

THE STRONGHOLD

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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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“The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knows them that trust in Him.”
Nahum 1:7.

HAVE you read this chapter through? It is a very terrible one—it is like the rushing of a mighty river when it is nearing a waterfall. It boils, seethes and flows with overwhelming force, bearing everything before it, yet, right in the middle of the surging flood, there stands out, like a green island, this most cheering, comforting and delightful text! Listen a minute to the Prophet's words of terror. “The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the Lord has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet. He rebukes the sea, and makes it dry, and dries up all the rivers: Bashan languishes, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languishes. The mountains quake at Him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at His Presence, yes, the world, and all that dwell therein. Who can stand before His indignation? And who can abide in the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by Him.”

Then, just as there has sometimes been a break and a delightful silence in the very midst of some tremendous chorus of sacred song, so here the thunder pauses, the hurricane is stopped and we hear the sweet music of this still small voice—“Jehovah is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knows them that trust in Him”—from which we may gather that there is always a hiding place for His people—His eyes of love are fixed on them even when they flash fire upon His adversaries! Nothing shall harm them, though the earth is removed and the mountains are cast into the midst of the sea! They may rejoice in the goodness of the Lord in the day of His fierce anger.

I invite you, dear Friends, to consider this text, and may the Holy Spirit make the meditation which will follow to be useful! There are three things, here, to be thought about. First let us think *of God Himself*—“The Lord is good.” Then let our minds ponder a little upon *what God is to us*—“a stronghold in the day of trouble.” And then we will change the theme a little and speak *of God with us*—“He knows them that trust in Him.”

I. First, then, let us think of GOD HIMSELF—“Jehovah is good.” It is well for us to be able to say so when the day of trouble is really upon us. It is one thing to sit under your vine and fig tree and sing, “The Lord is good.” It is quite another thing when the vine and fig tree have both been cut down and all your comfort is gone, to still say, “The Lord is good.” Do you not think that if we fail to say it the second time, it will look as if, after all, it was the vine and fig tree that were good, and not God? Or, at least, that our view of God's goodness was very much derived from the fact of our being in so much comfort? It was an accusation which Satan brought against Job that he loved God for what he got out of him—“Have not You made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he has on every side?” The devil is very apt to charge God's people with having a cupboard love, but it is well for us to refute that accusation by loving, praising and adoring God when comforts fail, when the hedge is broken and when the things that we received with gratitude are, at length, in wisdom, taken away. Oh, what a rebuff the archfiend had when Job, on his dunghill scraping his sores and with his children dead and his property gone, yet said, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”

That is the spirit of our text. Here is a man of God, in the midst of the overwhelming flood, standing up and saying—“The Lord is good. The Lord is good.” There are some persons who, even in their theology, do not believe God to

be good. “It cannot be,” they say, “that the wicked will be cast into Hell if God is good.” And they argue, therefore, the ungodly will not be punished. But the child of God says that though they will certainly be cast into Hell, God is good for all that. It is true that He will punish sin and punish it everlastingly, but God is good for all that. “No,” say others, “but if He is good, He cannot do so.” You may make unto yourselves another god and call him God, but the Christian says, “*The Lord* is good, Jehovah is good. He is good as I find Him—good as an angry God—good when I read such words as these, ‘With an overrunning flood He will make an utter end of the place, thereof, and darkness shall pursue His enemies.’” God is good, even then—He is always good! Let Him reveal Himself as He pleases, let Him do what He pleases—whatever I find He reveals about Himself, or whatever I see in Providence about Him, my heart is bowed down! Even when my understanding cannot understand, this firm piece of good sound doctrine is still true—“The Lord is and must be good.”

The goodness of God is seen *in His very name*, for what is His name, “God,” but short for *good*? We call Him God because we count the good. And so good is He that “there is none good save One; that is, God.” All other goodness that exists is but a spark from this great Sun, or else it is a lie! There never would have been any goodness in the world apart from God, nor can goodness continue to exist, much less increase, except as God, whose very name is good, shall continue to make that goodness flow forth from Himself unto the sons of men. *God is essentially good*. It is His very Nature to be good. He could not be otherwise than good. If you and I are good, it is not because of our nature that we are good. Alas, since the Fall, it is true that in us, that is, in our flesh, there dwells no good thing—and any goodness has to be imparted to us. But to God no goodness can be brought—from God all goodness must be fetched, for He is good, essentially!

