

Brought Up from the Horrible Pit

A Sermon

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'I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.'[Psalm 40:1-3](#).

THIS PASSAGE HAS BEEN USED with great frequency as the expression of the experience of the people of God, and I think it has been very rightly so used. It is a very accurate picture of the way in which sinners are raised up from despair to hope and salvation, and of the way in which saints are brought out of deep troubles, and made to sing of divine love and power. Yet I am not certain that the first verse could be truthfully uttered by all of us; I question, indeed, whether any of us could thus speak. Could we say 'I waited patiently for the Lord.' Think ye, brethren, might it not read 'I waited impatiently for the Lord,' in the case of most of us? All the rest may stand true, but this would need to be modified. We could hardly speak in our own commendation if we considered our conduct in the matter of patience, for that is, alas, still a scarce virtue upon the face of the earth. If we read the psalm through we shall see that it was not written exclusively to describe the experience of God's people. Secondly we may regard it as David's language, but in the first instance a greater than David is here. The first Person who uttered these words was the Messiah, and that is quite clear if you read the psalm through; for we fall upon such language as this: 'Sacrifice and offering, Thou didst not desire; mine ears hast Thou opened; burnt offering and sin offering hast Thou not required. Then said I, come I in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.' We need not say with the Ethiopian, 'Of whom speaketh the prophet this? Of himself or of some other?' For we are led at once by the plainest indications to see that He is not speaking of Himself, but of our Lord and if we needed confirmation of this we get it in [Hebrews 10](#), where Paul expressly quotes this passage as referring to the Lord Jesus. To Him, indeed, alone of all men can it with accuracy be applied. So this morning I shall have to show that this text of ours is most fit to be the language of the Lord, our representative and covenant Head. When I have shown this, you will then see how we can use the self-same expressions, because we are in Him. Each believer becomes a mirror in which is reflected the experience of our Lord; but it would be ill for us to be so taken up with the mere reflection as to forget the express image by which this experience is formed in us.

I shall ask you, then, at this time, to observe our divine Lord when in His greatest trouble. Notice, first, *our Lord's behavior* "I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry": then consider, secondly, *our Lord deliverance*, expressed by the phrase, 'He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay,' and so forth: then let us think, thirdly of *the Lord's reward* for it 'many shall see, and fear, and trust in the Lord': that is His great end and object, and in it He sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied. We shall close, fourthly, by perceiving *the Lord's likeness* in all His saved ones; for they also are brought up from the pit of destruction, and a new song is put into their mouths. He is not ashamed to call them brethren, since in each one of them his own experience is repeated though upon a smaller scale.

I. First, let us think of OUR LORD'S BEHAVIOR. 'I waited patiently for the Lord.' Here we greatly need the teaching of the Holy Ghost; may it be given us abundantly. First, our Lord's conduct when He was under the smarting rod was that of *waiting*. He waited upon the Lord all His life, and this waiting became more conspicuous in His passion and death. He went down into Gethsemane, and there He prayed earnestly; but with sweet submission; for He said, 'Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.' Complete submission was the essential spirit of His prayer. He rose up from prayer all crimson with His bloody sweat, and He went to meet His foes, delivering Himself up voluntarily to be led as a sheep to the slaughter. He did not unsheathe the sword as Peter did; much less did He flee, like His disciples, but He waited upon the will of the Most High, enduring all things till the Father should give Him deliverance. When they took Him before Annas and Caiaphas, and Pilate and Herod, hurrying Him from bar to bar, how patiently He kept silence, though false witnesses appeared against Him. Like a sheep before her shearers He was dumb, submitting Himself without a struggle. In the omnipotence of patience He held His Peace even from good, because it was so written of Him. When they led Him away to crucifixion through the streets of Jerusalem He did not even encourage the lamentations of the sympathizing women who surrounded him; but in His wondrous patience He said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me.' He did not refuse to bear His cross, or to let the cross bear Him. He did not complain of contempt and contumely, since these were appointed Him. When they nailed Him to the tree, and there He hung in the burning sun, tortured, fevered, agonizing, the words that escaped Him were those of murmuring and repining, but those of pity, pain, patience, and submission. Till He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost, He bowed His whole being to His Father's will, waiting His time and pleasure. He steadily took a long draft at the appointed cup, and drained it to the bitter end. His eyes were unto the Lord as the eyes of servants are to the hands of their masters; He waited in service, in hope, in resignation, and in confidence. He knew that God would help Him and deliver Him, He knew that His head would be raised on high above the sons of men; but still He waited for the Father's time, and meanwhile made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Himself the form of

