knock at some other door. Francis Quarles has well compressed the usual manner of men—

"Man'splea to man is, that he never more
Will beg, and that he never begged before—
Man'splea to God is, that he did obtain
A former suit, and therefore sues again.
How good a God we serve, that, when we sue,
Makes His old gifts the examples of His new!"

Yet there are exceptions to the general custom of mankind, for I read the other day a case in point, in Mr. Moody Stuart's, "Recollections of Dr. John Duncan, of Edinburgh," who was a beautiful character, and a famous Hebrew scholar, and has lately gone to Heaven, much to the loss of the Free Church.

In that book I met with the following passage—"He was easily imposed upon, but the imposition never soured him, and he was willing to submit to it for the chance of doing good. He said, 'I find they know how to get round me. They say, "You helped me before," and I can never resist that. It teaches me how to pray.' " And now I think of it, many of us like to help our old pensioners, and they come up very boldly to our door remembering the many times in which they have succeeded. If you grant a man a favor several times, he becomes very free in seeking it again. So it seems that even among men it may be a plea, "You have been my help," and most assuredly it is most prevalent argument with God. No man shall be repulsed from the gate of Mercy who comes with this upon his lips—

"You have helped in every need, This emboldens me to plead. After so much mercy past, Will You let me sink at last?"

I shall speak this morning thus—First, I shall try and depict Experience gratefully telling her tale—"You have been my help." Then Necessity urgently pleading with Experience—"Leave not, neither forsake me." And then Experience soundly instructing Faith—teaching her how to pray and how to expect an answer—"You have been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me."

I. First then, dear Friends, let us listen to EXPERIENCE GRATEFULLY TELLING HER TALE, "You have been my help." I, the preacher, can say, and must say, with all my heart,

"O God, You have been my help." Rest a minute and let the testimony be repeated by all who can declare it. I know that many of you, if this were the fitting time, would rise up and say, "O God, You have been my help." What would we have done without the help given us in time of need, given us from the Lord, Himself? How grandly has our God displayed His power and His mercy on our behalf!

Many of you whose heads are adorned with the silver locks of age will say, with troubling, tearful emphasis, "You have been my help." Yes, and those of you in middle life, battling with its cares and trials, can do no otherwise but cheerfully confess, "The Lord is my helper, and has long been such." And the younger ones among us, who have lately put on the harness would not like to be left out, for even in their short conflict they have received such aid that they gladly admit, "You have been our help." If hands had to be held up now, that we might see at a glance those who could say that God has been their help, what a forest of hands would go up in this Tabernacle this morning! Yes, Lord, we Your servants, assembled here in thousands, do solemnly confess that You have been our help.

Now, as I cannot describe the individual experiences of everyone here present, I will just say a little concerning the man who wrote these words. As we find them in this Psalm, and as his experience is singularly like that of every other saint, we may, perhaps, touch most of you in some point or other. David could very early say, "You have been my help," for while he was yet a youth the son of Jesse sought the Lord and struggled into spiritual life. I should think that his early experience was a very distinct and marked one—and one in which much saving help was displayed. He had deep convictions of sin, a clear view of the great Substitutionary Sacrifice that was to be offered, and in the end he obtained a very joyful sense of justification by faith.

David could look back to the days of his boyish conversion, when he fought hard with doubt and fear, and sin committed and sin dwelling within him, and yet was able to put his trust in the great Sacrifice, so that he said in retrospect, "You have been my help." I invite every converted person here to look back upon that trying time when he was seeking the Lord with a burden of sin upon his back, assailed by a thousand sins and hindered by ten thousand temptations. You were, then, most wonderfully helped! You were helped to fall at the foot of the Cross and helped to look up and view the perfect Atonement there, presented by the Redeemer.

You were helped to leave your burden in your Savior's sepulcher and helped to come away with a new song in your mouth—the sweet flavor of which is there to this hour. You were helped to repent and helped to believe—helped out of self-righteousness and helped out of despair. In memory of that matchless help you may well resolve to trust in the Word all the days of your life. "Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings will I rejoice." David, however, soon after his conversion, entered upon a scene of severe trial—at least, so I suspect.

