

OUR LEADER THROUGH THE DARKNESS

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“Who among you fears the Lord? Who obeys the voice of His Servant? Who walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord and rely upon his God.”
Isaiah 50:10.

“Behold I have given him for...a leader.”
Isaiah 55:4.

I DESIRE to speak to you, dear Friends, not only of Jesus as our Leader, but of following Him *in the dark*. Can you see Jesus in the dark? Yes. We sometimes see Him better in the dark than in the light. If you will go outside in the daytime and look up, you will not be able to see a single star. But if you will get into the bucket of a well and go down into the darkness, very soon you will behold the stars. To descend may sometimes be the shortest way to ascend. Certainly, to suffer is the road to the land where there is no suffering—and to be in present darkness may be the nearest way to eternal light. All light, but that which comes through Christ, Himself, hinders rather than helps our sight of Him. He is best seen by His own light. Begone, sun! Begone, moon! Begone, you candles! He is the Sun of Righteousness and where He is, there is light enough! All earth-born light hinders the vision of His face. I fear that many, trusting in the greatness of their mental light, have become blind to the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Blessed is he who sees Christ by Christ—the Crucified in the light of His five wounds—the Risen One by the brilliance of His own life!

Darkness—can it fall upon a child of God? He is a child of light—shall he walk in darkness? Not in darkness in the sense of ignorance, sin and death, but in the sense of gloom and sorrow! Saints may have much of it. The heir of Heaven sometimes knows a midnight. But if he is with Jesus, following Him as his Leader (and that is my topic), then he is in a safe condition. The words of one of our songs are ringing in my ears—

*“Anywhere with Jesus!
Anywhere with Jesus!”*

Better in the dark with Jesus than in the light, yes, than in Heaven, itself, without Him—

*“Not all the harps above
Can make a heavenly place,
If Christ His residence removes,
Or but conceals His face.”*

Give us Christ and we will make no hard terms about darkness, or light! Only let us be with Him and it is enough. “Forever with the Lord” is only another word for glory everlasting!

Adam, I suppose, was created in the daylight and he wandered about in the Garden enjoying his God and the fair works which surrounded him. When night came on, darkness was a new phenomenon to him. He must have wondered at it, but since he had no sin, his childlike trust in God would not permit him to be afraid. He laid himself down to rest without a fear. It was a memorable night for him. In the dark he lost something, but the loss was a great gain. In the morning, when he woke up, he found someone there—the very one he needed. She was there, whom the Lord had made for him, since, “it was not good that man should be alone.” So have you and I found the darkness coming on and we have been distressed for a moment—but when we have thought of God we have found rest. Then we may have lost a good deal in the darkness, as we thought, for we were conscious of an inward pain taking away what we thought to be a vital part of ourselves—but when we came out of the gloom into the morning light, a joy was ours which we had not known before—a joy that has been our companion and our comfort to this very day! Brothers and Sisters, I have lost nothing by the darkness. I say, “I,” for everyone must bear witness for himself. I believe every child of God can say the same. Do not

the dews fall at eventide? Could we bear the perpetual shining of the burning sun? Is not the morning freshness so great a joy that it compensates us for the night by which we reach it?

As I thought over my theme, “Jesus, our Leader in the Dark,” I began to fall in love with the dark. There are two parts to my subject—if one seems gloomy, the other is bright enough! Following Christ is a lightsome theme! The darkness may be very dark, but I say I have almost fallen in love with it when Jesus comes to me therein and makes it His pavilion! Rutherford declared that the cross which he carried for his Lord at last came to be so dear to him that he was half jealous of it, lest he should begin to love the cross with a love rivaling his love to his Lord! Darkness of soul in itself is horrible, but the rich fruit it has brought to us has made us cease to dread it. We now can thank God that the evening and the morning make up the day—and the evening is as much a part of the day as the morning. The nights of our lives are as rich as the days. The agony is as useful as the rapture. The depression as instructive as the exaltation. Let us think, then, of—

I. THE DARKNESS THAT CHRISTIANS MAY KNOW.

Well, surely we may say, first, that in some respects we are always in the dark while here below. We must wait with patience “until the day breaks and the shadows flee away.” Our Lord here on earth may be said to have been always in the dark in comparison with the Glories which He left, in contrast with the bliss that He has reassumed. To be here at all, was to Him to be in the dark. The ever-blessed Son of the Father was away from the home country and its splendor—he was among sinners and His heart was pained with human sin, His ears were vexed with ungodly speeches, His eyes were filled with tears because of obstinate rebellions! He was all tenderness and yet His soul was among lions. It must have been a constant trial to His holy, sensitive spirit to have dwelt in the midst of sinners. So in a certain sense we, also, are always in the shade compared with what is coming. “It does not yet appear what we shall be.” He is coming! He is coming! The axles of His chariot are hot with speed. He cries, “Behold, I come quickly.” When He comes, the Glory of His Presence will make the greatest joys that we have ever known to seem but twilight, as compared with the full day of His appearing! If His life was so truly in darkness, we must not wonder if our lives are the same.