a servant, and as a servant yielded all His strength to the work which was given Him to do. He was willing in the hour of His passion to be treated as the scum and scorn of all mankind, nor did He hurry the hour when all the shame and scorn should blossom into glory and honor. He went down in His waiting even to the utmost of self-denial, and truly proved that He came not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him. Never man served and waited like this man.

Our text adds to this word 'waited' the word 'patiently.' 'I waited *patiently*.' If you would see patience, look not at Job on the dunghill, but look at Jesus on the cross. Job, the most patient of men, was assuredly impatient at the same time; but this blessed Lord of ours gave Himself up completely, and showed not the slightest sign of repining. Not a speck of impatience can be detected in the crystal stream of our Lord's submission. His soul was all melted, and it all flowed into the mold of the Father's will: no dross was in or about Him, nothing which refused to melt and to run into the mold. One would have supposed that He would have spoken an angry word to Judas, who betrayed Him; instead of which He gently asked of Him, 'Friend, wherefore art thou come?' It would not have seemed wonderful if He had upbraided the Jews who so falsely accused Him, or the rulers who so unjustly treated Him; but here is the patience of the saintly One, He was perfect master of His own Spirit. His answer to His murderers was the prayer, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' So meek and lowly in heart was He that to men He gave no sharp replies: His answers were all steeped in gentleness; take for example His word to the high priest: 'If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?' They sat down around the cross and mocked Him, jeered at Him, insulted over Him, and made mirth even of His cries and prayers; but He did not utter a single word of rebuke, much less did He leap from the cross to dash His mockers in pieces, and prove by their destruction that He was indeed the mighty Son of God. 'I waited patiently,' saith He. No thought or word or deed of impatience can be charged upon Him; waiting, He waited, and waited still. We are in such a hurry when we are in trouble; we hasten to escape from it at once; every minute seems an hour, and every day an age. 'Help me speedily, my God!' is the natural cry of the child of God under the rod; but our Saviour was in no ill haste to get from the chastisement which came upon Him for our sakes: He was at leisure in His woe. So thoroughly was He resolved to do His Father's will that even on the morning of His resurrection He arose with deliberation, and quitted the grave in order, folding His grave-clothes and laying the napkin by itself. He steadily persevered in all His work of holiness and sorrow of sacrifice, never accepting deliverance till His work was done. Patiently He endured to have His ear bored to the door-post, to have His head encircled with thorns, His cheeks disdained with spittle, His back furrowed with the lash, His hands and feet nailed to the wood, and His heart pierced with the spear. In His body on the tree patience was written out in crimson characters.

Now, this was needful for the completeness of His atonement. No expiation could have been made by an impatient Saviour. Only a perfect obedience could satisfy the law; only an unblemished sacrifice could put away our sins. There must not, therefore, be about our Substitute a trace of resistance to the Father's will, nor as a sacrifice must He struggle against the cords, or turn His head away from the sacrificial knife. In truth, His was a willing, patient doing and suffering of the divine will. 'He *gave* His back to the smiters and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: He hid not His face from shame and spitting.' 'I waited patiently for the Lord,' saith He; and you know, brethren, how true was the declaration.

