

A SABBATH MIRACLE

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A SERMON

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And He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift herself up.

And when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said unto her, Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity. And He laid His hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God."

Luke 13:10-13.

WHAT blessed days Sabbath days are! I mean not only the Jewish Sabbath on the seventh day of the week, but the Christian Sabbath on the first day of the week. I remember a friend in Newcastle telling me that when he was looking at a house in that city which was to be let, he was taken to the top of it and the agent said to him, "You see that there is a fine view from here. You can see a long way today, but on Sundays you can see Durham Cathedral." My friend asked, "Why on Sundays?" And the reply was, "You cannot see it the rest of the week because of the smoke, but, on Sundays it is usually clear enough to get a glimpse of it." What views some of us have had of Heaven and what views of Jesus Christ have been accorded to us on Sabbath days! We might have seen Him on other days if there had not been so much smoke from business, care and sin, but the blessed breath from Heaven has blown it all away on the Lord's Day and we have been able to look even into that which is within the veil!

Our Lord Jesus Christ has performed wonders of Grace on all the days of the week. I would not be surprised to hear that there are Christians here who were converted on a Monday, or a Tuesday, or a Wednesday, or a Thursday, or a Friday, or a Saturday! But I should quite expect to learn that for every one of them, there are 10 here who were brought to Christ on the Sabbath! Heaven's gates seem to be set more widely open on that day than during the rest of the week, or else we have more inclination to enter them then. When the full history of the Sabbath shall be unfolded, we shall begin to know what infinite mercy it was on God's part to set aside one day in seven especially for His worship and for our spiritual benefit. Thousands upon thousands, yes, millions upon millions have found Jesus very near and rejoiced in Him on the Lord's Day!

Our Savior was known to use the day for public worship and for the pursuance of His high and holy calling of blessing the children of men. So, finding that on that day He could meet with many in the synagogue, He was accustomed to go there and teach. Among the people who came on the particular Sabbath of which our text speaks, there was one poor woman who was possessed by an evil spirit. And that evil spirit had, I suppose, so affected her nerves and so influenced her entire system that her spinal cord was greatly weakened. Evidently she had suffered from the worst kind of curvature of the spine, for she was bent double, "and could in no wise lift herself up." I am afraid that if any one of you had been in such a sad state as that, you would have said, "I shall never go to the synagogue anymore," and that your friends would have said, "We think you had better not go. You are such an object and you are so unwell, that you will be best at home. You can read a good book there and you can worship God just as acceptably in your own parlor as you can by going up to the public assembly of His people."

I am also afraid that there are some here who would have felt that they could be excused for a much lighter affliction than that poor woman suffered from, for I have known some who could not come out to the service if it happened to be

wet—though they went to business on wet days. Many people imagine that Sunday is a convenient day for being ill and getting a little rest so as to be fortified for the more important business which requires all their energies Monday and during the rest of the week. It seems as though they thought that cheating God out of His day is a very small matter, but that robbing themselves of even a portion of a day would greatly grieve them.

If this poor woman had not gone to the synagogue, I do not know that she would ever have met with Christ. So I commend her example to you even if your bodily infirmities increase so much that you might make very justifiable excuses for being absent. There was a dear Sister, now in Heaven, who attended this Tabernacle for years though she was so deaf that she never heard a word that was spoken. The reasons she gave for being here were that, at any rate, she could join in the hymns and that had she stayed away, she would have felt as if she was dissociated from the people of God and other people, perhaps, might not have known the reason for her absence—and it might, therefore, have been a bad example to them. So she said, “Though I do not hear a word, I love to be there,” and she has told me that some of the happiest hours she has ever spent have been those when she has thus had communion with the people of God, although she could not fully understand all that was being said or done. In like manner, dear Friends, as often as the people of God assemble for worship, join with them!