We are not, however, dependent upon natural light any more than He was. If a Christian can only be happy when his feelings are right, I should be afraid that he is trusting in his feelings! If you are only confident when your frames are delightful, I should be afraid that you are resting in your frames and feelings! Faith is a principle which has its root, deeper feelings. We believe whether we see or not. We believe whether we feel or not. We believe in Christ upon the testimony of the Father concerning Him—that testimony is enough for us even if there are no attendant signs. Our happy experience of salvation is a pleasant confirmation of the Word of the Lord! And when it seems to fail us, we still believe. God is not changed because we tremble! Christ is not altered because we are in fear! The ground on which we stand for salvation is not our attainments, nor our experiences, nor our communions. We stand upon the finished work of Christ in which we believe, whether it is dark, or whether it is light. The young Christian will say, “I believe that I am saved because I am so happy.” He is no more correct than the old Christian would be if he should say, “I believe that I am saved because I am unhappy.” Let me explain myself. The value of feeling depends upon its *cause*. All happiness in the young man is not a proof of piety. He might be happy if he had received a large legacy, or had been invited to a party of pleasure. All unhappiness in the old Christian is not good evidence of Grace—by no means would such an assertion stand! And yet, if we sigh and cry because of the abominations of the city, we have therein a strong evidence of our being on the side of Christ and righteousness. If we mourn our imperfections and lack of spotless holiness, our very sighing and crying are proofs of heavenly life and salvation! The heart is clean, and the course of the soul is heavenward when the heart can never be satisfied with anything short of perfect holiness.

Had we not been quickened, and quickened to a high degree, too, we would have been content with dim signs of holiness. But now nothing but perfection will content us—we are unhappy when even the least mist comes between us and God—and these feelings prove how much we love Him and how our very element is to dwell in unbroken communion with Him. We are not dependent, therefore, upon happiness or unhappiness as the ground of our confidence. Christ loved me and gave Himself for me—this is the Rock upon which I stand! He died effectually for every soul that trusts Him. I trust Him and this is the token that He has redeemed me from my sins. I am His. Here is my rock of refuge! I stand on Christ’s righteousness, be it dark or light. The ground of a Christian’s faith is not moved in the least degree by the time of his spiritual day, or the state of wealth in his experience. Could we sit forever on the top of Tabor, we would be no

safer than if we were made to dwell always in the Valley of Humiliation, longing for brighter days. Christ! Christ! Christ! In Him we are safe!

Yet, dear Friends, there are glooms which fall to the lot of some of God's best people. I would have you beware, my Brothers and Sisters who have made a great advance in Grace, and are very joyful in the Lord, of judging your fellow Christians. I have noticed with sorrow on the part of some, whose shoelaces I am not worthy to unloose, that, nevertheless, they are hard towards the lambs and the lame of the flock. Because they have not reached your own high attainments, do not condemn them! If you have strong faith, you may condemn unbelief, but do not condemn weak Believers, who may have beautiful points of character, although they are as yet mere babes in Grace! Have you never heard of the strong cattle, of whom the Lord said, "Because you have thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed all the diseased with your horns till you have scattered them abroad; therefore will I save My flock and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle." Beware lest you become proud of your attainments and unkind to those beneath your level! I believe that there is such a thing as being so long in the light that you do not believe that others are in the dark. Or, if they are, you judge them to be weak and foolish and you are apt to scold them. Brother, you cannot scold the darkness into light! A little sympathy will do far more than what you are pleased to call *faithful* upbraiding. That word, "faithful," sometimes means, "cruel."