But while the Saviour thus waited, and waited patiently, we must not forget that He waited *prayerfully*, for the text speaks of a cry which He lifted up, and of God's inclining Himself to it. That patience which does not pray is obstinacy. A soul silent to God is apt to be sullen rather than submissive. A stoical patience hardens itself against grief, and asks no deliverance; but that is not the patience which God loves, it is not the patience of Christ. He used strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death. Let Gethsemane tell of that wrestling which infinitely excelled the wrestling of Jacob: Jabbok is outdone by Kedron. His was a wrestling, not to sweat alone, but unto sweat of blood: he sweats who works for bread, the staff of life; but He sweats blood who works for life itself. What prayers those must have been under such a fearful physical, mental, and spiritual agony which were so fervent that they brought an angel from the throne, and yet so submissive that they are the model of resignation. He agonized as earnestly as if He sought His own will, and yet He wholly resigned Himself to the Father, saying, 'Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God.' Our Lord was always praying: there never was a moment in His life in which He was not in full communion with God, unless we except the period when He cried, 'Why hast thou forsaken me?' He did often go aside to pray a more special prayer, but yet even when He spoke to the people, even when He faced His foes, His soul was still in constant fellowship with His Father. But ah, when He came between the upper and the nether millstones, when this good olive was ground in the olive press, and all the oil of His life was extracted from Him, then it was that His strong crying and tears came up before the Lord His God, and He was heard in that He feared.

Now, brothers and sisters, look at your pattern, and see how far short you have come of it. At least, I will remember with regret how far short I have come of it. Have we waited? Have we not been in too great a hurry? Has it not been too much our desire that the Lord might make His will like our will rather than make our will like His? Have you not had a will of your own sometimes, and a strong will too? Have you not been as the bullock unaccustomed to the yoke? Have you not kicked against the pricks? You have not waited, but you have worried. Can we say that we waited patiently? Oh, that patience! Every man thinks he has it until he needs it, but only let his tender point be touched, and you will see how little patience he possesses. It is the fire which tires our supposed resignation, and under

that process much of our palace of patience burns like wood, hay, and stubble. Old crosses fit the shoulder, but let a new cross be laid upon us and we writhe under it. Suffering is the vocation of a Christian, but most of us come short of our high calling. Our Lord Jesus has joined together reigning and suffering, for we read of 'the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ'; He was the royal example of patience, but what are we? Remember, again, that Jesus prayed importunately while He waited: 'being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly.' Have we not at time restrained prayer? Have we not pleaded as an excuse for our feeble petitions the very facts which ought to have been a spur to our earnestness? 'I felt too ill to pray.' Coldest thou not pray for health with all the more fervency? 'I felt too burdened to pray.' Shouldst thou not pray for help to bear thy burden? Can we ever safely say to ourselves, 'I may be excused from supplication now, for my sorrow is great.' Talk not so. Here is thy balm and benediction, thy comfort and thy cordial: here is thy strength and succor, thy constancy and confidence. Even in the midnight of the soul let us arise and pour out our hearts like water before the Lord. O tried believer, get thee to thy knees, and from above the mercy-seat the glory of the Lord shall shine forth upon thee. Pray even as Jesus did, and as all His saints have done, so shall you in patience possess your soul. In due time the Lord inclined to the afflicted suppliant, listening to his moaning from the bottom of the pit; of this it is high time for us to speak. Yet let us not leave this first point till we learn from the example of our Lord that patience is seen in waiting as well as in suffering. To bear a great weight for an hour or two is nothing compared with carrying a load for many a day. Patience knows its letters, but waiting reads the page, and praying rehearses it in the ears of God. Let us add to our patience waiting, and to waiting prayer.

II. We come, secondly, to consider OUR LORD'S DELIVERANCE. In due time, when patience had had her perfect work, and prayer had at last prevailed, our suffering Lord was brought up again from the deeps of sorrow. His deliverance is set forth under two images.

