

The Happy Beggar

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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,

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"But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinks upon me." [Psalm 40:17](#).

THERE is no crime and there is no credit in being poor. Everything depends upon the occasion of the poverty. Some men are poor and are greatly to be pitied, for their poverty has come upon them without any fault of their own. God has been pleased to lay this burden upon them and, therefore, they may expect to experience Divine help and ought to be tenderly considered by their Brothers and Sisters in Christ. Occasionally poverty has been the result of integrity or religion—and here the poor man is to be admired and honored. At the same time, it will be observed by all who watch with an impartial eye that very much of the poverty about us is the direct result of idleness, intemperance, improvidence and sin. There would probably not be one-tenth of the poverty there now is upon the face of the earth if the drinking shops were less frequented, if debauchery were less common, if idleness were banished and extravagance abandoned. Lovers of pleasure, (alas, that such a word should be so degraded), are great impoverishers of themselves. It is clear that there is not, of necessity, either vice or virtue in being poor and a man's poverty cannot be judged of by itself—its causes and circumstances must be taken into consideration.

The poverty, however, to which the text relates is a poverty which I desire to cultivate in my own heart! And it is one upon which our Divine Lord has pronounced a blessing. When He sat down upon the mountain and poured forth His famous series of beatitudes, He said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." The poor in pocket may be blessed, or may not be blessed, as the case may be, but the poor in spirit are always blessed and we have Christ's authority for so saying! Theirs is a poverty which is better than wealth! In fact, it is a poverty which indicates the possession of the truest of all riches.

It was mainly in this sense that David said, "I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinks upon me." Certainly, in any other sense, there are vast multitudes who are "poor and needy," but who neither think upon God, nor rejoice that God thinks upon them. Those who are spiritually "poor and needy"—the sacred beggars at Mercy's gate, the elect mendicants of Heaven—these are the people who may say, with humble confidence, as David did, "Yet the Lord thinks upon me."

Two things are noteworthy in the text. First, here, is a frank acknowledgment—"I am poor and needy." But, secondly, here is a comfortable confidence—"yet the Lord thinks upon me."

I. First, here is A FRANK ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

Some men do not object to confess that they are poor in worldly goods. In fact, they are rather fond of pleading poverty when there is a collection coming, or a subscription list in dangerous proximity. Men have even gloried in history in the name of, "The Beggars." And, "silver and gold have I none," has been exalted into a boast! But spiritually, it is little less than a miracle to bring men to feel, first, and then to confess their poverty, for naked, and poor, and miserable as we are by nature, we are all apt enough to say, "I am rich and increased with goods." We cannot dig and to beg we are ashamed. If we did not inherit a penny of virtue from father Adam, we certainly inherited plenty of pride! Poor and proud we all are. We will not, if we can help it, take our seat in the lowest room, though that is our proper place. Grace alone can bring us to see ourselves in the glass of truth. To have nothing is natural to us, but to confess that we have nothing is more than we will come to until the Holy Spirit has worked self-abasement in us. The emptiers must come up upon us for, though naturally as empty as Hagar's bottle, yet we boast ourselves to be as full as a fountain! The Spirit of God must take from us our goodly Babylonian garment, or we shall never consent to be dressed in the fair white

linen of the righteousness of saints. What Paul flung away as dross and dung, we poor rag-collectors prize and hoard up as long as ever we can!

"I am poor and needy," is a confession which only He who is the Truth of God can teach us to offer. If you are saying it, my Brother, you need not be afraid that you are under a desponding delusion. But, true as it is, and plain to every Grace-taught child of God, yet only Grace will make a man confess the obnoxious fact. It is not in public that we can or should confess our soul-poverty as we do in the chamber when we bow our knees secretly before God. But many of us, in secret, have been compelled, with many tears and sighs, to feel as well as to say, "I am poor and needy." We have searched through and through, looked from the top to the bottom of our humanity and we could not find a single piece of good money in the house, so greatly reduced were we. We had not a shekel of merit, nor a penny of hope in ourselves! And we were constrained to fall flat on our face before God and confess our inability to meet His claims. And we found no comfort till, by faith, we learned to present our Lord Jesus as the Surety for His servants for good. We could not pay even the poorest composition and, therefore, cast ourselves upon the forbearance of God.