None can doubt that some excellent children of God are often in gloom through *bodily sickness and weakness*. There are forms of sickness which bring no depression with them. You might suffer from them through life and never be saddened. But there are certain forms of disease which touch not only the bone and the flesh, but also the mind. The pain of the mind encroaches upon the spirit and the spirit is darkened with trouble. "Oh, but they ought not to be troubled." Granted, but they *are* troubled, and I have noticed this—that your very strong men, yes, and your very strong ministers, too, who can say rather sharp things about the weak—and may be justified in saying them, yet, nevertheless, are not themselves beyond incurring the same rebukes! Great teachers may not make good sufferers. When the hot iron touches them, it is another thing from what it seemed to be. It sounds fine for them to say that we ought not to be cast down, but ask their wives what these strong men are like when their head aches, or their heart is out of order! When nights grow long and weary with sleeplessness, do they show all the faith of which they now speak? Ah, Brothers, the flesh is weak!

But our Lord knows all about sickness—"He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses." No form of sickness is beyond the sympathy of Jesus. Nothing is sweeter or more reviving than His fellow feeling. One does not know how sympathy works so effectively, but it does operate marvelously. A little girl said to her mother, "Mother, poor Widow Brown has asked me to come in every day and see her. She says that I comfort her so! Mother, I don't know anything that I do to comfort her. I would wipe all her tears away if I could, but when she sits and cries, I go and put my cheek against hers and I cry, too. And she kisses me and says that I comfort her." Just so. One poor human being can cheer another by fellow feeling, but how much more can Jesus do it! Oh, to feel your Master's tears drop on your cheek! When you are weeping, then you read that "Jesus wept."—

*"In every pang that rends the heart
The Man of Sorrows had a part."*

Another cause of great gloom is frequent with us—it is *bereavement*. I will not say much about it, lest I needlessly draw up the sluices for many a widow, or wifeless husband, or fatherless child. How often does the mourner judge that he has laid the best part of himself in the grave! However dear they were, they could not stay with us—perhaps, because they were so good that it was necessary that Christ should have them away from earth. He prayed for them, "Father, I will that they be with Me where I am"—but we kept on praying the other way—"Father, we will that they be with *us* where we are." Our Lord's prayer conquered ours! It should do so, for they were more His than ours since He had bought them with His blood. We should never pray against our Lord, but when we do, may His prayer always have the preference, as it will. Yet bereavement has brought many a Mary and Martha very low.

"Jesus wept" at the grave of Lazarus. Here, too, we see that the Master is near akin unto us. I believe that if we want to know the weeping Savior, we must weep. We always see our Lord, to a great extent, like ourselves. If we are pilgrims, He comes to us as a wayfarer, as He did to Abraham. If we are in conflict, like Jacob, He comes to wrestle with us. If we are in trouble, He meets us, like Moses, at the burning bush. If we are soldiers, like Joshua, He meets us as Captain of the Lord's host. If Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego are in the furnace, the Son of God makes the fourth in the fire! As we

are, so does He become, that as He is, so may we become! Our bereavements are a part of the way in which we see and follow our Lord.

And *poverty*, too. Many of you have never known poverty. I do not wish that you should, for poverty is a very heavy cross to many of the children of God. It hinders them when they would give to the Lord's cause and hampers them in their work for Him. This, perhaps, is not so lamentably true as they think. When poverty involves crushing toil, long hours of labor and scarcely enough bread to keep body and soul together, then it is, indeed, a burden. Dire poverty has hung like a cloud over many a child of God. There is a poverty which the poets love—it dwells in a thatched cottage whose porch is overgrown with woodbine. Perhaps if the poets had rheumatism through the wind blowing through the decaying walls, they might not sing of it quite so sweetly. But in London we have a poverty that has neither porch nor woodbine—poverty that has no cottage, but a single room where scarcely the decencies of life can be preserved. Beloved, if you have to suffer from this gloom, remember that the Son of Man had not where to lay His head.

Another gloom has shadowed many here present in their measure and upon some, in special, it has loomed tempestuously. It is the cloud of *slander and reproach*. If you have preserved your garments unspotted. If you have sought nothing but the Glory of God and yet you find everything that you do misrepresented, your words misconstrued and yourself abused—this is truly a trial. Slander is no bed of roses, nor a test to be desired but, oh, how easy is it then to see Jesus and how sweet it is to follow Him! “He was despised and rejected of men.” If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, they have not left another name that is bad enough for us! We might in very modesty wish to have a name a little lower than our Lord's, guided by the same motive which made a great saint consider ordinary crucifixion too great an honor and, therefore, entreated to be nailed to the cross with his head downwards! Would you not be content to be called something worse than Beelzebub? Might you not gladly accept such a name as winebibber and madman, that you might come in behind your Leader? “Consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself,” and then sing—

*“If on my face, for Your dear name,
Shame and reproach may be,
I'll hail reproach, and welcome shame,
For You'll remember me!”*

Gloom also falls upon the Christian in *time of desertion*. I do not know whether Judas had sons and daughters, but I have seen several persons who bear a family likeness to that son of perdition. “He that eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me,” is a sentence often repeated. “It was not an enemy that reproached me—then I could have borne it—but it was you, a man my equal, my acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together and walked unto the house of God in company.” This, also, is an oft-told tale. Yet fret not too much because of ingratitude, fickleness and treachery. Is it not written, “Cursed is he that trusts in man”? All men are liars! Can you not be content to take the inevitable? Your Master had His Judas. Shall not you have yours? “Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.” It may be so with you all the more because you desire to be faithful to your Lord.