First, it is represented as a *bringing up out of a horrible pit*. It is a terribly suggestive metaphor. I have been in the dungeon in Rome in which, according to tradition, Peter and Paul were confined (though, probably, they were never there at all). It was indeed a horrible pit, for originally it had no entrance but a round hole in the rock above; and when that round hole at the top was blocked with a stone, not a ray of light nor a particle of fresh air could possibly enter. The prisoners were let down into the cavern, and there they were left. When once the opening was closed they were cut off from all communication with their fellow men. No being has ever been so cruel to man as man. Man is the worst of monsters to his kind, and his cruel inventions are many. He has not been content to leave his fellows their natural liberty, but he built prisons and digged pits in which to shut up his victims. At first they would place a man in a dry well merely for custody and confinement, or they would drop him into some hollow cavern in the earth in which corn or treasure had been concealed; but afterwards with greater ingenuity of malice they covered over the top of these pits so

that the prisoners could not be partakers of God's bountiful air, or the merciful light of the sun, or the silver sheen of the moon. Covered all over and shut in, the captives were buried alive. Even in modern times we have seen what they call *oubliettes*, or dungeons in which prisoners were immured, to be forgotten as dead men out of mind, buried so as never to come forth again. Such unfortunates as were doomed to enter these tombs of living men bade farewell to hope. They were inhabitants of oblivion, dwellers in the land of death shade, to remain apart from their kind, cut off from memory. These worst of dungeons may illustrate our text 'He brought me up also out of a horrible pit.'

In the original we get the idea of a crash, as when some mailed warrior in the midst of the battle stumbles into a pit, and there he lies bruised and broken: and there is the thought of the fall of waters rushing strangely, furiously, mysteriously. The Hebrew hath it, 'The pit of noises,' or as some render it, 'the pit of destruction.' Such was the condition of our dear Redeemer when He was bearing our sin and suffering in our stead.

Just notice, first, that our Lord was like a man put into a pit, and so made to be *quite alone*. Imagine yourself now confined in one of those caverns, with the big stone rolled over the mouth of it. There would be neither hearing nor answering. Now will you know the dread solemnity of silence. You may speak, but no gentle whisper of sympathy will reach your ears in return; you may cry again and again and make the dungeon's dome echo to your voice, but you are speaking as to brass; no man cares for your soul. You are alone; alone in a fearful solitude. Thus it happened to our Saviour. All His disciples forsook Him and fled, and what was infinitely worse, His God forsook Him too. He cried, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Can any man tell me all that was meant by that infinite lament?

Of course, a prisoner in such a pit as that was *in total darkness*. He could not see the walls which enclosed him, nor so much as his own hand. No beam of sunlight ever wandered into that stagnant air; the captive would have to grope for the pitcher of water and the morsel of bread which a cruel mercy would allot to him. Our Lord was in the dark; midnight brooded over His spirit. He said 'Now is my soul troubled.' 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death.' His was a pit of gloom, the region of the shadow of death, a land of darkness as darkness itself

When a man is shut up in a pit he is, of course, *full of distress*. If you were, any of you, to go into one of the solitary cells of our own jails, I warrant you a short sojourn in it would be quite enough. These cells some years ago were thought to be wonderful cures for all sort of evil dispositions in men, but probably they have oftener destroyed reason than conquered depravity. Go in, if you dare. Ask the warder to shut to the door, and leave you in the dark all alone, that you may try the solitary system for yourself. No, I should not advise you to try it even for five minutes, for you might even in that short space inflict such an injury upon your nervous system as you would never recover. I believe that many of the gentler ones here would be quite unable to bear total darkness and solitude even for the shortest space.

In the grim gloom the soul is haunted with phantom fears, while horror peoples the place which is empty of human beings; the heart is worried with evil imaginations, and pierced with arrows of distress; grief takes hold of the spirit, and alarm conquers hope. In our Lord's case, the grief and sorrow which He felt can never be described, nor need it be conceived. It was something tantamount to the miseries of damned souls. The holy Jesus could not feel the exact misery which takes hold on abandoned rebels, but He did suffer what was tantamount to that at the judgment's seat of God. He gave a *quid pro quo*, a something which in God's esteem, reckoning the dignity of His mighty person, stood instead of the sinner's eternal suffering. He felt woe upon woe, night blackening night. Do not try to realize His agony; He wills that you should note, for He has trodden the winepress alone, and of the people there we're none with Him, as if to show that none could understand His sorrows, and that we can do no more than speak of His 'unknown sufferings.'