He appears to have been sent from home to serve as a shepherd boy in the wild places of Judea. I fancy that his condition with regard to his brothers was very much like that of Joseph—they either envied or despised him. When Samuel went to Bethlehem to anoint him, you will remember that all the rest of the family were at home and the youthful David was not summoned until the Prophet especially required it. But, as though he were not worth noticing, he was required to be away watching the flocks. And so, also, when he went, at his father's request, to the battle against the Philistines, his brothers treated him with great scorn, as though he had no business to come near them, or to associate with great men like themselves, in battle for their country.

Poor David, therefore, was the marked one of the family, a speckled bird, the butt of household ridicule. But he could say, in looking back upon the times of his loneliness, "You have been my help." Sweet were the songs which he sang among the sheep, such as, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." Happy were the quiet hours which he spent amidst the hills and vales of his native land, and by the rivers and the brooks where he made his flock to lie down. Many a time that harp of his, upon which he had learned to play so skillfully, had borne up his devout spirit on wings of music to the Throne of God, when his young heart sang in solitude the praises of the Most High.

Perhaps some of you look back upon your early troubles as among the bitterest you ever knew. We are always hearing people say that our young days are the happiest we shall ever see. It may be true with many, but there are others whose young days were darkened with sorrow. They had to bear the yoke in their youth and they can say, in looking back, that it was good for them it was so, for in those times the Lord was their helper. David's father and mother had, in a measure, forsaken him, but God took him up. The Lord had regard to him when others despised him. He was the Lord's Anointed when he was an alien from his mother's children.

What joy it is if our early sorrows have left this inscription upon the tablets of our hearts, "You have been my help." But David did not merely suffer when he was young, but did work for God—yes, he did grand exploits for his God and for his country while yet a youth—of which he could say with great fervor, "You have been my help." It was no little thing when the shepherd lad rushed against the lion and took him by his beard and slew him. And when the bear had taken the lamb, it was no slight matter for a raw youth to battle with the monster of the woods and slay it in the name of God, that he might deliver his sheep from destruction.

The Lord was his helper that day, and grandly did he feel it, when he went with his sling and his stone to meet the gigantic Philistine! And openly did he confess his faith when he came back with the giant's head, all dripping with gore, to magnify the Most High, who had delivered him and delivered Israel out of the hand of this mighty adversary. "You have been my help." "The Lord delivered me out of the mouth of the lion and from the paw of the bear, and the Lord has delivered me from the hand of this uncircumcised Philistine."

Now, my Brothers and Sisters, I do not ask you to look back upon what the Lord enabled you to do in your younger days by way of self-congratulation. I do not ask the old soldier to "shoulder his crutch and show how fields were won" that he may command admiration from younger warriors. But, that God may be glorified, I ask you to remember how the Holy Spirit came upon you in those early days and enabled you to be valiant for the Truth of God! Perhaps you had more zeal than knowledge in those days! Perhaps you possessed more confidence than prudence—but you did grand things for God and God was with you! He was with you, and so you might be content to go back to all the mistakes of youth if you might win back, again, its simple trust and burning love!

At any rate, stand here today and admit that whatever you may have accomplished which will bless your fellow men and honor your God, the glory of it is all due to the help given you by the Lord. David, after those first trying times, passed through another series of afflictions. He was called to court, but the king was jealous of him and very soon he had to escape from Saul's murderous attacks. What continuous help did David receive from the God of his salvation! He was almost a prisoner in the caverns of Engedi but God delivered him. He was well-near captured among the hills, but Jehovah called off his pursuers. Many a time did he hold his life in his hand, for he was hunted like a defenseless partridge upon the mountains—but always, by some means or other, the Lord delivered him as a bird out of the snare of the fowler—the snare was broken and he escaped.

Look back upon the troubles through which God has brought you, my beloved Brothers and Sisters! Remember the times in which your feet had almost gone and your steps had well-near slipped, and say with grateful emotion, "You have been my help." God helped David by raising him up many true friends. When he was in the cave brave spirits came to him, valiant and faithful men, who loved David as they loved their own souls. And when he asked for a drink of water from the well of Bethlehem, they went, their lives in their hands, to gratify his wish and let him drink of the water which he was accustomed to taste in his boyish days, for they were denoted to him.