And *God is good independently*. There are none that make Him good, or help Him to be so. If you and I are good in any way, it is by His Grace, by His teaching, by the example of friends, by Divine restraints, by gracious constraints. By a thousand helps and props our poor goodness stands, but His goodness stands of itself! None can make Him better. None keep Him back from being evil. He is good, He must be good and that entirely in and of Himself—essentially and independently good. I want you to think of this, because I want you never to get the notion in your head that God is good through certain means and under certain circumstances and conditions—or that the goodness of God depends upon the life of such an one, or upon your possession of such-and-such earthly goods. Oh, no! God is good independently of all these and if all these were swept away, God would be just as good and just as good to you! You may question it, but it should never be a matter of question. If every conduit pipe which now conveys to us streams of comfort from the fountainhead were broken and taken away, God could make the waters leap out of the rock, itself, and streams to flow in the desert immediately at our feet! As long as you have God, you have the essence of all good—and as long as God lives, whoever else dies, the goodness on which your soul is to feed has an independent existence.

Note, next, that *God is eternally and unchangeably good*. He cannot be better! He cannot be worse—He is absolutely perfect. There can be no improvement and there can be no depreciation in Him. He was good on your wedding-day, when He gave you the loved one to be the joy of your life. And He was just as good on that sorrowful day when the partner of your being was struck down. You thought God was good when your little child laughed in your lap and the house was glad with his merry ways, but He was just as good when the little coffin went silently out of the door, wet with parents’ tears. God was good to you when you walked abroad in the sunlight and every breath of air meant health to you—and He is just as good when every step is a weariness and your body is consuming away with sickness. He has not changed. Why, dear Heart, you have not changed toward your child, have you? Yet you are evil and shall not He who is all good be just as full of love to His children in dark dispensations as in bright times? Assuredly it is so! If you should live till infirmities are multiplied—if it were possible for you to exist till you had numbered the years of Methuselah, yet you would still find God to be just as good as in your young days when first your heart leaped at the sound of His name! Do not be afraid, therefore, of what is yet to be, for *whatever* comes, “Truly God is good to Israel”—truly, “His mercy endures forever.”

Turn this little sentence over many times, and try to get the full meaning out of it. “The Lord is good”—*good in each one of His Divine Persons*. You do not doubt that the Father is good. He chose you before the world was. He gave His Son for you. He “has begotten us, again, unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” He is our Father—surely He is good, is He not? There is Jesus, the second Person of the blessed Trinity in Unity. Is He not good? He “loved me, and gave Himself for me.” He loved, lived, died, rose again and still lives pleading, preparing, wait-

ing to come and take us to Himself. Is not Jesus good? That blessed Truth of God is beyond all question! Well, then, the Father is good and the Son is good. And the Holy Spirit—is He not good? Did He not first turn your eyes to Jesus? Did He not breathe into you the breath of spiritual life? And, since then, has He not been your Teacher, your Guide, your Helper, your Comforter, dwelling with you, suggesting your prayers, helping your infirmities? Oh, He is good! What evil did you ever have at His dear hands? Well, then, the Father is good, the Son is good and the Holy Spirit is good, so, in a threefold sense we may say, “The Lord is good.”