But I must add, to complete the figure, that shut up in such a pit there might be a great tumult above, like to the tramping of armed hosts, or there might be a rush of waters underneath the captive deep in earth's bowels. He could not tell what the noise was, nor whence it came; and hence he would often be in terrible fear while he sat alone in the thick darkness. Our lord had His fears, for we read that He was heard in that He feared. Torrents of sin rushed near Him; floods of wrath were heard around Him, and cataracts of grief fell upon Him. Besides, there was a mystery about this anguish which intensified it a mystery not to be written or explained. Our Redeemer's spirit was cast down within Him far beyond anything that is common to men; in that horrible pit, that pit of destruction, He lay with none to pity or sustain.

But, Oh, change the strain, and sing unto the Lord awhile, as we read the verse, 'He brought me up out of a horrible pit.' The Lord Jesus Christ was lifted up from all sorrow of spirit at that moment when He said so bravely, 'It is finished,' and though He died yet was He lifted up from death, as it is written, 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.' His Spirit ascended to God, and by-and-by, when the third day had blushed with morning light, His body rose from the tomb, to ascend in due time to glory. He came up out of the pit of the grave, delivered from all fear of corruption, pain, or defeat. Now His sorrow is ended, and His brow is clear from care. His visage is marred no more: He bears the scars which do but illumine His hands and feet with splendor, but

No more the bloody spear,
The cross and nails no more,
For hell itself shakes at his name,
And all the heavens adore.

Sing ye unto the Lord, ye saints of His, as ye behold your Master brought up again from among the sorrowful, the despised, the deserted, the dead.

A second figure is, however, used here to express our Lord's grief and deliverance from it 'Out of the miry clay.' Travelers tell us that wherever pits are still used as dungeons, they are damp, foul and utterly loathsome; for they are never cleansed, however long the prisoner may have been there, or however great the number of victims shut up within them. You know what the prisons of Europe were in Howard's days, they were even worse in the East in periods further back. The imprisoned wretch often found himself sinking in more; he found no rest, no hope of comfort, and when extricated he needed a hand to drag him out of the thick clay. Our blessed Lord and Master found Himself when He was suffering for us where everything appeared to give way beneath Him; His spirits sank, His friends failed Him, and His heart melted like wax. Every comfort was taken from Him. His blessed manhood found nothing upon this earth upon which it could stay itself, for He had been made sin for us, made a curse for us, and so every foundation of comfort departed from Him. He was deprived of visible support, and reduced to a sad condition. As a man who has fallen into a slough cannot stir so as to recover himself, so was it with our Redeemer, who says in the Psalms 'I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing.' Some morasses are so destructive that, if a man should once fall into them, he might give up his life for lost unless some one came that way to drag him out. So did the Saviour sink in the miry clay of our sin and misery until the Lord Almighty lifted Him out. The clay of sorrow clung to Him; it held to Him while He was performing the great work of our redemption. But the Lord brought Him up out of it. There is no mire upon His garments now: his feet no longer sink, He is not held by the bands of death, He slides not into the grave again. He was dragged down, as it were, by hearing our sin, but that is over, and He hath ascended on high: He hath led captivity captive, and received gifts from men. All honor be unto Him, and to His Father who delivered Him.

As we read our text we pursue this story of our Master's deliverance, and we are told that *He was brought up* out of the lowest deeps. Say the words or sing them as you choose 'He brought me up.' God upraised His obedient Son from the depths into which He had descended on our account. He was brought up, like Jonah who went to the bottom of the mountains, and yet was landed safely on the shore. He was brought up like Joseph, who rose from a pit to a palace; like David, who was led up from the sheepfold to the kingdom. 'The king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice! His glory is great in thy salvation: honor and majesty hast thou laid upon him. For thou hast made him most blessed forever: Thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance.'