The Psalmist is doubly humble, for first he says he is poor, and then adds that he is needy—and there is a difference between these two things.

He acknowledges that he is poor, and you and I, if taught of God, will say the same. We may well be poor, for we came of a poor father Our father Adam had at first a great estate, but he soon lost it. He violated the trust on which he held his property and he was cast out of the inheritance and turned adrift into the world to earn his bread as a day-laborer by tilling the ground from which he was taken. His eldest son was a vagabond. The first-born

of our race was a convict on parole. If any suppose that we have inherited some good thing by natural descent, they go very contrary to what David tells us when he declares, "Behold, I was shaped in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me." Our first parents were utter bankrupts. They left us nothing but a heritage of old debts and a propensity to accumulate yet more personal obligations. Well may we be poor who come into this world heirs of wrath with a decayed estate and tainted

blood!

Moreover, since the time when we came into the world, we have followed a very miserable trade. I recollect when I was a spinner and weaver of the poorest sort. I dreamed that I would be able, by my own spinning, to make a garment to cover myself with. This was the trade of father Adam and mother Eve when they first lost their innocence—they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons. It is a very laborious business and has worn out the lives of many with bitter bondage. But its worst feature is that the Lord has declared concerning all who followed this self-righteous craft, "their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works." Even those who have best attired themselves and have, for awhile gloried in their fair apparel, have had to feel the Truth of the Lord's words by Isaiah, "I will take away the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles... and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils... and instead of a girdle there shall be a rent; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth." Vain is it to spend our labor on that which profits not, yet to this business are we early put apprentice and we work at it with mighty pains!

We are miserably poor, for we have become bankrupt even in our wretched trade. Some of us had, once, a comfortable competence laid by in the Bank of Self-Righteousness, and we meant to draw it out when we came to die— and thought we should even have a little spending money for our old age out of the interest which was paid us in the coin of Self-Conceit. But the Bank failed long ago and now we have not so much as a farthing of our own merits left us, no, nor a chance of ever having any! And, what is worse, we are deeply in debt and we have "nothing to pay." Instead of having anything like a balance on our account, we are insolvent debtors to the Justice of God, without a single farthing of assets! And unless we are freely forgiven, we must be cast into prison and lie there forever. Job described us well when he said, "for want and famine they are solitary; fleeing into the wilderness in former time desolate and waste. They have no covering in the cold, and embrace the rock for want of a shelter."

See, then, what poverty-stricken creatures we are—of a poor stock, following a starving trade and made bankrupts even in that!

What is still worse, poor human nature has no power left to retrieve itself. As long as a man has a stout pair of arms, he is not without a hope of rising from the dunghill. We once thought that we were equal to any task, but now Paul's description suits us well—"without

strength." Our Lord's words, too, are deeply true, "Without Me you can do nothing." Unable so much as to think a good thought, or to lift our hearts heavenward of ourselves—this is poverty,

indeed! We are wrecked and the whole vessel has gone to pieces. We have destroyed ourselves. Ah, my fellow man, may God make you feel this! Many know nothing about it and would be very angry if we were to say that this is their condition—and yet this is the condition of every man born into the world until the Spirit of God brings him into communion with Christ and endows him with the riches of the Covenant of Grace!

"I am poor," this is my confession! Is it yours? Is it a confession extorted from you by a clear perception that it is really so? I will recommend you, if it is so, to take to a trade which is the best trade in the world to live by—not for the body, but for the soul—and that is the profession of a beggar, certainly a suitable one for you and me! I took to it long ago and began to beg for mercy from God. I have been constrained to continue begging every day of the same kind Benefactor and I hope to die begging! Many of the saints have grown rich upon this holy mendicancy—they have indeed spoken of being daily loaded with benefits! The noblest of the peers of Heaven were here below daily pensioners upon God's love—they were fed, and clothed, and housed by the charity of the Lord—and they delighted to have it so. How clear is it from all this that none of us can have anything of which to glory! Boasting is excluded, for, let the beggar get what he may, he is but a beggar still—and the child of God, notwithstanding the bounty of his Heavenly Father, is still in himself a penniless vagrant!