Now, to cheer your faith yet again, let me remind you that *the Lord is good in all His acts of Grace*. Was He not good when first He chose you, when there was nothing in you “to merit esteem, or give the Creator delight”? When you had fallen and lay all in ruins, yet “He loved you not withstanding all”—was He not good then? And when He planned the Covenant, “ordered in all things and sure,” the Covenant of Grace by which He could be just and yet be the Justifier of him that believes in Jesus—was He not good then? And when He gave His Son—His only Son—that He might die to make atonement for our sin, was He not good then? And when He washed us in the precious blood of Christ, clothed us with His perfect righteousness, adopted us into His family and, by our regeneration, gave us the nature as well as the privileges of children—when He promised to preserve us even to the end—was it not all goodness? And must we not say of all His acts of Grace, “The Lord is good”? Further, Brothers and Sisters, you may depend upon it that the Lord’s actions are all for our benefit. Good men, you know, are much the same all through—cut them where you please, there is something sound about them in every part. I am sure that it is so with God—it is not merely one portion of His Character that is good, but it is *all* good. Nor is it one set of His actions that are good, but *all* His acts are good.

That brings us to this point, that *all His Providences are, have been and always shall be good*. What is the Providence that grieves you just now? Perhaps you have been a great loser this week. Ah, but it is a good God that permitted you to be a loser. You have been bereaved. Ah, but it was not a demon that stole away your darling, but the good God permitted it—did it Himself, maybe, so He is good in that. “I should think Him good,” said one to me, “if anything else had happened to me except *this*.” No, Sister, He is good in that, for if you will have it that He is good in all except only the one thing in which He has dealt with you of late, then, truly, if He had done something else, you would have been of the same mind! You do not believe Him good, I tell you, unless He is all over and altogether good. The Lord has done for His people the best that could be done. He has not suffered any evil to harm them, neither has He denied them anything that would be for their good. It is still true, “No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.” A day shall come when these lips shall tell of God’s goodness in a much better style than they can at present—up there, in yonder golden streets! But, meanwhile, I have an opportunity I may not have again, for now I am permitted to say, though I have not been second in mourning to any of the bereaved this week, and though thrice the arrows have wounded me, yet the Lord is good and blessed be His name! Though physical pain and mental depression come together, yet the Lord is good.

When I was away in the South of France enjoying health and every comfort, I kept saying to myself and to my friend, “Let us praise God doubly now, for, maybe we shall be in the dark when we get home and, lest we should run short of praise, then, let us give the Lord an extra quantity now.” I felt so glad to be, as it were, laying up a little store of honey against the time when flowers would not be quite so plentiful. But I want to use up that store, now, and bless and magnify and adore the name of the Lord!

Let me say to you mourners and sufferers that your praises of God when you have no trouble are not worth half as much as they may be now. If you can sing His praises on the bed of sickness and extol Him in the fire of a sore bereavement, that will be grand! The praises of the angels, as they bow in perfect happiness, and say, “God is good,” must be very blessed. And the praises of men of God on earth, who are prospering in business and who have health and strength, and who say, “God is good,” are very precious. But you take me to one who is poor and needy, one who scarcely knows where his daily bread will come from—and when he says, “But God is good,” I think the Lord finds a sweeter note in that praise than He does even in the music of the angelic choirs! Then go to one who is racked with pain and suffering, and deprived of every comfort—yet I see her stretch out her bony hand and say, “The Lord is good, blessed be His name.” That is sweeter music still! But what praise to God there must have been from those martyrs who lay in prison rotting to death, or who were brought out to the stake and who, as they burnt, when every finger was a candle, yet still loved Him, praised Him, and extolled Him! Oh, that is such music as God, Himself, could not create directly and dis-

tinctly. God must go round about by redeeming love to get such melody as that! He has not made a seraph that could so sing—it has to be a fallen and renewed being that could be capable of such love as that, and say, “The Lord is good.” I am trying to put this praise into your mouth, but may God put it into your heart! Dear Brother, dear Sister, let this be your continual song, “The Lord is good.”

II. Secondly, GOD IS GOOD TO US. What is He to us? “A stronghold in the day of trouble.”

It is well to know what God is *under special circumstances*. The special circumstances here mentioned are, “in the day of trouble.” Remember that it is *only a day*—it is not a week, nor a month—and God will not permit the devil to add an extra hour to that day. It is a “*day of trouble*.” There is an end to all our griefs. Well did one say—

*“When God appoints the number ten,
There never can be eleven.”*

And when God measures out the bitter medicine to His people, there cannot be another drop of gall put into the cup.