Then we are told *He was set on a rock*, and oh, the glory of our blessed Lord in this matter, for now He stands on a firm foundation in all that He does for us. Judgment and truth confirm His ways, and the Judge of all the earth approves His doings. Christ has no sandy foundation for His work of mercy or His word of comfort. When He saves He has a right to save: when He puts away sin He does it on indisputable grounds: when He helps

and delivers His people He does it according to law, according to the will of the Highest. As Justifier, Preserver, and Perfecter of His people, He stands upon a rock. This day I delight to think of my Lord as settling His church with Himself upon the immutable foundations of the covenant, on the decree of God, on the purpose of the Father, on His own work, and on the promise of God that He would reward Him in that work. Well may we say that His feet are upon a rock, for He is Himself, by another figure, the Rock of ages, the Rock of our salvation.

And now the *goings of our glorious Christ are established*. When He goes out to save a sinner, He knows that He can do it, and has a right to do it. When He goes up to His Father's throne to make intercession for sinners, His goings are established, and the desire of His heart is given Him. When He comes in among His church, or marches forth with his people to the ends of the earth, His goings are established. 'For the king trusteth in the Lord, and through the mercy of the most High he shall not be moved.' He shall surely come a second time without sin unto salvation, for so has the Father decreed: His glorious goings are as surely established as were those of His labor and suffering. We shall never be without a Saviour: we shall never have a fallen or a vanquished Saviour; for His goings are established for continuance, certainty, and victory. Such honor have all His saints; for 'the steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord'; and again, 'none of his steps shall slide.'

Best of all, there is *a new, song in the mouth of our Well-beloved*. It is grand to think of Jesus singing. Read the twenty-second Psalm, and you will find Him doing it, as also in the Hebrews: 'In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.' Toward the end of His earthly career you hear Him bursting into song. Was not that a grand occasion just before His passion, when He was going out to die; we read that 'after supper they sang a hymn.' If we had been bound to die that night, as He was, we should rather have wept or prayed than sang. Not so our Lord. I do not know what psalm they sang: probably a part of the great Hallel, usually sung after the Passover, which consists of those Psalms at the end of the book which are so full of praise. I believe the Saviour Himself pitched the tune and led the strain. Think of Him singing when near His hour of agony! Going to scorn and mockery, singing! Going to the thorn-crown and the scourge, singing! Going to death, even the death of the cross, singing! For the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross, despising the shame! But now, what must that new song be which He leads in heaven? 'They sang, as it were, a new song before the throne'; but it is He that leads the heavenly orchestra. How greatly He excels Miriam, the sister of Moses, when she took her timbrel and led forth the women in their dances, saying, 'Sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.' This is called 'the song of Moses, the servant of God and of the Lamb'; so I gather that the Lamb's new song is after the same triumphant fashion: it is the substance of that which Moses' song foreshadowed. In Christ Jesus the Lord our God has led captivity captive. Let us praise Him on the high sounding cymbals. Sing

unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously. The powers of darkness are destroyed; sin, death, and hell are drowned in the atoning blood: the depths have covered them: there is not one of them left. Oh, 'sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously.' 'Ascribe ye greatness unto our God.'