Notice one thing more about this woman. She did not get any good through going to the synagogue, as long as she merely went there. She went to the synagogue bent double and she came back bent double. If she went all those 18 years, as I daresay she did, she was unable to lift herself up all that long time! Do not, I pray you—you who are regular attendants at the House of God and yet remain unsaved—get into the notion that all you need is to attend Divine Service so many times on the Sabbath or on weeknights, for, if you do, you will not likely ever get a blessing. This poor woman was not healed until she met with the Lord Jesus Christ! And I wish each one of you would come here saying, “Oh, that I might meet with Jesus today! Oh, that Jesus would meet with me!” It is a rule, with very few exceptions, that what a man fishes for he is most likely to catch. If any come here merely out of idle curiosity, it is possible, though not certain, that their curiosity will be satisfied. If any come to find fault, I have no doubt that they will find plenty to complain of. But if any of you have come determined to find Christ if He is to be found, it will be a very surprising thing if you have to go away without discovering Him! This is what you really need if you are to be restored from all the ills that sin has worked—you must come to Christ Himself.

I. Coming to the story of this poor woman who was bent double, the first thing to be noted is that CHRIST’S COMPASSION WAS EXCITED. Jesus, while He was teaching in the synagogue, looked into the faces of His congregation and as He looked at them, He saw this woman and His heart was at once moved with compassion towards her.

Note that it *was not her prayers that moved Him*, or any plea she urged, for she did not speak to Him, or plead with Him. This was one of the cases in which no request for healing was presented to the Savior. It was the sight of her misery that touched His heart. Perhaps, dear Friends, if she had not been bent double, Christ’s notice might not have been so quickly drawn to her. But because she was what people call, “quite an object,” and looked so sad, she attracted Christ’s attention.

Notice, also, that Christ *was not moved to compassion by the prayers of anybody else for her*. Sometimes He healed the sick when their fathers, or mothers, or friends brought them to Him. But nobody brought this poor woman to Jesus. It does not seem as if anybody had sufficient compassion upon her to ask Jesus to heal her, or, if they had the compassion, they had not enough faith to believe that it was possible for her to be healed. There she was, a poor lone woman and, possibly, it was the sight of her with not a friend to help her, that touched Christ’s heart and moved Him to fix His gaze upon her with a view to curing her sad complaint.

Notice, further, that *Christ’s heart was not touched by any description which she gave Him of her condition*. She gave Him no description and none was needed. He looked at her—that was all that was required, for He already knew all about her. She did not say, “I have been bound by Satan for 18 years,” but Christ knew that she had been. As He looked at her, He read her life story as a man reads a book. And as He read the story, His heart was moved with compassion towards her. I wonder whether there is a soul here that has not been asking the Lord for a blessing because that soul does not think it is likely that any blessing would come? I wonder whether there is anyone here who has not dared to hope and, therefore, has not dared to pray? My Master has a wonderful eye for such souls as these! There may have been in that synagogue a man wearing a gold ring, or a lady in a fine dress, but Christ did not notice them or their adornment. He

picked out the person who was the most miserable, the most wretched and who most needed His pity—and upon her He fixed those blessed eyes of His with a compassion tender as the heart of a woman! And His whole soul was moved with pity for her because she was so grievously bound by the accursed power of Satan.

Now let us look at this woman's case a little more closely. She "was bowed together, and could in no wise lift herself up." That, in itself, was a painful thing—all the beauty of the woman's form and figure had gone. And being bent double like that must have produced most serious injury to every organ of the poor creature's body. I have no doubt that she was the subject of a thousand aches and pains through the posture in which she had been bent. Besides, it is a beautiful thing to be able to look up—but to be always obliged to look down is something terrible! Through this trying affliction, the poor woman could not even see the Savior though, happily, He could see her, bent down as she was in the crowd. Instead of looking up with the face of a woman, she had to carry her head down towards the earth like a poor beast—and I would not wonder if the spirit of evil that was in her had made her feel unhappy, sorrowful and almost despairing. I am also inclined to think that her mind may have been, like her body, bent towards the earth and that this, too, was caused by Satanic influence.