The Psalmist also said, "I am needy." There are poor people who are not needy. Diogenes was very poor, but he was not needy. He had made up his mind that he would not need anything, so he lived in a tub. He had but one drinking vessel and when he saw a boy drinking out of his hand, he broke his vessel, for he said he would not possess anything superfluous. He was poor enough, but he was not needy, for when Alexander said, "What can I do for you?" he answered, "Stand out of my sunshine." So it is clear that a man may be very poor and yet he may not be burdened with need. But David was conscious of extreme need—and in this many of us can join him.

Brothers and Sisters, we confess that we need ten thousand things, in fact, we need everything. By nature, the sinner needs healing, for he is sick unto death. He needs washing, for he is foul with sin. He needs clothing, for he is naked before God. He needs preserving after he is saved, he needs the Bread of Heaven, he needs the water out of the Rock. He is all needs and nothing but needs. Not one thing that his soul needs can he, of himself, supply. He needs to be kept from even the most common sins. He needs to be instructed as to even the first elements of the faith. He needs to be taught to walk in the ways of God's most plain commandments. Our needs are so great that they comprise the whole range of Covenant supplies and all the fullness treasured up in Christ Jesus.

We are needy in every condition. We are soldiers and we need that Grace should find us both shield and sword. We are pilgrims and we need that love should give us both a staff and a Guide. We are sailing over the sea of life and we need that the wind of the Spirit shall fill our sails and that Christ shall be our Pilot. There is no figure under which the Christian life can be represented in which our need is not a very conspicuous part of the image! In all aspects we are poor and needy.

We are needy in every exercise. If we are called to preach, we have to cry, "Lord, open You my lips." If we pray, we are needy at the Mercy Seat, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought. If we go out into the world to wrestle with temptation, we need supernatural help lest we fall before the enemy! If we are alone in meditation, we need the Holy Spirit to quicken our devotion. We are needy in suffering and laboring, in watching and in fighting. Every spiritual engagement does but discover another phase of our need!

And, Brothers and Sisters, we are needy at all times. We never wake up in the morning but we need strength for the day—and we never go to bed at night without needing Grace to cover the sins of the past. We are needy at all periods of life. When we begin with Christ, in our young days, we need to be kept from the follies and passions which are so strong in giddy youth. In middle age our needs are still greater, lest the cares of this world should eat as does a canker. And in old age we are still needy and need Preserving Grace to bear us onward to the end. So needy are we that even in lying down to die, we need our last bed to be made for us by Mercy and our last hour to be cheered by Grace. So needy are we that if Jesus had not prepared a mansion for us in eternity, we would have no place to dwell! We are as full of needs as the sea is full of water! We cannot stay at home and say, "I have much goods laid up for many years," for the wolf is at the door and we must go out a-begging again! Our clamorous necessities follow us every moment and dog our heels in every place. We must take the two adjectives and keep them close together in our confession—"I am poor and needy."

II. The second part of the subject is much more cheering. It is A COMFORTABLE CONFIDENCE—"yet the Lord thinks upon me."

A poor man is always pleased to remember that he has a rich relative, especially if that rich relative is very thoughtful towards him, finds out his distress and cheerfully and abundantly relieves his needs!

Observe that the Christian does not find comfort in himself 'I am poor and needy.' That is the top and bottom of my case. I have searched myself through and through and have found in my flesh no good thing. Notwithstanding the Grace which the Believer possesses and the hope which he cherishes, he still sees a sentence of death written upon the creature and he cries, "I am poor and needy." His joy is found in Another! He looks away from self to the consolations which the eternal purpose has prepared for him.

Note well who it is that gives the comfort—"The Lord thinks upon me." By the term, "the Lord," we are accustomed to understand the glorious Trinity. "The Lord thinks upon me," i.e., Jehovah, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. O beloved Believer in Christ, if you have rested in Jesus, then the Father thinks upon you! Your person was in His thoughts—
"Long before the sun's refulgent ray
Primeval shades of darkness drove."