III. Such is the exalted condition of our Lord at this hour; let us turn and look upon THE LORD'S REWARD. The Lord's reward for having gone down into the horrible pit, and having gunk in the miry clay for us, is this that 'Many shall see, and fear, and trust in the Lord. *'Many!'* Not all mankind, but 'many' shall look to Jesus and live. Alas! Vast numbers continue in unbelief, but 'many' shall believe and live; and the Lord's 'many' means very many. As I was thinking over my text, I thought, 'I hope there will be some at the Tabernacle this morning that belong to the I many who shall see and fear and trust in the Lord.' 'Many *shall*' for the Lord hath promised it. But, Lord, they will not. 'But they shall,' says God. Oh, but many refuse. 'But they shall,' says God and He hath the key of men's hearts, and power over their judgments and their wills. 'Many shall.' Do you, oh ye unbelievers, think that Jesus shall die in vain? Oh, sinners, if you will nor have Christ, others will. You may despise Him, but He will be none the less glorious. You may reject His salvation but He shall be none the less mighty to save. He is a king, and ye cannot pluck a single jewel from His crown. If you are so foolish as to provoke His iron rod so that He shall break you in shivers with it, yet He will be glorious in the sight of God, and He will save His own. Notwithstanding your hardness of heart, be this known unto you, oh House of Israel, that 'many shall see, and fear, and trust in the Lord.'

What shall the many do? They shall *'see.'* Their eyes shall be opened, and they shall see their Lord in the horrible pit, and in the miry clay, and as they look they shall see that He was there for them. What joy this will create in their spirits! If they do not see the Lord Jesus as their Substitute they shall, at any rate, be made to see the exceeding sinfulness of sin. If when Jesus only takes imputed sin, and has no sin of His own, yet He must be cast into the horrible pit and sink in the miry clay; then what will become of men who have their own sins about them, provoking the fierce anger of the Lord? If God thus smites His well-beloved, oh sinner, how will He smite you! Beware, ye that forget Him, lest He tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you. By the suffering Surety all covered with His own gore, I do beseech you, provoke not God; for if His Only-Begotten must suffer so, you must suffer yet more if you break His law, and next reject His gospel.

'Many shall see.' Do you wonder that it is added, 'and shall *fear?*' It makes men fear to see a bleeding Christ, and to know that they crucified Him. It makes men fear, however, with a sweet filial fear that is akin to hope, when they see that Jesus died for sinner, the Just for the unjust, to bring them to God. Oh, when they see the Lord of love acting as a scapegoat, and bearing their sins away into the wilderness of forgetfulness, they begin to hate their evil

ways, and to have a reverent fear of God; for so saith the Scripture, 'there is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared.'

But best of all and this is the chief point they come to '*trust* in the Lord.' They build their hope of salvation upon the righteousness of God as manifested in Christ Jesus. Oh, I would to God that some of you would trust Him at once. Beloved friend, are you trying to be saved by your own works? That is a delusion. Are you hoping to be saved by your own feelings? That is a lie. But you can be saved, you shall be saved: if you will trust yourself with that blessed One who was alone in the dark pit of noises for the sake of sinners, and slipped in the miry clay for the ungodly, you shall assuredly be saved from wrath through Him. Trust Him, and as surely as He liveth you shall be saved; for he that trusteth in Him cannot perish. God's truthfulness were gone if the believer could be lost. Hath He not said, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.' The throne of God must rock and reel before the cross.

IV. Fourthly, let us see THE LORD'S LIKENESS in His people. This whole passage, as I said in the beginning, has often been used by individual believers as a description of their own deliverance. It is a true picture, because we are made like unto our Head, and all the brethren are partakers of that which the Head has endured. Do I speak to any of my Master's servants in sore trouble? Dear friends, are you made to wait, though your trial is sharp and severe? Is it so that your prayer has not yet been answered? Then remember the waiter's place was once occupied by the Lord Jesus, for He says, 'I waited patiently.' If the Lord keeps you waiting for a certain blessing year after year do not despair. He will give it at length if it be truly for your good, for He hath said, 'no good thing will I withhold from them that walk uprightly.' He kept His Son waiting, and He may very well keep you in like posture, for how long did you delay, and cause the Lord of grace to wait on you! 'Blessed are they that wait for Him.' I have seen people very uppish when they have called on a public man and have had to wait a little; they feel that they ought not to be kept in the lobby, but suppose some young man said to them, 'I am his own son, and yet I have been waiting an hour.' Then they are more patient. So when God keeps you waiting do not be proud, and say, 'Wherefore should I wait for the Lord any longer?' but remember 'It is good for a man both to hope and quietly wait for the salvation of God.' Jesus waited waited patiently.' Seek to be like Him, and in patience possess your soul. 'I cannot see how I am to be delivered.' Wait. 'Ah, this is such a heavy burden.' Wait. 'But I am ready to die under this terrible load.' Wait! Wait on! Though He tarry, wait for Him: He is worth waiting for. 'Wait' is a short word, but it takes a deal of grace to spell out its full meaning, and still more grace to put it in practice. Wait: wait. 'Oh, but I have been unfortunate.' Wait. 'But I have believed a promise, and it has not been fulfilled.' Wait; for you wait in blessed company: you may hear Jesus saying, 'I waited patiently.' Blessed be His name, He is teaching us to do the same by His gracious Spirit.