Perhaps the worst point about her case was that she had been for 18 years in that sad condition. We do not know how it came about. She may, as a girl, have been able to run in the fields and spend her days right merrily but, all of a sudden, perhaps, there came upon her this evil spirit and she began to feel weakness of the spine and, by-and-by, she was bent double, the sun of her life was put out and her days were dark with sorrow and pain—and this had continued for 18 years! What a long time that is to be such a sufferer! Eighteen years of happiness may pass very quickly, but 18 years of pain is a very long period. This woman, for 18 years, could not lift up her head to look at the sun. For 18 years Satan had possessed her, bowed her body together and filled her mind with morbid thoughts, dreary dreams and terrible forebodings of dreadful things to happen in the future! Jesus knew all about those 18 years, so we do not wonder that He had compassion upon her.

Possibly in this congregation—no, I am quite sure I have some who, in soul, are like this poor woman was in body. You feel that you would gladly give all you have to be saved, but you have long ago given up all hope of that. You did, at one time, hear the Gospel with some degree of pleasure, but now, even while you listen to it, you keep on condemning yourself and saying, "Salvation will never come to me." You have fallen into a condition of chronic melancholy and you are so sad that friends who used to cheer you, gave you up in despair long ago. Perhaps they call you foolish, but God knows that it is not folly, but a most grievous calamity that has happened to you. You cannot see Jesus and you do not think that He can see you—but He does and that is your only ray of hope! If I were to attempt to comfort you, I know that I would fail. If you are the person of whom I am thinking, no language from merely human lips will ever comfort you—there will have to be a Divine Voice reaching your inmost soul or else you will never be loosed from your infirmity! We meet with some such persons every now and then and we try to cheer them. It is right that we should do so. We pity them and we are quite sure that our Lord Jesus Christ pities them still more, for there is not one of us whose heart is one half as tender towards his fellow man as the heart of Christ, Himself, is and must be. So, you poor afflicted ones tossed with tempest and not comforted—you downtrodden, sin-burdened souls—Jesus picks you out of this throng, as He picked out that poor woman in the synagogue, that He may have mercy upon you as He had upon her!

II. Secondly, JESUS ISSUED A COMMAND—"He called her to Him."

Somehow or other He managed to attract her attention and then, probably not without considerable difficulty and pain, she made a great effort and, at last, was able to see Him. And He said something to this effect, "Will that poor woman over yonder who is bent double, come here to Me?" Whatever words He may have used, we know that "He called her to Him." Was not that command *a proof of great Grace and condescension on Christ's part?* If He, the Messiah, who spoke as never man spoke, had called the ruler of the synagogue and spoken familiarly to him, one might not have wondered so much. Yet, out of all that throng He did not call anyone except that poor decrepit, bowed-down, Satan-possessed daughter of Abraham! And we are expressly told that, "He called her to Him." He might have called to her from a distance and said, "Be healed," but He did not, for He wished to show His special sympathy with such a sad case of suffering.

This call was not only given in great condescension, but it was also *given directly and personally to her*—"He called her to Him." If Jesus had said, "I wish any person here who suffers from a spirit of infirmity to come to Me," perhaps she

might have come, perhaps she might not. But, instead of giving a general intimation like that, He fixed His eyes on her, and “called her to Him.” Do any of you remember a sermon—I do very well—in which the preacher seemed to speak to nobody but yourself? I am fully persuaded that if I had been like the prisoners in some of our jails—shut up in a box where I could not see anybody but the preacher—on the occasion when the Lord met with me, the preacher could not have addressed himself more pointedly to me than he then did! And on the occasion to which our text refers, Christ addressed Himself to this woman personally and pointedly. I am hoping that the description I have given of the woman will make someone here say, “Ah, that is just my case!” Well, if so, O poor bowed-down daughter, poor languishing, desponding man, Jesus calls you! If that description applies to you, take the personal call to yourself and say, “This condescending, pointed call is addressed to *me*.”

Then do as this poor woman did—make it *a call which was promptly obeyed*. I daresay that the other people in the synagogue were very surprised that Christ called *her*, yet they made way for her and, strange object as she was—perhaps, every step painful to her—she managed to get where Christ was. As she was coming towards Him, she heard Him make this extraordinary statement, “Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity.” And when she got close to Him, He laid both His hands on her, “and immediately she was made straight.” How startled she must have been—even at Christ’s first call—and little did she dream that He was going to cure her in such a fashion! And perhaps there is someone here whom Christ means to save, yet you have not even been thinking of Him. Nevertheless, thus is it written in the counsels of eternity, “In the Tabernacle, on that summer Sunday night, such-and-such a soul must be delivered from the bondage of Satan.” If it is so written, all the devils in Hell cannot hold you captive beyond the appointed moment! And all the weight of your sins and the evil habits that you have formed and so long practiced shall burn like so much straw in a blazing fire, for God’s eternal decree of Mercy must be fulfilled! And He who comes to deliver you is none other than Christ, the Son of God, “mighty to save,” before whom gates of brass are broken and bars of iron are snapped in sunder!