He regarded you with thoughts of boundless love before He had fashioned the world, or wrapped it up in swaddling bands of ocean and of clouds. Eternal thoughts of love went forth of old towards all the chosen—and these have never changed. Not for a single instant has the Father ever ceased to love His people! As our Lord said to His disciples, "The Father Himself loves you." Never has He grown cold in His affections towards you, O poor and needy one! He has seen you in His Son. He has loved you in the Beloved. He has seen you—

"Not as you stood in Adam's fall,
When sin and ruin covered all,
But as you'll stand another day,
Brighter than sun's meridian ray."
He saw you in the glass of His eternal purpose, saw you as united to His dear Son and, therefore, looked upon you with eyes of complacency. He thought upon you and He still thinks upon you. When the Father thinks of His children, He thinks of you. When the great Judge of All thinks of the justified ones, He thinks of you. O Christian, can you grasp the thought? The Eternal Father thinks of you! You are so inconsiderable that if the mind of God were not Infinite, it would not be possible that He should remember your existence! Yet He thinks upon you! How precious ought His thoughts be to you! The sum of them is great, let your gratitude for them be great, too!

Forget not that the great Son of God, to whom you owe your hope, also thinks of you. It was for you that He entered into suretyship engagements before the earth was. It was for you, O heir of Heaven, that He took upon Himself a mortal body and was born of the virgin! It was for you that He lived those 30 years of immaculate purity that He might weave for you a robe of spotless righteousness! For you poured down His bloody sweat in the garden! He thought of you, He prayed for you in Gethsemane. For you were the flagellations in Pilate's Hall, the mockeries before Herod and the blasphemous accusations at the judgment seat of Caiaphas! For you the nails, the spear, the vinegar and the, "Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani?" Jesus thought of you and died for you with as direct an aim for your salvation as though there had not been another soul to be redeemed by His blood! And now, though He reigns exalted high, and you are "poor and needy," yet He still thinks upon you! The Glory of His present condition does not distract His thoughts from His Beloved. He is lovingly thoughtful of you. When He stands up to intercede, your name glitters on His priestly breastplate with the names of the rest of the chosen. He thinks of you when He prepares mansions for those whom His Father has blessed. He looks forward to the time when He shall gather together in one all things in Heaven and in earth that are in Him—and He counts you among them. Christian, will not this Truth of God comfort you—that the Son of God is constantly thinking upon you?

We must not forget the love of the Spirit, to whom we are so wondrously indebted. He cannot do otherwise than think upon us, for He dwells in us and shall be with us. As He dwells in us, He cannot be unmindful of us. It is His office to be the Comforter, to help our infirmities, to make intercession for us according to the will of God. So let us take the three thoughts and bind them together. "I am poor and needy, but I have a part in the thoughts of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." What fuller cause for comfort could we conceive?

We have answered the question "who?" Let us now turn to "what?" "The Lord thinks upon me." He does not say, "The Lord will uphold me, provide for me, defend me." The declaration that He "thinks upon me" is quite enough. "Your Heavenly Father knows that you have need of these things," says our Lord, as if it was quite clear that for our Heavenly Father to know, is for Him to act. We poor short-sighted and short-armed creatures often know the needs of others and would help if we could, but we are quite unable—it is never so with God—His thoughts always ripen into deeds. Perhaps, O tried Believer, you have been thinking a great deal about yourself of late—about your many trials—so that you lie awake nights, mourning over your heavy cares! "Alas," you think, "I have no one to advise me and sympathize with me." Let this text come to you as a whisper and you paraphrase it into a soliloquy, "I am poor and needy, this is true, and I cannot plan a method for supplying my needs, but a mightier mind than mine is thinking of me—the Infinite Jehovah thinks of me! He sees my circumstances, He knows the bitterness of my heart, He knows me altogether and His consideration of me is wise, tender and gracious. His thoughts are wisdom itself! When I think, it is a poor, little, weak, empty head that is thinking! But when God thinks, the gigantic mind which framed the universe is thinking of me!"

