

EXPERIENCE AND ASSURANCE

NO. 2166

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 AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow
 of Your wings will I rejoice.”
 Psalm 63:7.*

In their time of trouble the children of God return to their Father. It is according to their newborn nature to seek Him from whom it came. The believing heart is like the needle in the compass—you may turn it round with your finger east and west—but when you withdraw the pressure, it will, beyond all doubt, tremble backward towards its pole. With God, the regenerate heart is in its proper position. A mystic something draws the new life towards the Source from where it came. We may, alas, by the force of temptation, or by the demands of business, or by an overpowering lethargy become indifferent to our highest love—but this cannot long continue—we can never rest except in God! The winds of trouble blow the dove of our soul back to the ark. Our heart repents of its wanderings when they bring it into a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. Then we long after Divine refreshments and cannot be quiet till we have them. Then we cry, “O God, You are my God; early will I seek You”!

The soul, in coming back to God, will be greatly helped by meditation. Hence the Psalmist says, “My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips: when I remember You upon my bed, and meditate on You in the night watches.” The soul feasts when it *meditates*! I am afraid these eager days leave little space for meditation, yet there is no exercise more nourishing to faith, love and all the Graces. David says, “I remember You; I meditate on You.” A transient thought of God may bless us largely, even as a touch of the hem of the Savior’s garment healed a woman of her plague. But to *meditate* upon Him is, as it were, to lean our head upon His bosom and enjoy full fellowship in His love. Oh, for more meditation! It would mean more Grace, more joy!

The photographer can take an instantaneous photograph and so can we, by ejaculatory prayer and vehement desire, obtain immediate help from Heaven. But in a certain state of the atmosphere the object needs longer exposure—needs, in fact, that its image should rest longer upon the sensitive plate before it will completely imprint itself. *Meditation* does, as it were, set the Lord long before the soul so that it receives His image more completely. Happy is he who can say, “I have set the Lord always before me”! Thoughts of God are as when a man climbs a hill, looks upon a landscape and cries out exultingly, “How beautiful is this scenery!”

But if you would have a figure of meditation, you must see that man standing on the hilltop for a long space of time and marking the features of the landscape. Look, yonder is the spire of a village church! Mark the cottages nestling around it! There flows a river and, hard by, a broad sheet of water, like a looking glass, reflects the sun. Mark the distant range of hills and the woods and wilds which lie between. Note well the valley bronzed with a thousand fields of corn divided like a garden by hedgerows. Such a view as this is instructive and abides in the memory. He understands the country best who has seen most of it—and we know the Lord, by His Spirit—far better by quiet meditation than by any other means.

We not only remember our God once, but we remember, and remember, and remember, and remember again till memory flowers into meditation. Thoughts of God crop the herbage, but meditation chews the cud—and it is the chewing of the cud which yields nourishment. Oh, that you and I may often cheer our sleepless hours by heavenly meditations, for thus shall the pure in heart see their God and thus shall they enter into the closest fellowship with Him! *Among our subjects for meditation should be God’s gracious dealings with us.* David meditated upon his whole life in the light of its connection with God. He read his diary through and specially dwelt upon the points where he had come into contact with the Invisible and the Infinite. He remembered the help he had received from Omnipotence. He knew God best by special times of gracious aid.

After all, it is not what we read in the Bible, but what we feel in the heart which actually gives us our best acquaintance with God. A hundred biographies of other men will not make so much impression upon us as the knowing of God in our own personal experience. If we can say of Him, "You have been my help," we shall meditate upon Him to good purpose.

Once more—*when the heart comes back to God*, riding in the golden chariot of meditation, *the natural instinct is to speak to Him*. Hence my text is not only the Word of God, but a word *with* God! The Psalmist does not direct the words of the text to us, but to God Himself—"Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings will I rejoice." Beloved, it is a delightful thing to converse with God! Do you indulge this habit? If the Lord is your Father, should you not, as a child, speak with Him every day? If you are married to Christ, should not the spouse speak with her Well-Beloved? It were very strange if she did not! Private devotion ought to be a dialogue between the soul and God—by the Scripture the Lord speaks to us—and by prayer we speak to Him.