It was a glorious Sabbath for that poor woman when the Lord came forth, determined to heal her! And this will be a glorious Sabbath for you if the Lord now resolves to save you! He is even now calling you doubters, you desponding ones, you who have given up all hope! He is calling *you*, will you not come to Him? Will you not trust Him? He asks you to believe, not that *you* are good, but that He is good—not that you can be healed by your neighbor, but that you can be healed by your Savior! He asks you to come and listen to His gracious words while He says, “Your sins are forgiven you; go in peace.” “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions and, as a cloud, your sins: return unto Me, for I have redeemed you.”

III. We have so far noticed two things—Christ’s compassion excited and His command issued. Next, CHRIST’S POWER WAS MANIFESTED—and that was done in a very instructive way.

Jesus said to her, “*Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity.*” It is the Word of the Lord that has power in it. Whenever people are converted and brought to Christ, it is by God’s Word that the deed is done. Fine sermons never win souls—you may blaze away, young man, at a terrific rate with your brilliant oratory and your fine pieces of poetry and quotations from eminent authors! And your sermon ending may be like the set piece at a display of fireworks, or the final burst of brightness with which it all ends—but all that will not save souls! What does save souls, then? Why, the Word of the Lord, the Truth of God as it is in Jesus! I have noticed that the very words of Scripture are usually those that reach the heart, so, Brothers and Sisters, if you really want to find the Lord, give good heed to His Word! Incline your ears and come to Him—hear, and your soul shall live, for “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of the Lord.”

In addition to speaking to the woman, *Christ laid His hands on her* and that is the way that healing reaches sin-sick souls, by being brought into contact with Christ! When the pure Humanity of Christ is recognized by us and we perceive that He is our Brother and our Friend—when we see that He bears both our sins and our sorrows and carries our sicknesses in His own blessed Person—when we realize that Christ has become our Representative and Surety—a sense of peace comes to our soul! One reason why Jesus is so well qualified to save us is that—

*“He knows what sore temptations mean,
For He has felt the same”—*

and He is, therefore, able to aid those who are tempted. Bowed-down woman, He puts His pierced hands upon you! Sorely troubled man, know you not that God has taken your nature upon Himself and now says to you, “Be you comforted,

for I have loved you and lived for you and died for you”? God grant that you may feel that healing touch and experience that Divine Deliverance this very hour!

That afflicted woman was healed immediately. One of the most wonderful things about Christ’s cures was that, as a general rule, they were worked in an instant. Can you imagine—I have often tried to do so—the strange sensations that passed through some of those people when they were healed in a moment? Think of this poor woman—18 years bent double and then completely restored in a single instant! What a paradise must have been condensed into those few minutes! At first I suppose she may have thought that she was only dreaming. What? Was she able to stand upright and to look into the face of Him who had worked such a wonderful cure for her? The rapture must have seemed almost too much for her when she realized that she was healed in an instant! And what if, just now, you should be *saved* in an instant? Remember that to pardon sin does not take God a single second—to save a soul from death and Hell is a more rapid work than for the lightning bolt to fall from Heaven! At one moment a great load of sin may be upon you and you may be fully conscious of the terrible burden—the next instant every sin is gone and you are conscious that it is so—and ready to leap for joy! Nobody can work this mighty miracle of mercy but the Lord Jesus Christ, yet He can do it more swiftly than I can speak of it. Oh, that some who have been bound by Satan for 18 years, or even longer, may prove that they do not need 18 minutes, or even 18 seconds to get free—but may they now look to Jesus and, believing in Him, find instantaneous healing!