Have you ever attained to the idea of what the thoughts of God must be? That pure Spirit who cannot make mistakes, who is too wise to err, too good to be unkind, thinks upon us! He does not act without deliberation, does not come to our help in inconsiderate haste, does not do as we do with a poor man when we throw him a penny to be rid of him, but He thoughtfully deals with us. "Blessed is he that considers the poor," says the Psalmist. Those who take up the case of the poor, weigh it and remember it, are blessed! That is what the Lord does for us—"yet the Lord thinks upon me." He considers my case, judges when, and how, and after what sort it will be most fitting to grant me relief. "The Lord thinks upon me." Beloved, the shadow of this thought seems to me like the wells of Elim, full of refreshment, with the seventy palm trees yielding their ripe fruit! You may sit down here and drink to your full—and then go on your way rejoicing! However poor and needy you may be, the Lord thinks at the present moment upon you.

We have spoken upon who and what—now we will answer the inquiry, How do we know that the Lord thinks upon us? "Oh," say the ungodly, "how do you know?" They are very apt to put posing questions to us. We talk of what we know experimentally and again

they cry, "How do you know?" I will tell you how we know that God thinks upon us. We knew it, first of all, when we had a view of the Redeemer by faith, when we saw the Lord Jesus Christ hanging upon a tree for us, and made a curse for us. We saw that He so exactly suited and fitted our case that we were clear that the Lord must have thought and well considered it. If a man were to send you a sum of money tomorrow, exactly the amount you owe, you would be sure that someone had been thinking of you. And when we see the Savior, we are compelled to cry out, "O Lord, You have given me the very Savior I needed! This is the hope which my despairing soul required and this the anchorage which my tempest-tossed boat was seeking!" The Lord must have thought upon us, or He would not have provided so suitable a salvation for us.

We learn anew that the Lord thinks upon us when we go up to the House of God. I have heard many of you say, "We listen to the preacher and he seems to know what we have been saying on the road. The Word comes so home to our case that surely God has been hearing our very thoughts and putting into the mind of the preacher a word in season for us." Does not this show how the preacher's Master has been thinking of you? Then sit down and open the Bible, and you will frequently feel the words to be as much adapted to your case as if the Lord had written them for you alone! If, instead of the Bible having been penned many hundreds of years ago, it were actually written piecemeal to suit the circumstances of the Lord's people as they occur, it could not have been written more to the point! Our eyes have filled with tears when we have read such words as these, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you."—"Fear not, you worm Jacob, and you men of Israel; I will help you, says the Lord."—"He shall deliver you in six troubles; yes, in seven there shall no evil touch you."—"Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed." And such like which we could quote by the hundreds! We feel that the Lord must have thought about us, or He would not have sent us such promises.

Best of all, when we sit quietly at the feet of Jesus, in the power of the Spirit of God, in solemn silence of the mind, then we know that the Lord thinks upon us, for thoughts come bubbling up, one after another, delightful thoughts, such as only the Holy Spirit could inspire. Then the things of Christ are sweetly taken by the Spirit and laid home to our hearts. We become calm and still, though before we were distracted. A sweet savor fills our heart like ointment poured

forth—it diffuses its fragrance through every secret corner of our spirit. Sometimes our soul has seemed as though it were a peal of bells and every power and passion has been set a-ringing with holy joy because the Lord was there! Our whole nature has been as a harp well-tuned, and the Spirit has laid His fingers among the strings and filled our entire manhood with music. When we have been the subjects of these marvelous influences and gracious operations, if any had said to us that the Lord did not think of us, we would have told them

that they lied, even to their face, for the Lord had not only thought of us, but spoken to us and enabled us, by His Grace, to receive His thoughts and to speak again to

Him!