The worst cloud of all, I think, is *deep depression of spirit* accompanied with the loss of the Light of God's Countenance. Sickness, poverty, slander—none of these things are comparable to depression! “The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?” Do you know what exceeding heaviness means? I pray that you may have but very little of it, but if you do have it, remember Him who said, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” Those words were once a great comfort to a child of God dying in despair. Though an eminently gracious man, he was in the dark. He could not find his God and he knew that he was soon to pass into eternity. I do not think our heavenly Father often puts His children to bed in the dark, but if He does, they will wake up in the Light of God in the morning! This man of God said to the minister who visited him, “O Sir, although I have trusted Christ for years and have served His cause, I have lost Him. What will become of a man who dies feeling that God has deserted him?” The wise pastor answered him, “What became of the Man who, just before His death, cried, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’ Is He not on the highest Throne of Glory even now?” The sick man's mind was lightened in a moment! He began to say, as the Lord Jesus did after the dark sentence, “Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit,” and he died in peace. Yes, God loves His people quite as much when He leaves them in the dark, as when He sets them at His right hand in the Light! Measure not God's love by His Providences, nor even by His manifestations of them. Measure it by the gift of the Only-Begotten, for Jesus is the only measure of the immeasurable love of God our Father! Yes, a child of God may be in depression for many a year. Timothy Rogers was the victim of despondency for many years and yet he came out into the

Light and then wrote his experience in his memorable book, *Trouble of Mind*, which has been of great service to others in like condition. I hope that none of you will wish to be in soul darkness. Some trembling people acquire a sort of perpetual palsy of fear. They have become so shut up in doubt that they are afraid to come out of it into the light of faith. Come out of your hiding places, you troubled ones! Do not make yourselves one line lower in spirits than you can help! But if you should be long in depression and that depression should turn to despondency, and that despondency should curdle into despair, believe in God! Say with Job, "Though He slays me, yet will I trust in Him." If I cannot see His face with delight, yet in the shadow of His wings will I rejoice!

I come now to the more specially practical part of my sermon.

II. THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH THIS DARKNESS IS PERMITTED.

There were three aspects of the darkness which our Lord endured in which we should resemble Him. First, He was in darkness *for education*. "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." Our Mediator went to school and His schoolbooks were "the things that He suffered." Do we learn much out of any other books? Is not our best schoolmaster the one named Adversity? Are not our best schoolbooks printed in the old black letter? We make but small account of any other. Our Lord Jesus learned obedience. Some people, when they get into the dark, think that they can make no progress, but must lie still. Say not so! Our greatest progress should be made in the dark. We should grind most when the wind blows hardest. A friend of mine went to Australia and on board of his ship there were a number of gentlemen of different degrees of ignorance, one of whom was a complete greenhorn. He had never been to sea before. I do not think he had been anywhere else. When it came to be night, he said, "Where do they put up tonight?" My friend said, "What do you mean?" He replied, "You do not mean to say that they will go on sailing in the dark?" "Certainly," replied my friend. But the other said, "Why, they may run into something, for they cannot see their way." "No," my friend answered, "and they will not see their way till we get to our destination, unless they touch at the Cape! And they will travel as fast in the night as in the day." So they did. Who but a fool would have thought otherwise?