Once more, *this woman’s cure was perfect* as well as instantaneous. She did not lift herself up a little and find that the Satanic bondage was being somewhat relaxed. No, she was perfectly healed and, better still, she was *permanently* healed! Her malady did not come back. We have known doctors set a man up for a little time and, after that, there has been a relapse. But this woman was both made straight and kept straight—and if we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the salvation which He gives us, though it is instantaneous, is also perfect and everlasting, for whoever trusts in Christ is saved immediately and saved forever! The gifts and calling of God are not matters for repentance on His part—He does not give salvation and then take it back, but, having once given it, it remains the property of its possessor world without end! Then what a precious Christ He is and what a glorious Healer! I hope some sick one here is saying, “I wish He would look this way, oh, that Jesus would look on me!” He is looking upon you, Soul! Hear what He says to you, “Come unto Me. Trust in Me.” If you trust Jesus now, though you have been bent double these eighteen, these twenty-eight, these thirty-eight, these forty-eight, these fifty-eight, these sixty-eight—these 98 years, or these 118 years, if such a person could be, if you did but look to Him, come to Him, trust Him—in a moment He would make you whole! Oh, that you may do so!

IV. The last thing of all is this—CHRIST’S POWER WAS GLORIFIED.

It is said of this woman that, immediately, being made straight, she “glorified God.” I should think she did! I should not mind having interruptions in our service from people who had found Christ. Our Methodist friends in the olden times, when they found peace, used to shout, “Hallelujah!” Well, if they really had found Christ, I think they were warranted in shouting. If ever a man might cry, “Eureka! Eureka!” it was not the old philosopher, but the new-born child of God! Oh, what bliss it is to find the Savior! If one were, for a little while, delirious with the excessive joy of being saved by Grace, it might be excusable. It is said that some of our young converts are wonderfully enthusiastic. Yes, and well they may be! If you had received such a blessing as they have, you would be enthusiastic, too! If you have ever known the weight of sin crushing you to the dust and then have had it suddenly borne away, you must have felt a mighty rebound when that great load had been removed. Could that healed woman help clapping her hands? Did she not stand up before the whole congregation in the synagogue and say, “That Man must be the Son of God, blessed be His holy name! After 18 years of bondage, He has healed me in a moment!”

Or suppose that she was of the very quiet sort—like the most of you good Sisters—if she did not say a word, yet I think she glorified God by simply standing up straight. If she did not say anything, but just walked away home, all who had known her in her long time of affliction, when they saw her stand up, a fine tall handsome woman—and knew that she must be the same person—must have been struck with wonder and have said, “What new power is this? Who but God could thus have restored this woman?” I would like, Brothers and Sisters in Christ, that you and I would so live that our very lives would preach for Jesus Christ—that people would only have to listen to our ordinary conversation, or to see the cheerfulness of our countenance, or to perceive the hopefulness of our spirit under trouble, our justness and integrity,

our readiness to forgive, our zeal for God! It is good to preach with your tongue if God has called you to do so. But never forget that the best preaching in the world is done by other members of the body. So, preach with your feet—by your walk and conversation! Let your whole being be a living, powerful, irresistible illustration of the power of Jesus Christ to bless and save!

It was so in the case of this woman, for I do not think that after she had clapped her hands once and stood up to testify before the whole congregation, that she was finished glorifying God. Oh, no! All her life she would be glad to tell that story over and over again! I wonder whether she got married after that wonderful healing? It is very likely that she did. And if so, and she had children of her own, as they sat on her knee one of the first stories she would tell them would be about when she was bent double for 18 years and then that wonderful Prophet called her to Him in the synagogue, one Sabbath, and made her straight in a moment! Perhaps she lived long enough to tell the story of Christ's suffering and death. If she ever saw any of her grandchildren, I am sure they would say, "Come, Granny, tell us your story," and she would tell it so well that they would want to hear it again and again!

I think that every Christian should go home to his friends and tell them what great things the Lord has done for them. There is a Brother—not far from me at this moment—who had been a wild young man, fond of all the sports of the country. He went to London and heard a sermon that was the means of his conversion. When he went home, one of his friends with whom he used to follow the hounds, said to him, "Well, Tom, what is the best thing you heard in London?" And Tom replied, "The best thing I heard in London is that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." "Oh," said his companion, "you have gone mad!" "No," answered Tom, "I was mad before I went to London, but I have been cured." I hope you will be able to give such testimony as that concerning what Jesus Christ has done for your souls, even as this poor woman "was made straight, and glorified God."