But it really is “*the day of trouble*.” See how the emphasis is laid there—“a stronghold in *the day of trouble*.” It is the most troublous day that a man has, that day in which the clouds return after the rain, that day in which he seems to have lost every comfort, and sorrows come one after another, like Job’s messengers, all bringing gloomy stories—each one more gloomy than those that went before—“*the day of trouble*.” There is such a day which occurs to most godly people, sooner or later, before they get to Heaven—“*the day of trouble*.” It seems to be trouble’s own day. Trouble has the day all to itself. From early in the morning to the last thing at night, it is trouble, trouble, trouble—“*the day of trouble*.” What is God *then*? He is a “a stronghold.” That is a grand word, “a stronghold”—that is, a fortress, a castle, a tower of defense—“in the day of trouble.”

So that, *in the time of trouble, God guarantees safety to His people*. They dwell surrounded as with impregnable bulwarks! “As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from henceforth even forever.” Troubles are like enemies besieging them, but God is to them like a strong tower of defense in which they are perfectly safe!

What is more, they *are often perfectly at peace*. The enemy comes and spies upon them, throws up his earthworks and prepares his engines of war. But thus says the Lord, as He did to Sennacherib, “The virgin, the daughter of Zion, has despised you and laughed you to scorn. The daughter of Jerusalem has shaken her head at you.” Often, in the times of their greatest trouble, God’s people are so resigned, so acquiescent to their Lord’s will and, consequently so calm, so brave, that their peace is not in the least degree affected. I had a curious experience in conversing with two ladies who were very deaf. We went for a drive in a carriage and as soon as the rumbling of the wheels began, they could hear everything that I said, so we could easily carry on a conversation while there was a great noise, but inside their own drawing-room it was not so easy for them to hear. And I do believe that, sometimes, when God puts His people into a rumbling tumbler of affliction, they can hear His voice much better than at other times! It seems odd and strange, but it is strangely true—they are most at peace when in the thick of the fight, never so safe as when in danger—and never so much in danger as when apparently safe! God’s people are a mass of contradictions, a paradox and a riddle! Let the Believer read that riddle as he can, for no one else will. He has a stronghold in the day of trouble, giving safety and perfect peace.

Beside that, it is a stronghold *defying the enemy*. The foe comes tearing up the hill, ready to devour the people of God. What makes them safe against the adversary? Why, there is a bastion, a fortification, so that he cannot come near. He grins at the saints and bites his nails, like Bunyan’s Giant Pope! He threatens what he will do to them. Like Rabshakeh, he writes ugly letters, but he cannot really do anything. When a man hides behind the Most High, God Himself bids defiance to that man’s adversaries, and their rage is all in vain. There came a watery torrent down upon a little mill and threatens to sweep it away, but Wisdom fitted up a wheel and allowed as much of the water as might be needed to turn the wheel and grind the miller’s grain. As for the rest, it was turned aside. “Surely the wrath of man shall praise You: the remainder of wrath shall You restrain.” So will it be when that great torrent of trouble comes—a part of it shall be used to grind our corn and make us rich and fat in the things of God—the rest of it shall run harmlessly by. We shall hear its noise, but that shall be all. Therefore, in patience let us possess our souls.

Once more, this stronghold means that *God abides forever the same*, always a sure refuge for the needy. Strongholds are not like temporary camps—fortifications are intended to stand from generation to generation and, in that sense, “The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble.” Remember what brave Luther did. I think I hear him saying,

when the enemy raved and raged around him, “Come, let us sing the forty-sixth Psalm, and spite the devil.” So they sang, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble,” and he verily laughed for joy in his holy confidence in his God.

And Luther’s God is our God—just the same God as He was then—and He deserves the same confidence from us as He had from Luther! Therefore, let us give it to Him now! Let us praise Him now! Instead of hanging our harps on the willows, let us say, “No, the willows have quite enough weight to bear without having our harps hung on them. And our harps were never made to be hung on willows.” Let us strike every string to the praise of that unchanging love which puts the burden on the back and even smites us in love and with wise intent. My Soul, bless you your Lord this very moment and rob Him not of His revenue of praise because you are sad!