Now, it is no small thing to have good, kind, faithful, earnest friends and adherents. And if you have had such, or have been favored with parents, brethren and friends who have been greatly attached to you, be sure to praise the Lord for them this morning, as I, myself, joyfully do in the midst of many tried and attached supporters, and say, "You have been my help." On one or two occasions David found the Lord to be his help when he was in positions where he might scarcely have expected Divine aid. When we plunge ourselves into trouble through our own fault, it is but natural to fear that we may be left to suffer for our folly. And it is peculiarly gracious on the part of our heavenly Friend to come to our rescue.

David had unwisely sought refuge with the king of Gath and there was placed in great jeopardy of his life, so that he had to play the madman in order to escape. But escape he did,

through God's gracious help. Yet another time, in his unbelief, he went and joined the army of this heathen king—and if the lords of the Philistines had not spoken against his going down to the battle, he would have been placed in a very awkward position, in having been called to fight against his own countrymen—but God delivered him, even then. With what regret may some of us look back upon our own follies! And with what thankfulness may we survey the mercy which plucked our feet out of the net. Where others would have left us in anger, because of our waywardness and ingratitude, You, O Lord, have been our help.

David obtained help under very strong temptations. It was a very strong temptation when he saw his adversary in the cave all alone, and might with one stroke of his sword have taken off his head. He was helped of God to spare his foe and he only cut off the hem of the king's robe to let him see how completely he was in his power. Help also did he need when, in the dead of night, he went with Abishai, his captain, through the sleeping hosts of Saul and came to the place where lay his cruel enemy asleep. His spear stood temptingly near his pillow and a deep sleep was on him. And Abishai said, "Let me smite him, let me smite him but once, one stroke shall end it all."

Who among ordinary men of war must not have wished to let that one single blow be struck? In what surer manner could a bitter quarrel be ended? But no, "I will not lift up my hand against the Lord's Anointed." David must have felt that God was superlatively his Helper that night to keep back his hand from blood. You, too, dear Friends, have been in such a position that you were strongly tempted to do wrong. Impulses both of your own nature and of Satan were strong upon you and you had almost put forth your hand unto iniquity. But you have been kept with an unblemished character to this day and you are compelled to say, this morning, "You have been my help."

Yes, and David could remember, again, when God helped him in times of direst distress. Perhaps the greatest sorrow of David's life, before he fell into sin with Bathsheba, was the destruction of Ziklag. He came back from the Philistines' country to his own town of Ziklag and found the town totally sacked, everything taken away. And, what was worse, his own wives and children, and those of all his men, carried away captive. David might have borne up under this had his friends cheered him, but they were so exasperated that they fell angrily upon him and spoke of stoning him! He was their leader—he was not to blame in any respect for their loss—but merely in the bitterness of their hearts they spoke in foolish anger and hot haste.

Generally, at such times, men need a victim and in this case they would have made their noble leader the object of their wrath. It is written, "David encouraged himself in the Lord his God," and sorely did he need to do so. God brought him out of it, for he never lost a farthing by the sack of Ziklag, nor any of his men. They recovered their wives and their children, and, beside that, not only all their own goods, but all the spoil the plundering band

had taken from other places. David could have sung, and no doubt did sing, "Ebenezer, up to now the Lord has helped us!" Or, in the words of the text, "You have been my help."

Have not you had your Ziklag, you businessmen, when things were going all to the bad? You could not help yourself and bankruptcy stared you in the face. You did what you could, but it seemed as if you must be ruined. That was your Ziklag and the Lord helped you. Or perhaps there was disease in your house—one child had gone, another was sickening—your wife was laid by. You were unable, yourself, to lift hand or foot to help, all things were against you—it was your Ziklag. Or perhaps you are a minister of the Gospel and there was, in your Church, spreading disaffection and

cruel ill will—and no one was found to stand up for you. Though you had been faithful before the Lord God of Hosts, you seemed quite left and deserted. It was your Ziklag, but you were helped through it.

And therefore, I beg you, do not, for the glory of God and for the comfort of tried saints, keep back your testimony, but say, "I was brought low, and He helped me, and, therefore, blessed be His name." We do not talk enough about our deliverances! When you get home this afternoon, after dinner, if a friend or two should call, you will go over your bad times and your troubles, but you will not recapitulate your mercies. Have we not had enough of complaining? Let us touch another string and bless the Lord for all His lovingkindness! What a tale some of us could tell of His mercies! No novel that was ever composed could possibly equal, in interest, my own experience of God's goodness, and I think there are many here of whose lives the same could be said.