Sometimes, you know, in conversation with a friend, you have not much to say. Very well. You listen while your friend speaks. When prayer is not urgent, read your Bible and hear what God, the Lord, shall speak. And when you have heard His voice you will usually find it in your heart to pray to Him. If the prayer is soon over, because you have expressed all your thoughts, then let the Lord speak again and you listen diligently. But do speak to the Lord! Realize His Presence and then speak to Him as a man speaks with his friend. God has no dumb children, but He has some who hold their tongues to a fault when they are with Him. I fear that these same people use their tongues to a fault when they are away from Him.

O Brothers and Sisters, speak with God! This is the noblest use of speech. If half our talk with men were silenced and our talks with God were multiplied 10 times, it would be well. May I ask a question of every professing Christian? Have you spoken with God this morning? Do you allow a day to pass without conversation with God? Can it be right for us to treat the Lord with mute indifference? No! Let us often turn our hearts and our lips heavenward and say, "Thus will I bless You while I live: I will lift up my hands in Your name." Does not our Lord love to hear us speak? Listen to His loving appeal in the sacred Canticle—"O My doves, that are in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let Me see your countenance, let Me hear your voice; for sweet is your voice and your countenance is comely."

With this as a preface, I now invite you to the text itself, which is a stanza of David's song unto the Lord. "Because You have been my help"—This is *experience*. "Therefore in the shadow of Your wings will I rejoice"—this is *expectation*, or, viewing it in a still brighter light, "I will rejoice"—this is *assurance*. Here are three subjects to dwell upon. God help us to climb these three rounds of the ladder of light—experience, expectation, full assurance! If we stop at the top when we get there it may not be amiss. But if we have to begin again, let us rehearse matters in the same order—more experience, clearer expectation and fuller assurance.

I. First, then, EXPERIENCE—"You have been my help." Experience is the child of faith and, strange to say, experience is the nurse of faith. No man can expect to experience the fulfillment of the promise till he believes the promise. But they believe the promise best who have had most experience of God's faithfulness. *David had experienced Divine help*. He distinctly traced many of his deliverances to Divine help. He says, "You have been my help." David did not ascribe his success in life to a powerful patron for he had none. I have heard men sigh for the bondage of patronage. One has cried, "If I were taken up by some great man, I should succeed in life."

David had no patronage—on the contrary, he encountered strong opposition. His brothers pushed him into the rear and even his father kept him minding the sheep. In later life Jonathan was his friend, but he was not his patron for that generous prince always felt that David was his superior. If you have God for your Friend, you need not cringe before great men, for you shall joyfully say unto the Lord, "You have been my help." Cursed is he that trusts in man and makes flesh his arm. But blessed is he that trusts in the Lord and whose hope is the Lord. Neither does David ascribe his success in life to *himself*. There is no doubt that he was a man of genius, cast in a poetic mold and it is also clear that he was a valiant man, born for deeds of daring and high enterprise. He was also a man of judgment and counsel and as apt for government in peace as in war.

With all his faults, there is no more royal character upon the pages of Scripture than David, King of Israel. But he does not sacrifice to his own sword, or magnify his own bow. We read no word of his about his being a self-made man. No, rather, he sings, "It is God that subdues the people under me." Brethren, have there not been instances in your lives

in which the Lord has evidently interposed to help you? I can see His hand clearly in places wherein no other help would have been sufficient. If anyone had to sketch my life, he could not do it fully unless I were, from my own secret thoughts, to supply certain gaps. Without God the Believer's life is inexplicable. The Romans used to speak of *Deus ex machinis*, God appearing in an unexpected manner in the midst of a history to rescue the hero and change the scene. This is no figure of speech in the life of faith.

Every now and then we have witnessed a distinct interposition—a stretching out of the Divine hand—an inroad of the supernatural. To us has it been true, “He bowed the heavens also, and came down.” Others might think our experience fanatical if we were to tell it as we see it, but this we cannot help. To us it has been a real manifestation of the Divine thoughtfulness on our behalf. Looking back upon our lives we cannot help saying deliberately and as cool a statement of fact—the Lord has been our help. There, and there, and there we mark certain turning points in our life which cannot be accounted for to our own minds on any other theory than that here the Creator came into contact with His creature—the Redeemer stooped over His redeemed and the Comforter worked upon the soul which He indwelt. Yes, “O triune Jehovah, You have been my help!”