Some people may say to you, "You had better hold your tongue, for you will break down if you try to tell such a story as that." That would be the very best thing you could do! There is nothing like a break-down when you are telling your story of redeeming Grace and dying love—it is the very glory of it when you break down with emotion and cannot say any more—for your hearers will be all the more anxious to know the rest of it! And there will be a deeper impression produced by your breaking down than there would have been if you had kept right on. But, anyway, do tell the story! Tell it as long as you have any breath in your body! Tell how "Jesus has done all things well" and saved your soul. Make Heaven and earth to ring with the glad news! And when you go Home to Glory, tell the angels all about it, for they will be glad to hear your story and they will break out into fresh praise as they listen to it! May God thus bless every one of you, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *PSALM 9.*

This Psalm has a dedication which is very difficult to understand—"To the chief Musician upon Muth-labben. A Psalm of David." Either "Muth-labben" is the tune to which the Psalm was to be sung, or some musical instrument that is now forgotten, or else it alludes to Ben, who was one of the Levitical singers mentioned in 1 Chronicles 15:18. In all probability, however, the true translation of the title is, "A Psalm on the death of the son," or, "on the death of the champion," and it is thought by some that it was composed by David after the death of giant Goliath. If it is so, I think you will see, as we read the Psalm, that it well proclaims the victory which God had worked.

Verse 1. *I will praise You, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will show forth all Your marvelous works.* It will be well if we also resolve that we will praise the Lord. Most people have something or someone to praise, so let us select the Lord, even Jehovah, as the Subject of our song. Let us resolve that we will praise Him continually, for it may be difficult, sometimes, to do it. The heart may be very heavy—it may even be inclined to rebellion and murmuring—but let us make this strong resolution in the power of God's Grace—"I will show forth all Your marvelous works." Here is room for great variety of praise and here are abundant topics for praise, for there is no work of God which is not marvelous and worthy of being praised with our whole heart! So, Lord, I will not be dumb. You have given me a tongue—I am not like the brute beasts that cannot speak—my tongue is the glory of my frame, so with it I will show forth all Your marvelous works.

2. *I will be glad and rejoice in You: I will sing praise to Your name, O You most High.* Get up, then, my Soul, out of the dark places of your despondency! Rise, my drooping spirit, to something higher and better. If you cannot be glad in anything else, be glad in your God—be glad that you have a God and such a God—and that He is still your God. Whatever else you may have lost, you have not lost Him. “I will be glad and rejoice.” The reduplication of the words indicates a double joy—a double gladness! As the Apostle says, “Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.” Be glad twice over, for you have double cause for rejoicing in the Lord.

3. *When my enemies are turned back, they shall fall and perish at Your Presence.* As much as to say, “The Presence of God is quite enough to make my adversaries flee—yes, and to utterly cut them off.” As John Wesley said, “The best of all is God is with us.” And if God is with us, it matters little to us who are against us!

4. *For You have maintained my right and my cause; You sat in the throne judging right.* One of our noblemen has this for his motto, “I will maintain it.” But the Christian has a far better one—“You have maintained my right.” If David sang thus after he had hurled the stone from his sling into Goliath’s skull, he might well magnify the name of the Lord who had maintained the rights of His people and put the uncircumcised champion of the Philistines to confusion and death!

5, 6. *You have rebuked the heathen, You have destroyed the wicked, You have put out their name forever and ever. O you enemy.* You can conceive of David, standing on the prostrate form of his fallen foe, and looking on that gigantic countenance and those mighty limbs, crying out, “O you enemy”—

6, 7. *Destructions are finished forever! And you have destroyed cities, their memory is perished with them. But the Lord shall endure forever: He has prepared His Throne for judgment.* “You have destroyed cities,” but you could not destroy God. When you did defy the armies of other nations, you could easily put them to rout, but when you did defy the living God—then there was the end of you, for you could not overcome Him, nor overcome His people. Blessed be God for this—our faith is founded upon a rock that never shall be removed—and our confidence is fixed upon One who can never fail us and whose Truth must stand fast forever!