Rich with incident, crowded with wonders, crammed full of miracles have our lives been, for God has dealt so well with us that we often stand astonished at what He has done. "You have been my help." Oh, yes, I will sum up the whole of my life in the one sentence, and, as we have seen a portrait sketched in a few lines, so will I give you my whole career in miniature—"You have been my help." Listen, then, to the song of Experience, and hasten to join in it! It is most charming and cheering—"You have been my help."

II. Our second point is NECESSITY PLEADING EXPERIENCE. "You have been my help; leave me not, neither

forsake me." First, You have been my help, therefore it is consistent with Your holiness to help me. Lord, I am a poor sinner, unworthy to be noticed, and my doubts and fears sometimes tell me that it would not be fit for Your infinitely holy Majesty to look upon such a rebellious worm as I am. But, Lord, You have done it already! You have been my help and if it were not wrong for You to help me once, it will not be wrong for You to help me twice. If it did not stain Your spotless robe to hold out your hand to a fallen and condemned soul in years gone by, it will not stain Your purity to lend me Your hand again.

I therefore bless Your condescending goodness and ask You not to leave me! You have been my help. Therefore, in the second place, it is within Your power to help me, for, Lord,

my case today is not worse than it was when You did help me before, or, if it is, You are All-Sufficient. Lord, help me out of this affliction, for You did redeem me on a former occasion. I was weak and friendless then, and could not help myself. But Your own arm of mercy was fully equal to the emergency. Lord, I know it is quite sufficient now. If You had never delivered my soul out of such a puzzling, perplexing and intricate case as mine, I might have doubted, but as You have already been my help in times of great strait, when no way of relief was visible, You are able to help me again. Therefore I lay hold upon the hands of Your power and the arms of Your strength.

You have been my help. Therefore You can help me again, O Jehovah! I know You can! Again, my appeal is to Your Wisdom. Lord, You have been my help and if You do not help me now, all that help will go for nothing! It is of no use to have helped me so far, if You do not help me to the end. Now, Lord, I know You do not begin to build, and then leave the world incomplete, so that they that go by may say, "He began to build, but was not able to finish." You have made an investment in me, good Lord. You have gone deep in expenditures of mercy and love with a poor worm like I, and if You stop Your hand, Lord, You will lose all you have invested. You must go right through with it, Lord, or else You will have lost all the works of Your love and Your power and Your goodness which You have already so lavishly spent upon me.

Is not that good pleading? "You have been my help"—Lord, if it were wise to help me so far, it must be wise to go through with it. Would it have been wise to bring Israel into the wilderness and feed them with manna for 40 years and then to let them die of starvation? What would the Egyptians say? Would they not ask, "Why did He bring them into the wilderness? Why did He conduct them so far and afterwards suffer them to perish?" Well does our poet put it—

"The work which wisdom undertakes, Eternal mercy never forsakes."

For, if it is wise to begin with, it must be wise to carry it on. Lord Jesus, You have loved my soul as Jacob loved Rachel, and he was bound to serve for seven years to win her. And if he had served six and a half years, and then left off, he would never have had his Rachel. And You have, in Your infinite love, served for me these years, but if You leave off now, I shall never be Yours at last—my poor soul must perish unless, till the last hour of life, You shall still wait upon me in mercy, and refresh me with Your Grace.

To my own soul at this moment this plea, "You have been my help," is a very powerful hold upon Divine Wisdom, and is an urgent reason why I may ask for Grace, still, to be given me. Perhaps the backbone of the argument lies in the attribute of Immutability. "You have been my help, if You can change, then can You leave me. But if You are, indeed, Jehovah, "I Am that I Am," the same forever and forever—if You have once blessed, You are bound by the force of Your Nature to bless right on—as long as You are God and I require Your blessing. Have you not said, "I am God, I change not; therefore you sons of Jacob are not

consumed"? What blessed notes that text contains! He who has kept you to this day, if He changed, might leave you. But since He cannot change, He will bear you right through!