David felt it was so and he avowed it without hesitation. Furthermore, these words imply that *David had often experienced this help*. He does not make this statement in reference to one solitary incident in his life, or he would have said, “You were once my help.” He sees a continuity in the loving kindness of the Lord his God. He means, “You have all along been my help.” When he was a youth and kept his father's flock, there came a lion and took a lamb out of his flock—and he, with dauntless courage—rushed upon the monster and saved the lamb from between his jaws. Another day a bear pounced on one of his helpless charge and the brave youth killed it. God helped him in those days of solitude in the wilderness.

None saw his daring deeds, but he communed with God and worked bravely, so as to prepare himself to be the shepherd and deliverer of the Lord's own flock. In his early youth the Lord was his strength and his song. Soon he was taken away from solitude and introduced into public life and the Lord was his help. He had a strange introduction to the world. I might almost say that he was slung out into public life like a stone from his own sling. A gigantic Philistine stalked before the hosts of Israel, defying the servants of God to single conflict. Young David undertook to answer the champion's defiance and then was fulfilled his brave words to King Saul, “Your servant slew both the lion and the bear and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them.” He ran to him in the name of the Lord Jehovah, the God of Israel, whom he had defied and presently he returned to Saul bearing the braggart's gory head. “Because You have been my help,” was David's way of accounting for his slaying the lion, the bear and the giant.

In later life David had to attend in the court of envious Saul and he behaved himself wisely. He would confess to the Lord the reason for his wise behavior in these words, “Because You have been my help.” Put upon difficult enterprises, he achieved them. Jealously envied by the king, he gave him no ground for a charge, for God was his help. Driven at length into exile, to become the leader of a band of men hunted like a partridge upon the mountains, his life was still preserved—the Lord was his help. While yet a wanderer, he met with a great heart-breaking trouble. While he had been away from Ziklag, where his men were in residence, a band of marauders came upon the city, took the women and children captive and burned the city with fire.

When he and his band came back to the place, each man had to grieve over his ruined home, stolen substance and wife and family carried off. The rough men spoke of stoning David, for their hearts were bitter with a great sorrow. Then we read that, “David encouraged himself in the Lord his God,” and very soon his mourning was turned into dancing—the captives were recovered, the spoil was reclaimed and the men-at-arms were glad. Truly David could say, “You have been my help.” I cannot go through all the life of David, but I hope you are familiar with it. In doing his duty as patriot and king, God was his help and enabled him to walk uprightly in his government. In his sufferings the Lord was his help and enabled him to be calm and brave. In the time of danger God was his help and kept him from the hand of the enemy.

And now, in this Psalm, though David is in the wilderness of Judah and probably hunted by his own son, yet he sings unto the Lord, “You have been my help.” Beloved Friends, I do not want you to stop with David any longer. I beg you, now, to come nearer home and review your *own* lives. I cannot, of course, give a sketch of the histories of all here assembled, but many of them will run on this wise—as a Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, your life was a hard fight in

the beginning and many a time you were ready to perish. Perhaps you began very low down in the scale and when you were about to rise, misfortune dragged you down. Many things were against you, but the Lord was your help.

In your own person you have suffered sickness, but when you have tossed upon the bed, in great anguish, God has been your help. You have experienced trial in your family. There are graves in the cemetery which you will never forget. Half your heart lies buried beneath the sod. Yet the Lord has been your help. When you hoped, by industry, to succeed, the times suddenly turned and swept away your gains. It seemed as if you could not prosper. You can say today, "I was brought low and the Lord helped me." You are not in the workhouse. You have not been through the bankruptcy court. You still find that promise true, "Your bread shall be given you and your waters shall be sure." You joyfully say this day, "O Lord, You have been my help."

As for me, the very spot on which I stand bears witness to the loving kindnesses of the Lord. On this platform I have endured deep distress of mind while preaching to you and I have feared lest I should not be able to speak aright in the name of the Lord. But now, concerning these 37 years of my ministry, I joyfully say, "You have been my help." Most of you, in your various walks of life, will have had occasion, again and again, to bless the Lord who has been your help.