III. Now, lastly, we are to think of GOD WITH US—“He knows them that trust in Him.”

Of course the Lord knows everything, but there is an emphatic sense in that word, “know,” whenever it is applied to God’s people. Here it refers to *His intimate acquaintance with them*—their persons, their condition, their needs, their sufferings, their past, their present, their future. He knows all about them. We say, sometimes, to a person whom we do not care to meet, “I do not know you.” But we never say that to our own dear child, or to a friend whose concerns interest us. No, we try to know all about him—we wish to know in order that we may relieve and succor. In a far higher sense, Omniscience concentrates its all-perceiving glance upon each child of God. Your Father is looking at you, Beloved, with as intent a gaze as if there were nobody else in the world but you—yes, and no world, either, but only you. Think how He would know you if, in the whole universe, there were nothing but God and you—just in that way He knows you! He delights to know all about you, for He made you and He new-made you! You are a plant of His planting. He has watched over you and He has said, “I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.” It is with the most intimate and intense knowledge that the Lord knows them that trust in Him.

This knowledge also *implies tender care*. Just as a doctor who really cares for a patient, knows all about that patient by making a diagnosis of his condition and studying his symptoms from day to day till he gets to be thoroughly acquainted with him and does not prescribe for him at a venture, so does God care for you with an intense, loving, affectionate, earnest care—wishing to do you good, to make you better—and to turn everything to your benefit. If you are one of those that trust in Him, it is sweet for you to be able to say, “God knows all about me and He cares for me.” Do notice one word in the text, “He knows them that *trust* in Him”—not those that are perfect, not those that are doing certain works—but, “He knows them that *trust* in Him.”

Those who trust in the Lord are not only the objects of His knowledge and care, they are also *the objects of His approval*. There is nothing in the world that God approves of more than faith. To trust God is the greatest of all works. “What shall we do,” said the Jews to our Lord, “that we might work the works of God?” Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe on Him whom He has sent.” To erect a row of almshouses, or to build a cathedral—is not that a big work? No, not compared with *believing on Jesus Christ whom God has sent*. This is the God-like work, the greatest work that we can do! Our action may not please God, however pleasing it may appear to us, but wherever there is faith, God is pleased. And remember, “without faith it is impossible to please Him.” So dear Friends, if you want to please God, trust Him, trust Him implicitly! Trust Him now with your sin, with your sorrow, with everything! The more you trust Him, the more pleasing you are to God. See what an opportunity you have of pleasing Him in times of great trial and trouble. If a person has a burden to carry which he is able to bear, self-reliance will serve his turn. But when he has a load upon him that he *cannot* carry, and he says, “O God, if You will strengthen me, I will carry it”—then it is that he is pleasing to God! If you are only reaching what you can reach, there is nothing notable in that—the real thing is to be doing what you cannot do—by believing in God to give you more strength than by nature you possess! To trust God while you are alive is good, but to say with Job. “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him,” that is the very cream of faith! “He knows”—with approving knowledge—“all them that trust in Him.”

Once more, dear Friends, this word, “know,” here means *loving communion*. We know one another by being with one another, sympathizing with one another, entering into one another’s thoughts and feelings. I have known in this sense some of the choicest of God’s people—and what a loss it is to lose those whom we have known so well! But God knows us. He knows our prayers and tears, He knows our wishes, He knows that we are not what we want to be, but He knows what we do desire to be. He knows our aspirations, our sighs, our groans, our secret lodgings, our own chasten-

ing of spirit when we fail—He has entered into it all. He says, “Yes, dear child, I know all about you. I have been with you when you thought you were alone. I have read what you could not read—the secrets of your own heart that you could not decipher. I have known them all, and I still know them.”