Growth in Divine Grace must go on in the dark, as well as in the light. I have been told that plants do most of their growing at night. Surely, Christ's plants grow very fast after a period of darkness which has been sanctified to them. I half wish for some friends that I know that they might have just a day or two of darkness. I hope I am not unkind. I know one who would wish to sympathize if he could, but he has never had an illness. And when he does sympathize, it is a remarkable thing that he should be able to do it. You think of him with wonder, as you would think of an elephant picking up a pin! He does it, but it seems out of his line—it does not come to him naturally. Our Lord learned *obedience towards God* through His sufferings. If you think of it deeply, it was a very great lesson for Him to learn. The Ruler of Heaven and earth, whose will was Law, had to learn obedience! He speaks, and legions of angels fly at His commands—and yet He has to learn to obey! Now that He is here on earth, in the fashion of a man, He becomes an obedient Servant. Have you and I ever learned that lesson? It is not every Christian that has learned obedience of the commonest sort. I know some Christians who would think it dreadful to obey ecclesiastically. "Obey them that have the rule over you," is not a pleasant Scripture to them. They will have no pastor. Nobody ever was set over them. I am sure I am devoutly grateful that I was not, for it would be a very uncomfortable office to guide such unruly spirits! Obedience is one of the lessons of wisdom which this age needs to learn, for everybody must be master or mistress nowadays. We all desire to rule and we all feel that we could do it far better than the present leaders are doing! He who has the least wisdom and has failed in business half a dozen times, is the very person who believes himself to be the most fitted to be Prime Minister! We do not love obedience, but we have to learn it. The rod is our Teacher's instrument—this darkness, this heaviness, is pressing us into true service. We are now to follow Jesus in the dark by learning obedience as He learned it. The Lord prosper us in this!

We have next *to learn sympathy*. I have hinted at that already. "We have not an High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Our glorious Elder Brother learned sympathy by suffering! By His passion He learned compassion. Whenever we suffer, let us regard it as a part of our education and so follow Christ closely to learn of Him, as He learned of the Father. See yonder text, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; and you shall find rest unto your souls!" First we come to Him by faith and He *gives* us rest. That is one sort of rest. Then, by obedience, we take His yoke upon us and we learn of Him, and we find rest—another degree of rest. The one is given and the other is found, but there is no finding the second rest except with the yoke upon our shoulders and learning of Christ!

Education in the dark helps to keep us from self-dependence. I sometimes sing—

*“If today He deigns to bless us
With a sense of pardoned sin,
He tomorrow may distress us,
Make us feel the plague within—
All to make us
Sick of self, and fond of Him.”*

The Angel wrestled with Jacob. We usually speak of Jacob’s wrestling with the Angel. I suppose that he did so wrestle, for there cannot be a wrestle at all without two being in it. But the main point of the conflict was that the Angel wrestled with Jacob. What wrestling God has had with us to get our self out of us! We are such Jacobs—we are plotting, scheming—and crafty. God would beat us down as to this fleshly wisdom and when He has laid us low as Jacob and made us lame, then He will knight us, and we shall come off the field as prevailing princes, or Israels! The death of self-dependence is the joy and triumph of faith! And this often comes through darkness. God bless the darkness, then, for our education—and may we follow Christ by complete obedience to God!

I spoke of three things. The second is for *usefulness*. Our Lord went into the dark to save the guilty sons of men. We cannot follow Him in the central darkness, where all the storm clouds gathered, for that was Substitutionary. Into that awful winepress, where He went alone as our Sacrifice, we would not think of intruding! But nevertheless, there is a cup of which He has said—“You shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall you be baptized.” We have no atonement to make. “It is finished.” Yet for the ingathering and saving of the elect of God, it is necessary that the Church of God, in many of its members, should pass into the darkness.

I will tell you a story. It shall be none the worse because it is of myself, for we are gathered here to bear and hear personal testimony. One Sunday I preached a sermon from this text—“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” What I then spoke was in the agony of my heart, for I felt that I was, myself, for a while, forsaken. Such was the sorrowful dread of my spirit.

I could not tell why I should have been made to feel in this way. I was not sick. I could see no physical cause. I had not wandered from God and I could see no moral cause. But after the sermon there came into the vestry a man of about sixty, whose very hair seemed to stand on end and his eyes were bright with a strange luster. He took my hand and stood and held it, and wept. I looked at him and I saw that I had before me a man dazed, if not crazed. “Birds of a feather will flock together.” It struck me that he was a madman and I was not much mistaken. Then he said to me, “Nobody ever preached my experience before! I have now been for years in a horrible gloom of great darkness and could not find God, but this morning I learned that I was not the only man in the thick darkness, and I believe that I shall get out.” I answered, “Yes, that was the reason why I was put into the dark, that I might help you. And now that I know the reason, I am already out of the prison!”