8-10. *And He shall judge the world in righteousness, He shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness. The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. And they that know Your name will put their trust in You.* The basis of faith is knowledge and there is no knowledge like that which comes from experience. If you know the name of God as Jehovah—the Self-Existent and Ever-Living God—you will have good reason for trusting Him. And then, if you know His many precious names—such as Jehovah-Tsidkenu, the Lord Our Righteousness, Jehovah-Nissi, the Lord My Banner, Jehovah-Jireh, the Lord Will Provide, Jehovah-Shalom, the Peace-Giving God and Jehovah-Shammah, the God Who Is There Where His People Are—yes, if any one name of God is fully understood by you, you will put your trust in Him!

10-12. *For You, LORD, have not forsaken them that seek You. Sing praises to the LORD who dwells in Zion: declare among the people His doings. When He makes inquisition for blood, He remembers them.* When the great Coroner’s Inquest shall be held upon all who have wrongly suffered, the commission will open by an enquiry concerning the blood of the martyrs—“When He makes inquisition for blood, He remembers them.” His suffering ones, who laid down their lives for the Truth of God’s sake, shall find that their blood was precious in His sight.

12. *He forgets not the cry of the humble.* Is there no consolation in these words for some of you? You have been humbled and brought down from your high place. Now, then, is your time to cry—and when you do so, you will prove that “He forgets not the cry of the humble.” There are many who give heed to the petitions of their needy fellow creatures and feel their force for a time—but they are engaged in business, or occupied in other ways—and they soon forget. Other things crowd out the needy one’s petition and so he is left without help. But it is never so with God—“He forgets not the cry of the humble.” Notice in the next verse how David avails himself of that Truth. He seems to say, “Is it true that God does not forget the cry of the humble? Then I will cry to Him and my humble cry shall go up to His ear and to His heart.”

13. *Have mercy upon me, O Lord.* What a blessed prayer that is—a prayer useful on all occasions—under a sense of sin, or under a load of sorrow—burdened with labor, or crushed with despondency. It is a prayer which is like the cherubim’s sword which turned every way—you may use it as you will. “Have mercy upon me, O Lord.”

13. *Consider my trouble which I suffer by them that hate me, You that lifted me up from the gates of death.* What a lift that is—lifted up from the gates of death into life and ultimately into Heaven! What an Almighty God our Lord proves Himself to be at a dead lift! When every other arm is paralyzed, He comes to us and lifts us up from the gates of death.

14. *That I may show forth all Your praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion.* From the gates of death to the gates of Zion is the lift which God gives to His poor suffering people!

14, 15. *I will rejoice in Your salvation. The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made.* If you picture David with the carcass of the giant before him, the Philistines put to ignominious flight and the Israelites in full pursuit after them, you can understand His saying, “The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made.”

15, 16. *In the net which they hid is their own foot taken. The LORD is known by the judgment which He executes: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Meditation. Selah.* The probable meaning of these words is, “Consider and pause.” They are musical rests, perhaps, but they also suggest to us how well it is, in our reading of the Scriptures, sometimes to stop a while and inwardly digest the Words that we have read.

17. *The wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the nations that forget God.* Even if they are not outwardly as wicked as other men are, yet their forgetfulness of God is the highest form of injustice to Him! It is treason against the Majesty of Heaven! It is robbing God of what is His right! It is a combination of everything that is evil!

18-20. *For the needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish forever. Arise, O LORD, let not man prevail: let the heathen be judged in Your sight. Put them in fear, O LORD: that the nations may know themselves to be but men.* They boast that they are men and that they quit themselves like men. Yet let them know that although they are men, they are only men—with all the infirmities and imperfections of men—and that there is a God who will, in due time, let men know that they are but men and that the best of men are but men at the best!

20. *Selah.* Pause again, think over what we have been reading and lift up your heart in prayer to God, seeking the aid of the Holy Spirit to apply His Truth to your soul.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—9, 146.

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