These helps rendered to David had been very choice ones. He had often been helped in special ways. God had taken great care of him. He was the favorite of Providence and the darling of Heaven. Has it not been so with some of you? Have you not enjoyed choice morsels of experience? Are there not incidents in your life which you could scarcely tell lest the hearer should smile at your credulity and you should be found casting pearls before swine? To some of us, most special mercies have been vouchsafed and we have treasured them as choice things. I was rather astonished to learn that in the Hebrew the help is expressed by much the same word which is used in Genesis to describe the position of woman to man. God made Eve to be a helpmeet for Adam and here the Almighty God has been to us as suitable a help as the helpmeet He made for man!

Some of us have a dear one who has been our best earthly help and that in the best and happiest manner conceivable—a help exactly answering to our heart's needs. David had found in his God a help of the kind which he needed—a help tenderly, wisely, Divinely suited for his every need. The Lord had answered to His servant's needs and desires and had been his very present help, yielding wisdom for his folly and power for his weakness—and comfort for his sorrow. Wonder of wonders, that God the Omnipotent and Almighty should become a help in all things meet for man! Is not this a joyous thing? Have we not found it so? Confess this tender fact to your God and rejoice every day in the quiet of your own soul, saying, "You have been my help."

God has been to us a very timely help. Has He not appeared in the very nick of time? Had there been another moment's delay, it had been all over with us. But in our extremity the Lord found His opportunity. How speedily He came—

*"On cherub and on cherubim
Full royally He rode
And on the wings of mighty wind
Came flying all abroad.
And so delivered He my soul:
Who is a Rock but He?
He lives—
Blessed be my Rock!
My God exalted be!"*

Just when our own life ebbed out, the Divine life flowed in. Just when joy died within us, hope was born and our spirit revived.

God's help has also been continuous to us. Though at the present moment there may seem to be a break and we are in the wilderness of Judah where the Lord is rather thirsted for than seen, yet this is only an apparent break. Beloved, up to now there has been no pause in the goodness of God to us! In the time of our darkness we could not see the link but, looking back, we can see it now. Life has been to us a continuous chain of love with every link well forged upon the anvil of power by the hammer of Wisdom. The Lord has never failed us. Did He not say, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you"? and has it not been so? Up hill and down dale, in the dark and in the light, in summer and in winter the constancy of God's help has been proved. His faithfulness is a fountain of delight to us. The Lord has always been our help!

Observe, also, that *the Lord has granted us educative mercy*. David says, “Because You have been my *help*.” He says not that He has worked everything for us, but He has set us working, also. You see, if you do a thing for a man, it is well. But if you help him to do it, it may be better for him, for thus he learns the way. It is true that in many deeds of Divine Grace, the Lord does not help—He does all the work Himself. He chose us before we chose Him and without our choice of Him He quickened us. We could not help in our own quickening. He renewed us—we could not help in our own renewal. He, by His own power, made us new creatures and changed our hearts and gave us His Holy Spirit—we could not help in this, for this must be God’s own unaided work.

God made the grass, the grass did not help in its own creation—but God helps the grass to grow—and the grass grows by the Divine power. In the same manner, after we have come to spiritual life, then God helps us. Donne says, “God has not left me to myself. He has come to my succor. He has been my help—but then, God has not left out myself—He has been my help, but He has left something for me to do with Him and by His help.” We work because He makes us work and helps us in it. We bring forth fruit as branches of the vine, but He supplies the sap, so that He says, “From Me is your fruit found.”

Lord, You have been my help—I began with stammering a few sentences for You—but You have opened my mouth to show forth Your praise. Did you not begin with a faint confession of Christ? And now you dare to stand in the front of the battle! The Lord has so helped you that you have been trained for the conflict—“He teaches my hands to war and my fingers to fight.” Help not only promotes the work, but it blesses the man, himself, by stimulating his powers and developing them! Blessed be the name of the Lord! He has not carried us like babes, but He has taught us to walk with Him as men and we are the stronger because we can say, “You have been my help.”

I close this first head when I have noticed *the personal experience* of the text—“Because you have been *my help*.” Oh, I like that word *my*! *My help*.” If David had said, “Because you were Abraham’s help,” there would have been good argument in it, for the experience of another man ought to encourage our faith. Suppose he had said, “Because You were Jacob’s help,” or “Moses’ help”? It would have been good reasoning. But, oh, it strikes more surely and comes more closely home to a man’s heart when he can say, “Because You have been *my help*.” An infidel once sneered at a poor woman and said, “How do you know the Bible is true?” She answered, “I have experienced the truth of it.” He replied, “Your experience! That is nothing to me.”