How wicked we are to doubt our faithful God! The sun rose yesterday and nobody doubted but what it would be up this morning. And there is not a man living but what believes the sun will shine tomorrow. Do you trust the sun and will you not trust the God who kindles its light? The tide comes up to the shore and then recedes according to the regular motion of the moon, and everybody trusts the tide and is prepared for its coming in and its going out. And can you trust the unstable sea, and its fickle wave, and not rest upon the Immutable God?

You say the thing that was shall be, and surely God was forever and ever, and has kept His promises to His people— and therefore the thing shall be. If Heaven above can be measured, or the earth searched out. If the ordinances of the sun and of the moon can be changed, then may God forsake His people, but it can not, shall not be while He is still the same. I think there is one more argument here, namely, a plea to God's love. "You have been my help." Lord, surely if You did love me enough to help me before, You love me enough to help me still. It is the plea of a child to a father. "Father, you have always fed me, will you let me starve? You have always clothed me, will you let me be naked?" It is the argument of a spouse to her husband as she says to him, "My Husband, you have never failed me yet. Whatever I have needed you have supplied to me. Leave me not, neither forsake me."

You know how the plea has power with a heart which is touched with true affection. It is with us and our God as thought He had guided us halfway through a wilderness. We did not know one inch of the road and had no provision for it, but He has helped up to now. If, when He had brought us right into the center of the waste, He should say to us, "Now I am going to leave you"—if we were in such a plight that on desert sand, where there was no pathway and no shelter, our guide should say, "Now I must leave you to yourselves"—we would clutch him by the sleeve and say, "Leave me not! I pray you do not leave me, else why have you brought me here at all?

"All the kindness of the past will be but cruelty, a studied tantalizing of me, if you leave me. Why did you bring me here? All the way I have come, I have depended upon you for everything. I could not have found my way so far, alone, and will you leave me now?" Oh, I think no man would be so brutal as to resist such an argument. He would say, "If in my kindness I have undertaken the conduct of this poor ignorant creature and brought him so far, I cannot leave him till I have landed him safely at home." Shall the Lord be less kind than man? Imagine that a child has fallen into the sea and you are a strong swimmer and have swam from the boat and clasped the child, and you are bearing him on your shoulders and swimming to land.

Suppose you should suddenly say, "My child, I have done something for you, but will do no more. I must drop you into the sea." Would not the little one say, "Sir, you picked me

up when I was sinking. I should have been dead long ago but for you. Do not throw me off, Sir. Strike out again, Sir! Let me still cling to you." We may reason in the same manner with God. "My God, my God, if You had meant to let me be lost, why did You not do it years ago, and let me go down to Hell without hope? But now You have given me a hope of Heaven! You have let me know something of the joy of holiness. Some love to You and some longings after You have stirred my soul. Will You leave me now, O my God? It cannot, must not be."

The pleading is mighty, Brothers and Sisters, I know of none better—"You have been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me."

III. Now, thirdly, and briefly, here is EXPERIENCE INSTRUCTING FAITH. My venerable Brothers and Sisters,

the first word of this instruction is to you. Experience says to Faith, "Trust God, for He has been your help so long." How long? Fifty years for some of you. How old are you? Seventy, eighty? God has been your help, then, all that time! How long do you expect to live? To be eighty. You are 70 now. All you have seen through seven-eighths of life is that He is a faithful God. Can you not trust Him for the other eighth?

Your sun is going down, its shadows are lengthening, but from early dawn all through the hot noontide He has been good to you. Can you not trust Him for the last few hours of eventide? Surely, surely God deserves that such long-continued kindness should not be received with ungrateful doubts! If He had meant to be a liar to you, you would have found Him out before this. If His promises were intended to be failures, they surely would have been failures to you before you had gone so far! Oh, believe Him for the rest of life and go singing into Heaven, "You have been my help." May the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, enable you to put down all unbelief! The Lord has been our help so constantly that the fact confirms our faith.

If, in looking back upon our lives, we could find a point or two where God had failed us, we might, then, let our faith flag. I can only speak as I find—I cannot find one instance in all my life in which God was untrue or unkind to me. If we ever doubt God till we have cause for it. We shall never entertain any doubts so long as we live. Yesterday, as I looked at some little birds in a cage, I thought to myself, "These poor little creatures are entirely dependent upon those who feed them. If seed and water are not supplied to them, they cannot help themselves and must die. And yet there they sit and sing with all their might! Their state of dependence never distresses them. They have perfect confidence in their keepers."