The Lord not think of us? Why, we have proof upon proof that He does! He has very remarkably thought upon us in Providence. Should some of us relate the memorable interpositions of Providence on our behalf, they would not be believed—but they are facts for all that. William Huntington wrote a book called, "The Bank of Faith," which contains in it a great many very strange things, no doubt. But I believe hundreds and thousands of God's tried people could write "Banks of Faith" too, if it came to that, for God has often appeared for His saints in such a way that if the mercy sent had been stamped with the seal of God, visible to their eyes, they could not have been more sure of its coming from Him than they were when they received it! Yes, answered prayers, applied promises, sweet communing and blessed deliverances in Providence all go to make us feel safe in saying, "yet the Lord thinks upon me."

We will close our meditation upon this text when we have remarked that those who are not poor and needy may well envy in their hearts those who are. You who have abounding riches, who feel yourselves to be wealthy in goodness. You who feel as if you could afford to look down upon most people in the world. You who are so respectable, decorous and deserving, I beseech you to note well that the text does not say a word about you! You are not poor, and you are not needy, and you do not think upon the Lord—and the Lord does not think upon you. Why should He? "The whole have no need of a physician." Christ did not come to call you. He said He came to call not the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Shall I tell you that it is your worst calamity that you have such an elevated idea of your own goodness? Whereas you say, "We see," you are blindest of all! And whereas you boast that you are righteous, there is in that self-righteousness of yours the very worst form of sin, for there is no sin that can be greater than that of setting up your own works in competition with the righteousness of Christ! I bear you witness that you have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge, for you, being ignorant of the righteousness of Christ, go about to establish your own righteousness— and your efforts will end in terrible disappointment!

I pray you to cast away all reliance upon your own works. Tear up, once and for all, all that you have been spinning for these many years—your tears, your prayers, your church attendance, your chapel attendance, your confirmation, your baptism, your sacraments—have done with the whole rotten mass as a ground of confidence! It is all quicksand which will swallow you up if you rest upon it. The only rock upon which you must build, whoever you may be, is the rock of the finished work of Jesus! Come, now, and rest upon God's appointed Savior, the Son of God, even though you may not have felt your own poverty and need. If you mourn that you do not mourn as you should, you are one of the poor and needy, and are bidden to turn your eyes to the Lamb of God and live!

I would to God that all of us were poor and needy in ourselves and that we were rich in faith in Christ Jesus! Oh, that we had done both with sin and with self-righteousness, that we had laid both those traitors with their heads on the block for execution! Come, you penniless sinners, come and receive the bounty of Heaven! Come, you who mourn your need of penitence, come and receive repentance and every other heavenly gift from Him who is the sinner's Friend, exalted on high to give repentance and remission of sins! But you must come empty-handed and sue, as the lawyers say, in forma pauperis, for in no other form will the Lord give ear to you! "He has put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He has filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He has sent away empty."—

"'Tis perfect poverty alone
That sets the soul at large!
While we can call one mite our own,
We have no full discharge.
But let our debts be what they may,
However great or small—
As soon as we have nothing to pay,
Our Lord forgives us all!"

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: PSALM40.

If our hearts are in trouble, as his was who wrote this Psalm, may we be able to act as wisely and as well as he did, and so obtain a like deliverance!

Verses 1, 2. 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. God does nothing by halves. If He brings people up out of their sorrow, or their sin, He takes care that their feet shall not slip back again into the mire. David says, "He set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings." What a blessing that last little sentence contains! God does not set our feet upon a rock, that we may afterwards slip off and finally fall, but He establishes our goings, He makes our footing firm, so that we do not ever perish!

3. And He has put a new song in my mouth. Such a song as I never sang before, for I had never been in such trouble before and, therefore, had never experienced such a deliverance as the Lord has now granted to me. "He has put a new song in my mouth." With that sweet songstress, Ann Letitia Waring, I can say—

"My heart is resting, O my God,
I will give thanks and sing.
My heart is at the secret source
Of every precious thing.
And 'a new song' is in my mouth,

To long-loved music set—
Glory to You for all the Grace
I have not tasted yet."

3, 4. Even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD. Blessed is that man that makes the LORD his trust, and respects not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies. You know that this Book of Psalms has many benedictions in it. It begins with a blessing upon "the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful." But here it has a blessing for the Believer—"Blessed is that man that makes Jehovah his trust." As for the proud and the false, may God preserve us from ever paying any regard to them for, if not, they will lead us into some such mischief as that into which they have themselves fallen.