And they who trust in the Lord shall have one more thing. That is, *God will acknowledge them as His*. At the Last Great Day, Christ shall say to some, “I never knew you.” Those that do not trust Christ, He will not acknowledge. In that dread hour when they will most of all need a Savior, He will say, “I never knew you.” But if you trust Him, He knows you now and He will acknowledge you then! Jesus Christ Himself cannot say to me at the last day, “I never knew you.” He must know me, for He knows how I have bothered and worried Him! He knows how I had the blood from His heart to wash my sins away and the robe of His righteousness to clothe me. I have needed all that He is to make anything of me and still, day by day I am a poor beggar who will not let Him go down the street without crying, “You, Son of David, have mercy on me!” Therefore He knows my name and Christ will never say that He does not know us if He does. Make Him acquainted with your name even now! Dear Sinner, go and tell the Lord your story and your history, your sin and your transgression. If you confess your sin to Him, He cannot say, “I never knew you.” Then go and cast yourself on Him with all your sin—then He will acknowledge you as His and will never disown you!

“He knows them that trust in Him.” Trusting in Him gives us a wonderful hold on God. If you trust a man, he feels bound, if he is an honorable man, to be true to the trust reposed in him. If it were a poor person in the street, who had only a few shillings, and was afraid of being robbed, and he were to put his little bit of money in your hand, and say, “Good woman, will you take care of this money of mine?”—you would take care of it, would you not? You would do anything rather than lose it. And Christ will keep that which we have committed unto Him. Last Monday night, one of our Brothers, a neighboring minister, told us that, 45 years ago, he gave his soul to Christ and, he said, “It has been like a sealed envelope ever since.” I like that thought of the seal that has never been broken. The devil has never been able to get at the good man’s soul. It has been a sealed envelope ever since his conversion—and so it shall be until the day of his Lord’s appearing, when Christ shall break the seal and reveal to the assembled worlds what He has kept!

Oh, give yourselves to Jesus, dear Hearts! Give yourselves to Jesus! Now that so many are being taken away from us to Heaven, I want to have a great number coming into the Church to fill up the vacuum. During the last few weeks that I have been ill and have been away, I have not been able to see any of you, but I intend, as soon as I can, to see such as wish to make a confession of their faith in Christ. I hope that there are many of you ready to come and that among the rest will be one or another able to say, “Yes, Sir, the Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble. And I now know that He knows them that trust in Him—and I have the witness of the Spirit that I am one of that happy company.” God bless you, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *PSALM 77.*

The Book of Psalms, though it is Divinely Inspired, is also marvelously human—it is everywhere instinct with life—and life in its most sympathetic forms. However glad you are, there is always a Psalm suitable for you to sing. And you are never so sad but a Psalm could be found to help you, in the very depths, to pour out your complaint before God. This 77th Psalm is the song of a man in deep depression.

Verse 1. *I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice; and He gave ear unto me.* It was only a cry. A monotonous cry, redoubled and full of sorrow. Yet the Lord gave ear unto him who cried. There were some who would have stopped their ears and have got out of the way, for the sound made them melancholy and they could not bear it. But the Lord gave ear unto His sad servant’s cry. Oh, how sweet is this! Though He hears the songs of angels and though the hallelujahs of the blood-bought in Glory never cease before Him, yet He stoops from His throne of majesty and listens to the cry of misery! “He gave ear unto me.” Are any of you troubled? Pour out your hearts before the Lord and He will give ear unto you as He did to the writer of this Psalm!

2. *In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord.* That was a very wise thing to do! Where else should he go, in the day of trouble, but to Him who sent the trouble, to Him who could help him to bear the trouble, to Him who could sanctify the trouble, to Him who could, if He pleased, remove the trouble? “In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord.” I have

heard of some who fly to strong drink to drown their troubles—that will never do—it is like leaping into the fire to escape the flame! Some run to their fellow creatures for comfort—that is a poor way of acting—better by far do as the Psalmist said he did, “In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord.”