“No,” she said, “that is very likely. But it is everything to me.” And so it is. My experience may not convince another man, but my experience has rooted, grounded and settled myself. “But,” says one, “Surely, you are open to conviction?” Yes, I am always open to conviction. But there are some things upon which no man, nor angel, nor devil will ever alter my convictions already formed. There are a few things which we know—I mean things which we have *experienced*. If we have experienced the truth of them, then we are past all argument to the contrary—we are sure and certain, fixed and rooted. It seems to me that there are two books which a Christian man ought to study—the one is this big Book, the inspired Word of God. The other is the little book of his own life. If the Believer lives long enough he will write into that little book all that there is in the great Book, only he will change the tense.

When the great Book says, “I will do this, and I will do that,” we shall find in the little book, “God has done so-and-so. In my own case the promise has been fulfilled.” The little book will be the echo of the Inspired volume, the record of the fact that the Lord has done according to His Word of promise! Thus experience becomes a stay and a strength to the child of God in times of darkness or controversy. God grant that you may go on writing up your personal memoirs and thus confirming the witness of the Spirit! Are not our lives the proof of God’s faithfulness? Is not this the sum and substance of them, “You have been my help”?

II. And now, secondly, EXPECTATION. David naturally expected that as God *had* been his help, so He *would be* his help. I like a text which has a, “because,” in it followed up with a, “therefore.” The text becomes a syllogism, an argument, a sure statement—*because* such-and-such a thing is fact, *therefore* such another thing must be fact. God, who *has* helped us, *will* help us. Experience becomes argument and the argument carries conviction with it. *What we have experienced of God’s goodness is a revelation of Himself*—God’s actions are Himself in motion! If, then, we have experienced God’s power, He is powerful and we know that anything is possible to Him. If I have experienced His acts of faithfulness, I conclude that He is always faithful and that He will keep His promise and His Covenant and will be true to all those who trust in Him.

Suppose I have watched His ways for 40 years and have found Him to be the same yesterday and today? Then I conclude that He is Immutable—the same in my age as in my youth—the same in my adversity as in my prosperity. I infer from the fact that God has been good to me that He will be the same to me all my days. Very well, then. As I am the same person, at least as far as my weakness and my necessity are concerned, I will go to God in the same way. The Lord is the same God in every respect—my need is the same as ever it was—His supplies are the same as ever they were! His will to bless me is still the same and His promise to bless me is the same, for it stands guaranteed in His blessed Word. Therefore I will have the same faith and the same hope in God. Looking back and making sure that the Lord has been my help up to now, I draw the conclusion that He will be my help to the end of the chapter.

This reasoning is good, since *you have to deal with an unchanging God*. You could not reason in that way in reference to man. No. You say, “I cannot go to my friend, Brown, for help, for I have been to him already.” You do not argue that you may freely go again because you have been already. Far from it. You say, “I have received as much from him as I could reasonably expect and I must not become a burden to him.” Or else it happens that your friend grows weary of you and answers you coldly—and so you feel that you can go no more to him. Earthly friends can be drawn upon so much that their generosity is exhausted and they feel that you are unreasonable in your requests. If, therefore, you have changeable man to deal with, there will be no logic in your reasoning.

But when you think of Jehovah who changes not, then you may infer great things and the most severe logic will support you. He *was* my help, He *is* my help and therefore He *will be* my help, even to the end. *This kind of argument is very sure to a man’s own self* and he is the person most concerned. We know whom we have believed and we are persuaded that He will not fail us. We know what we do know and if we cannot tell it to others, we are none the less sure of it ourselves. The Lord has been our help in very remarkable ways which put His graciousness beyond a doubt. And so our expectation is large and unquestioning—we look for endless, perfect, prompt and final deliverance from all evil. There is a force about personal experience which, to the man himself, is irresistible and the conclusion that comes from it is to him as certain as the existence of God. The hammer of Thor, which would have broken the globe, is not more mighty than the argument of *personal* experience before which all difficulties of faith are dashed in pieces.