5. Many, O LORD my God, are Your wonderful works which You have done. "Your works in creation, in Providence and in Redemption."

5. And Your thoughts which are to us-ward. God is always thinking of His people, and His thoughts are wise, and kind, and practical, for when He thinks of doing anything for us, He speedily performs it.

5. They cannot be reckoned up in order unto You: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered. Think of that! You cannot count God's thoughts of you. If He were only to think of us once, in tender mercy, that one thought would run on throughout eternity, for He does not retract either a thought that He thinks or a word that He utters! Instead thereof, one gracious thought is followed by another, swiftly as the beams of light flash from the sun, so that it is impossible for us to number them. Thus thinking and writing concerning God's work, the Psalmist is carried away, as it were, into a vision in which he sees Christ and speaks in the name of Christ.

6. Sacrifice and offering You did not desire. The blood of all the bullocks, and rams, and lambs offered in sacrifice had possessed no real efficacy in putting away sin. They had no virtue except as types, symbols and prophecies of the one great Sacrifice that was to come!

6. My ears have You opened. Probably alluding to the ceremony of boring to the doorpost the ears of those who determined to remain as slaves to their masters when they might have gone free. So Christ was ready to be the Servant of His Father, and the Savior of sinners. He voluntarily undertook to bear all that this would involve.

6-8. Burnt offering and sin offering have You not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the Book it is written of Me, I delight to do Your will, O My God: yes, Your Law is within My heart. He was the Perfect One, coming

to do God's will for us and offering Himself as the truest Sacrifice that could ever be presented to God. So we may rightly picture our great Lord and Master uttering these words when He came to die.

9, 10. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained My lips. O LORD, You know. I have not hid Your righteousness within My heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation: I have not concealed Your loving kindness and Your truth from the great congregation. With what indefatigable earnestness, with what indomitable courage, with what sacred faithfulness, with what holy tears did Christ preach the Truth of God while He was upon earth! He was always the Prince of Preachers, so, when He was dying, He could plead this fact with His Father.

11, 12. Withhold not You Your tender mercies from Me, O LORD: let Your loving kindness and Your truth continually preserve Me. For innumerable evils have compassed Me about Was it not so with Christ? The evils of sinners seemed to compass Him about and, like wild beasts, to hunt Him to the death! And the saints of God, in their measure, may often use similar language to that which the Psalmist here prophetically used concerning Christ.

12. My iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head: therefore my heart fails me. We could not apply this language to the Savior except as we spoke of the sins of ourselves and others which were laid upon Him, but we may apply this language, and ought to apply it to ourselves when we are sorely beset by sin. Have not even you, who are the dear children of God, sometimes felt as if you could not look up and dared not look up? You were so desponding, so downcast that there seemed no help for you, even in God. Your sins, your cruel sins, your fierce tormentors were and, therefore, your heart failed you.

13-15. Bepleased, O LORD, to deliver me: O LORD, make haste to help me. Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it; let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil Let them be desolate for a reward of their shame that say unto me, Aha, aha. So will it surely be, for the enemies of God's people are God's enemies—and Satan and all his host who seek to destroy the souls of the Lord's chosen shall be driven backward and covered with eternal shame!

16. Let all those that seek You rejoice and be glad in You: let such as love Your salvation say continually, The LORD be magnified. Are you content to bear your present trial, dear Friend, so that God may be magnified? Are you willing to be reduced by infirmities and weaknesses to a condition of absolute nothingness, so long as God is exalted? If you are, then you will be saying continually, "Let God be magnified in my weakness, let His majestic love be seen amid all my sorrows."

17. But I am poor and needy. A double expression for a poverty that is doubly felt—perhaps poor in temporals— certainly poor in spirituals! Poor and full of needs, yet with nothing to supply those needs. "I am poor and needy."

17. Yet. That is a blessed, "yet."

17. The Lord thinks upon me. That is enough for me! If He thinks of me, His thoughts are so kind, generous, wise and practical that He will help me!

17. You are my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God