2, 3. *My sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted. I remembered God, and was troubled.* Yet he says that he sought God. It is a grand thing when your faith leads you to seek God, even though He troubles you! It is better to knock at God’s door when He is angry than to go to any other door! Even if He shuts the door in your face, still wait upon Him. Though He may seem not to heed your cry, there is no door like that of God’s! Therefore, continue there. Yet there are times when even Believers in God are so conscious of sin, so conscious of departure from Him by unbelief towards Him, that, as they remember God, they are troubled.

3-5. *I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah. You hold my eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak. I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times.* What God did with others of His people in their times of trouble, how He rescued them, the splendor of His power in the ages long since gone—these are among the things which the Psalmist considered. It is well, sometimes, to live in the past. If the present seems to be like a fire that has gone out, snatch a live coal from the altars of the past and set the fuel alight again.

6. *I call to remembrance my song in the night.* “How I was once like a nightingale and learned to sing with a thorn at my breast. How, in former times, I triumphed in the hour of trouble and affliction.” It is good to remember all this, for, though past experience will not do to *live* upon, yet sometimes we are like the men with their barges when they push backwards to send the barge forward. We may think of the past to help us in the present.

6, 7. *I commune with my own heart: and my spirit made diligent search. Will the Lord cast off forever? And will He be favorable no more?* Come, what do you think? Will such a loving, faithful God as ours cast us off forever? Can you harbor such a thought concerning Him? Will He be favorable no more after all the favor He has already shown? Can He change? Will He deny Himself? Do you think that God will play fast and loose with you? “Will He be favorable no more?”

8. *Is His mercy clean gone forever?* We sing, “His mercy endures forever!” Is that a lie? Can it be?

8. *Does His promise fail forevermore?* Does it ever fail at all? And if it does tarry a while, will it always wait? Will God, at last, be found untrue? Come, children of God, in your trouble face these questions and answer them—for you must get comfort out of the only reply that you can give to them.

9. *Has God forgotten to be gracious?* Is He the same God that He used to be? Or has He been overtaken with a fit of forgetfulness? Has He a failing memory, like yours and mine?

9. *Has He in anger shut up His tender mercies? Selah.* Can it be? Has He not said, “as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you”? Can it be, then, that in anger He has shut up His tender mercies?

10. *And I said, This is my infirmity.* And so it is. Worse than that, it is sometimes our iniquity, our sin, to think such hard things of God! But inasmuch as faith was there, battling, struggling and striving, the little temporary victory which unbelief seemed to gain was the result of infirmity.

10. *But I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High.* The glorious years of His electing love. The years in which He has loved His people and never changed that love. The years in which we, ourselves, have realized His Presence and been at His right hand enjoying, day by day, a sense of His love.

11, 12. *I will remember the works of the LORD: surely I will remember Your wonders of old. I will meditate also on all Your works, and talk of Your doings.* They will bear talking of, they will bear turning over and meditating upon, for they are full of comfort.

13, 14. *Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God? You are the God that does wonders: You have declared Your strength among the people.* Whenever the Hebrew mind was full of exulting joy concerning God’s greatness and might, it seemed inevitably to turn back to Egypt and the Red Sea. Just as we, Believers in Jesus, love to sing the song of the Lamb, so did these old Believers sing it by anticipation! We may fitly join with them and together we may sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and of the Lamb. Here is a part of it.

15. *You have with Your arm redeemed Your people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.* There is no song like that of redemption! Whatever our troubles may be—if we are trusting in Christ, we are a redeemed people! Whatever our sins

or infirmities, or imperfections—we are a redeemed people, like Israel of old! They were redeemed by power, as well as by price, so we read—

16-18. *The waters saw You, O God, the waters saw You; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled. The clouds poured out water: the skies sent out a sound: Your arrows also went abroad. The voice of Your thunder was in the Heaven: the lightning lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook.* This is what Egypt saw when God turned the dark side of the cloud towards the Egyptians and greatly troubled them through that wild tempestuous night!

19, 20. *Your way is in the sea, and Your path in the great waters, and Your footsteps are not known. You led Your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.* And so will He continue to lead His people by one and another, till all their wanderings are over and they rest in peace at His right hand forever. “Therefore, comfort one another with these words.”

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