It is clear that *this is an accumulating argument*. The young man who has known the Lord 12 months and experienced a great deliverance, is sure that the Lord is to be trusted. But when he has passed 20, 30, or 40 years of the same experience, his assurance will be doubly sure! To a believer in Christ every day teems with Providences and mercies. This tree bears its fruit every month and the fruit feeds faith wondrously. Every year is crowned with the loving kindness of the Lord and so, in old age, the faithfulness of God is a fact which is no more argued, but enjoyed! When the Believer dies he has nothing to do but to die. He is assured by an argument which has grown out of 40 years’ observation. He knows that God will help him, for He *has* helped him!

I stood by the side of a dear old friend and fellow helper yesterday. He is in his 92nd year and has taken to his bed through weakness. Instead of seeking sympathy or speaking to me in a doleful style, he pleasantly observed, “You see I am higher in the world than when you came last time, for I have left the parlor and come upstairs. Very soon I shall not be higher in the world, but higher *than* the world.” He said this with that same twinkle of the eye which I have noticed in him in the days of his strength when he was equally full of Grace and wit. There was no fear of death to daunt or dampen his spirit! He knew nothing of such a feeling. “Ah,” he said, “Isaiah was right when he described our experience in the passage, ‘They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint.’”

“He begins flying, then goes to running and then to walking. But the Prophet calls this *renewing* his strength. It looks like *losing* strength and speed, does it not? Ah, but (he said) you know flying is not a suitable thing for daily life—it is all very well for young people, but it does not suit everyday life. Running is for another period, but it is not a practical pace for a continuance. Quietly walking with God is a safe, lasting, everyday pace. You can keep on at that as Enoch did, till you walk away with God. I have now got to my walking days,” said the grand old man. Then he went on to expound the Scripture by other Scriptures. “John says, ‘I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you.’ That makes them mount up with eagles’ wings above the guilt of sin!”

“To the young men he says, ‘I write unto you, young men, because you have overcome the Wicked One.’ In that case there has been struggling and exertion, like the running without weariness. But when he gets to the fathers, he says, ‘I

write unto you, fathers,' not concerning a high joy, or a successful struggle, but 'because you have known Him that is from the beginning.' That is a walking, quiet, solid knowledge and it is the best of all."

What a happy talk we had! We were two merry men sitting on the brink of Jordan communing together with happy hearts—he of 92 talking to me concerning all the way whereby the Lord had led us both since we knew each other these 34 years and more! Oh, yes, it is a blessed, blessed thing to grow in Grace as we grow in years and to increase our argument for faith as we increase our experience!

That argument will remain unchanged in death. When the earth shall rock, the stars shall fall and the heavens shall be rolled up by the hand of God like a worn-out vesture. When the Great White Throne shall be seen and the sentence of the righteous Judge shall be heard, our confidence will still be the same—"You have been my help, and nothing shall separate me from Your love"!

III. Lastly, and somewhat briefly, ASSURANCE. Here comes the richest cluster which grows out of our subject. The Psalmist says, "Therefore in the shadow of Your wings will I rejoice." Here is, first, *contented assurance*. David does not say, "I am in trouble and I must get out of it somehow and therefore I must sin rather than fall under the hand of the enemy." No, he is quiet and patient. He does not make haste and demand immediate deliverance—he quietly waits the Lord's time and rests under the all-covering wings. You hear no loud outcries from him—as of one struggling against fate.

The children of God, like sheep, are dumb before their shearers. David, grateful for past help, holds himself still and happily awaits the purpose of the Lord. He manifests no fear, no fret, no hurry, no worry. Neither does he cast his eyes towards man. "*You have been my help,*" he says—and he looks that way. "My soul, wait you only upon God, for my expectation is from Him." But where is Joab? Where are the three mighties? Where are all the royal bodyguard? The enemy is cruel and thirsting for blood—does David piteously beseech his watchmen to keep well their ward? No, he is calm and peaceful and sweetly says, "You have been my help; therefore in the shadow of Your wings will I rejoice."

David exhibited a very *patient assurance*. He likened himself to a young eagle beneath the mighty wings of its mother—"In the shadow of Your wings will I rejoice." You thought he would have said, "You will drive Your mighty talons into my adversaries and tear them to pieces." Or, "You will strike them as an eagle destroys its prey." No, he is not eager for the Lord to act—he is biding his time—no, waiting on the Lord's time. He is quite content to be under His wings. What the great eagle may do, he leaves to the future while he nestles down in perfect quietness. May God give us patience always to possess our souls in Him! It is not ours to hasten the Divine vengeance, nor to wish for a personal triumph. It is ours to feel the bliss of safety in nearness to God.