Next, the Lord may send you, His dear child, a very heavy sorrow: you may fall into the horrible pit, and see no light, no comfort, and no one may be able to cheer you or help you. Some that have a touch of despondency in their nature have been brought so low as almost to despair of life. They have sat in darkness and seen no light: they have felt the walls of their prison and have not discovered a crack or cranny through which escape was possible: they have looked up, and even then they have seen nothing to console them. Ah, well, here is a word I commend to you: the Saviour says it: 'He brought me up.' The Lord God can and will bring up His troubled ones. You will have to write in your dairy one of these days. 'He brought me up.' I was in the dark, I was in the dungeon, but 'He brought me up.' I can personally say this with gladsome gratitude, for He hath brought me up,' again and again. My heart is glad as I reflect upon my past deliverances. I have often wondered why I so often shut up in prison, and bound as with fetters of steel; but I cease to wonder when I think of the many among you who are called to wear the like bonds. This is my portion, that I may be a witness-bearer for my God, and that I may be able to speak to the experiences of God's tempted people, and tell how graciously the Lord delivers His servants who trust in Him. Faith shall never be shamed or confounded, world without end. God can and will hasten to the rescue of the faithful. I set to my seal also that 'He brought me up'; and, beloved brother in tribulation, He will bring *you* up; only rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him.

'Ah,' say you, 'But I do not know how to stand, for I sink as in miry clay, through faintness of heart: I cannot find the slightest foothold for my hope.' No, you are sinking in the miry clay like your Master; but in answer to prayer the Lord will bring you up out of your hopeless state, and He will set your feet upon a rock and establish your goings, and give you joy, and peace, and delight. Wherefore see, and fear, and trust in God, and give glory to His blessed name.

Lastly, do I address any seeking one who finds no rest for the sole of his foot? Dear friend, are you sinking in the deep mire of your guilt? The Lord can pardon you, for 'the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.' Are you shut up by conscience in the prison-house under a just sense of deserved wrath? Jesus will give you immediate rest if you come to Him. Do you feel as if you cannot kneel to pray, for your very knees slip in the mire of doubt? Remember, Jesus makes intercession for the transgressors. Do you seem as if, every time you move, you are burying your hope, and slipping deeper and deeper into ruin? The Lord hath plenteous redemption. Do not despair. You cannot not deliver yourself, but God can deliver you: you cannot stand of yourself, but God can make you to stand. You cannot go to Him nor go abroad among your fellow-men with comfort, but the Lord can make you to run in His ways. You shall yet go forth with joy and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Only see Christ, and fear and trust your God, and you too shall sing unto Jehovah your deliverer, and this shall be your song:'

He raised me from a horrid pit,
Where mourning long I lay,
And from my bonds released my feet,
Deep bonds of miry clay.
Firm on a rock he made me stand,
And taught my cheerful tongue
I praise thy wonders of his hand
In a new thankful song.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON'PSALM 40.

HYMNS FROM 'OUR OWN HYMN BOOK' 196, 40, 332.