I had many interviews with that man. I piloted him back from the gulf of insanity. I was enabled, by God’s Grace, to lead him into joy and peace, so that he could resume his daily calling. The Lord’s servants have to experience many things which are not so much for themselves as for usefulness towards others—and we ought to be content to have it so. You cannot help a man if you know nothing about him and, therefore, the Lord sends you into many a thick wood and dark valley that you may meet with His own redeemed in their wanderings. If you did not know the wilderness, how could you act as a guide through it? So it is for usefulness that God calls us there—and as Jesus went there to save, let us learn from Him the great Grace of self-sacrifice!

I have done when I have added the third thing. Darkness may come over the soul that we *may give glory to God*. Our Lord Jesus passed through the darkness that He might glorify the Father’s name. The lesson which He set before us was that He still believed. Read the 22nd Psalm. See there the faith of the much hunted “hind of the morning.” He goes back to his early infancy, when God cared for him. “You are He that took me out of the womb.” He goes back to ancient history—“Our fathers trusted in You: they trusted, and You did deliver them.” Read that Psalm carefully and mark that the sufferer’s faith never failed him. Dear Friends, can your faith stand in trial? “I have great faith,” says one. Yes, there was a staff that stood by a brook and looked at the reflection of his antlers in the water, and said, “What fine horns I have! My friends in the herd no sooner hear the bay of a dog than they take to their heels. But I, with such fine horns, will fight any dog, or, for that matter, any pack of hounds! Let them come up and they shall see what my horn can do.” So he said—and he was a fine fellow, was he not? Landseer might have been proud to sketch him! That is the very picture of a

man full of untried faith. Presently there was heard the yelp of some poor puppy—and where was our stag? His heart was not as strong as his horns and his legs were carrying him far away from the dog! So it is with untried faith. You must not be sure of it for a moment. Fear will destroy it in the day of trouble.

Our Lord had abundant and abiding faith. I will only quote one instance of it—His faith in prayer to God in Gethsemane. There are two parts in that wonderful prayer of His in the garden. “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.” We dwell too exclusively upon the full surrender at the end—please notice the prayer itself. “If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me.” When you are in the dark, go to God and plead with Him to take the gloom away! Ask Him to take the cup from you—and be bold to go as far as your Lord did—which is a very long way, indeed, for He said, “If it is possible.” Go to that length! I would encourage the child of God in the dark to “possess his possessions,” to make real use of promises and expect help. We do not always trust God as being what He declares Himself to be, but sometimes if we would but do so, our darkness would come to an end! I remember in my own case, after a period of continued pain with little sleep, I sat up, as best I could, one morning in my bed, in an agony of pain—and I cried to the Lord for deliverance. I believed fully that He could deliver me then and there, and I pleaded my sonship and His Fatherhood. I went the length of pleading that He was my Father and I said, “If it were my child that suffered so, I would not let him suffer any longer if I could help him. You can help me. And by Your fatherly love I plead with You to give me rest.” I felt that I could add, “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.” But I did the first thing, first—I pleaded with my Father and went first where Christ went first, saying, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me.” I shall never forget my success in this appeal! In real earnest I believed God to be my Father and threw myself upon Him—and within a few minutes I dropped back upon the pillow, the pain subsided, and very soon I slept most peacefully. God loves us to believe Him and to plead earnestly with Him, for even if He does not think it best to grant our request, He will be pleased for us to go on to number two and, with full submission cry, “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”

You can hardly prove that you have any will to surrender if you have not first brought it before the Lord in fervent prayer! Pray about the matter up to the hilt, and then sheathe the prayer in submission, if it is not the Lord’s will. O Brothers and Sisters, let us learn this last virtue! Faith healing is grand, but faith enduring is grander! Glorify God by believing that His will is right and that the strokes of His rod are kind. Use both edges of the sword of faith! Believe for deliverance *from* sorrow, or for deliverance *in* sorrow. Anyhow, honor the Son by fully trusting Him. This is the way to follow your Leader, who said, “I will put my trust in Him.”

Oh, that the Lord our God may be with you all in the hour of darkness! If it is not so now, may it may be very soon! I would have you lay by these Truths of God in store for future use. When one is very happy, the suspicion lurks at our feet that this is too good to last. Therefore, the poet of experience said—

*“We should suspect some danger near
When we perceive too much delight.”*

Let it, then, be settled in your minds that you will trust only in the Lord and keep your expectation only upon Him. Come fair, come foul, come wind, come rain, come hail, come tempest, or come all the brightness of a fruitful summer, it shall make no difference to us, for ours is not the confidence which changes with the weather, but that which has its foundation among things eternal and immutable—

*“And when your eye of faith is dim,
Still hold on Jesus, sink or swim!
Still at His footstool bow the knee
And Israel’s God, your strength shall be!”*

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**