Note, next, that it is *the assurance of faith*. "Because You have been my help, therefore"—what? "In the light of Your countenance I will rejoice"? No—he had, then, but little light—he was "in the shadow." The wilderness cut him off from beholding God in the sanctuary. If you cannot see the face of God, His shadow may give you peace. Lord, I will pray to You to lift up the light of Your countenance upon me, but if You continue to hide Yourself, I will still trust You and be sure that You are the same God of Grace. Knowing that Your shadow is full of defense for me, I will rejoice therein. Notice also, it is *continued assurance*. We read not, in the shadow of Your wings have I rejoiced but, "I *will* rejoice." He is rejoicing and means to go on rejoicing! His joy no man takes from him. He will rejoice so long as he has a God to rejoice in.

The best of all is this *is rejoicing assurance*. The text does not say, "Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings will I *trust,*" but, "in the shadow of your wings *will I rejoice.*" That is going further than silent submission or humble trust. David is in the dark, but, like the nightingale, he sings in it! When the Lord seems to hide Himself, the soul remembers what the Lord was and resolves to be glad in Him as He was seen before. David lamented for Absalom, but he rejoiced in God! He rejoiced that the wings of the Lord safely preserved him and though they cast a shadow over him he would rejoice in the shadow as the evidence that the wings were really there!

O child of God, rejoice in the Lord in the dark! There is no honor to you in rejoicing when everything goes well with you—your faith wins credit if it leads you to rejoice in God when everything runs counter to your comfort. I may be speaking to some dear Brother who, in his business, finds things going very cross and the current of his affairs sets strongly in the wrong direction. Now is the time to show the difference between the joy of the spiritual life and that

which merely comes of the natural life. Rejoice in God and prove that your joy flows from the upper springs. “Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say, Rejoice.”

In conclusion, let me remark it is little wonder that so many do not understand trusting in God, for they have never tried it. Answers to prayer and fulfillment of Divine promises seem to them as idle tales. If we were to tell them what God has done for us, they would not believe us. There is William Huntington’s, “Bank of Faith”—well, I would not endorse every word of it, but I see no reason why it should not be accepted as a truthful narrative. When anybody calls it a “Bank of Nonsense,” as I have heard them do, I have answered, “It is because you do not know any better. Many other Believers could write books equally marvelous.”

Still, unbelievers will be sure to mock, for it is out of their line altogether. Years ago, a Red Indian went down to Washington and when he returned to his tribe he began telling them the wonders he had seen among the pale faces. At last he told them that he saw a canoe fastened to a great ball rise up into the sky. One of his brother Indians shot him dead with his rifle—and leaping into the middle of the ring declared that such a liar was not fit to live another minute—and therefore he had killed him. The statement was quite true, but as it was outside of Indian knowledge, the man was shot. So the experience of a Christian is so far removed from the worldling’s line of things that he ridicules it—but it is true for all that.

Thousands of us can bear testimony to the Truth of the Gospel and we wish, above all things, that you would try it yourself! When you hear that those who trust in the Lord are delivered, I wonder some of you do not want to know our Savior. Yesterday a poor person called on a brother minister and asked for a ticket to go to the gentleman who was curing rheumatism. My friend knew nothing about the gentleman. “Oh,” she said, “he is at Croydon and he has been curing people who have been ill for years.” The preacher knew nothing of any tickets, but the person said that her father had failed to see the gentleman and he would try again.

Just so—from every quarter people will come where there is hope of being healed. How strange that men will seek help for their bodies and not for their souls. There is One who can help in every case of soul-sickness, why not go to Him? We have been healed. Why do you doubt? He will be a faithful helper to all those who put their trust in Him. Why do you not seek Him? We are honest people who bear witness of His helping us—why do you not believe us, so far as to try the Lord Jesus for yourselves? If you will not believe us, believe in God’s own Book and say, “I will look to Jesus for help.”

Oh, that you would trust the precious Jesus and His precious promises and His precious blood by that precious faith whose very trials are more precious than gold! Then shall you find every help you need between this spot and Glory’s gate. The Lord bring you to Jesus at once for His name’s sake! Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 63.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—916, 34 (VER. 1), 734.

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