And, I thought, that is just my position. I am God's singing bird. Perhaps I wonder where I shall get my bread from, or my sermon for next Sunday—and a great many cares and troubles come to me. But why should I be troubled? Instead of mistrusting my Keeper, who has fed me these many years, had I not better sit and sing as loudly as I can? Would

not that be the best thing to do? The bird does it, and why should not a man do it, who is supposed to have more brains than a bird, but who sometimes does not seem to have half as much? Come, Brothers and Sisters, come! The Lord has constantly been true, let us not doubt!

And then He has helped us so singularly. Some here present have been in very remarkable tribulations—trials the like of which have not befallen other people—at least, so they think! They have fallen to their lot and yet they have had singular rescues and helps. Well, then, when you come into the singular predicament of dying, you shall have the singular Grace of being able to rejoice when you die! Or, if any other remarkable trial should waylay you between here and Heaven, you shall find extraordinary deliverance from Him who has been your help.

And I might say, in closing, God up to now has helped us in such a way that He has glorified Himself. We could not have believed that He could have so delightfully illustrated His Divine attributes as He has done in our past biography! There have been such flashes of light out of His excellent Glory that we have been astounded! So it will be to the last. God will be glorified in our mortal bodies while we live and when we come to die. He has been our help and He will be our help till, like a scroll, this world is rolled up and time itself expires, and we have reached eternity.

I have two or three more thoughts to utter and I have done. To self-righteous persons our text can have no sweetness. You have always done your best and have been very religious. You have believed that you deserve eternal life, and you have been on very good terms with yourselves. God has not been your help. You did not want Him—you have done very well without Him. You do not need washing in the blood of Jesus—you were never a very great sinner. You do not require help from the Holy Spirit—you have always been able to attend to the formalities of religion without assistance from supernatural power. And so this is your secret judgment of your condition.

You cannot say, "You have been my help." And I dare say you do not pray, "Leave me not, neither forsake me." You do not see the need of it. Well, your fancied salvation is such an one that the sooner you are rid of it the better! It is such an one that if you can put a millstone about its neck and sink it in the sea, you will do well, for if you do not do that, it will sink you in Hell forever! That hope of salvation which is not grounded upon Christ and the power of God, but which rests in self, is nothing but counterfeit—it is damnation gilded, nothing better. Away with it! Away with it! And oh, may you be made to go as guilty, as helpless, as entirely dependent upon mercy and Divine strength—and then you will be in the way of salvation, but not till then.

Oh, may the Spirit of God teach you this! I have, here, some poor trembling soul who is seeking Christ and he says, "O Sir, I could not use the plea of the text this morning." Well, beloved Friend, perhaps not in the strong sense in which the Christian can, but you may

still use it in a measure. For instance, you need to be forgiven. You need to be saved. You can say to your heavenly Father, "O God, You have preserved my miserable life. You have bid the sun to shine upon the

evil as well as the good. You have sent the showers and the harvest for me as well as for the best of Your servants. Oh, if You have done this, do more and send me the gifts of Your Grace!"

Besides, poor Heart, you can say, "You have given me this Sunday. You have permitted me to go and sit with Your servants. Though the meanest of them all, You permit me to hear the voice of Gospel invitation. You speak to me, and say, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.' Oh, crown these gifts by giving me faith, by granting me life—the life of Your Holy Spirit! Save me, save me with a great salvation!" I think that is good pleading and especially if you can add, "O God, You have set forth Your Son Jesus to be a Propitiation for sin, and declared that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. By Your Grace I do trust in Him and rest my soul upon Him, alone. Do not reject me! Let me know Your great salvation, or I languish, faint, and die."

You shall not be long in such a case as that. If you believe, all things are yours! If your only hope is in Him who bled on the Cross, your transgressions are already blotted out! Go, and sin no more! Peace be unto you! Be of good courage! The Lord has looked upon you already with an eye of love! You are His and He will never leave you nor forsake you, world without end. God bless you all, dear Friends, and He shall have the honor and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 27, 28.