

## **THE AFFLICTED REMNANT AND THEIR CONFIDING TRUST**

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"I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord." Zeph. 3:12

Jerusalem was the centre of the worship of the only true God from the day that David brought thither the ark (2 Sam. 6) until she rejected the Lord of life and glory, and brought upon herself that sentence, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate" (Matt. 28:38). For this reason, Jerusalem became a type and figure of two things: **first**, of the true church of God, his own elect family; and **secondly**, of the visible church. In those passages for instance, where we read, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem" (Ps. 122:6); "Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city" (Isa. 52:1); "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem" (Isa. 40:2)—in these, and similar passages, Jerusalem is addressed as representing the spiritual church of God. But, on the other hand, there are many passages where she is spoken of in language only applicable to the outward professing church; as in the beginning of this chapter, "Woe to her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppressing city!" (Zeph. 3:1).

In the text, we find Jerusalem personally addressed. And the Lord declares that he "**will leave in the midst of her an afflicted and poor people;**" and that this afflicted and poor people "**shall trust in the name of the Lord.**" By Jerusalem, then, in the text, is not meant the true church of God, the inner sanctuary; but the outer court, the visible church, as including the invisible. And the Lord says of this

professing church, of this outward visible congregation, that he will leave in her midst, a circle within a circle, a peculiar people, whom he describes under two distinct marks.

In endeavouring to unfold this portion of God's word, I shall notice three particulars connected with the text:

I.—The **solemn declaration** of the Almighty, that he will leave in the midst of the professing church a people.

II.—The character of the people whom the Lord thus leaves in the midst of Jerusalem, "**an afflicted and poor people.**"

III.—That they shall be brought to "**trust in the name of the Lord.**"

I.—God here speaks in the solemn exercise of his sovereignty, "**I will leave.**" It is no matter of chance, or of uncertainty. It is a solemn declaration, which God, who cannot lie, has given, and which He will therefore surely fulfill.

But we may observe two things connected with this **solemn declaration**: one is, "**in the midst of her.**" The words clearly intimate that "all are not Israel who are of Israel;" that the outward court forms a bulwark to the inner; that the visible church incloses in its bounds the invisible. Thus, we are to expect to find the people of God in the midst of the professing church, and yet completely separate from it; wrapped up in it, as the kernel is wrapped up in the nut; yet as distinct in essence, in peculiarity, and in flavour, as the kernel is from the shell which surrounds it. It is also hidden by the professing church in the same way as the kernel is hidden by the shell; and yet so hidden that though the eye of

man sees it not, yet it lies naked and open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

But the expression, "**I will leave,**" carries with it also a peculiar signification. The Lord does not say, 'I will put in the midst of her,' but 'I will **leave** in the midst of her.' The word is connected with the idea of a remnant, as we read in the next verse, "The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid" (Zeph. 3:13) . The inner portion, therefore, bears a small proportion to the outer: "two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof."

Now it will be the concern of every one taught of God to know whether he belong to the outward, or to the inward church: whether he be one of that peculiar people chosen before all worlds, whom God leaves as a remnant in the midst of the outward church, or whether he has the mere form of godliness, while destitute of the power.

II.—And this leads me to the second branch of the subject, which is to describe **the spiritual character** of this peculiar people left as a remnant in the midst of professing Jerusalem: for the Lord in his word, for the comfort of his people, has given signs and marks by which they are peculiarly distinguished.

The Holy Spirit, in the text, has stamped these two marks upon them: 1. that they are "**an afflicted and poor people:**" and 2. that "**they trust in the name of the Lord.**"

The first mark that he stamps upon them is, that they are **"an afflicted and poor people."**

1. They are **"an afflicted people."** The Lord's people, in common with the rest of mankind, have to drink of the cup of temporal sorrow. This, then, is no distinguishing mark of their being the people of God; for "Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward." But what is the effect of these temporal afflictions upon them? Temporal afflictions, however long, however deep, however aggravated, carry with them no evidence that those on whom they fall belong to the peculiar people of God; but the fruit and effect which spring out of these afflictions bear a decisive stamp. When afflictions come upon the men of this world, there is no sanctifying effect produced through them.

2. Affliction leaves them just as it found them. Did I say so? It leaves them worse than it found them. Their hearts are hardened rather than softened by the afflictions they are made to pass through; and their troubles, instead of driving them to the Lord, only serve to drive them farther and farther from him. They thrust them into rebellion, or into the world, or more deeply into sin, into suicide, or into despair. So that there is this marked distinction between temporal afflictions as befalling the children of men, and temporal afflictions as befalling the children of God—that temporal afflictions leave the children of men just as they were, in nature's darkness and in nature's death; whereas the temporal afflictions that fall upon the people of God bring with them a sanctifying and fertilizing effect. For instance:

Many of the Lord's people are **afflicted in their bodies.** In this they share with the children of men at large. The wards of the hospital, and the sick chamber, are not tenanted only by the children of God: the men of this world have their

share of bodily afflictions. But bodily afflictions produce in the latter no spiritual fruit. Sickness and pain do not, cannot change the heart. But the bodily afflictions that God's people have to pass through, often produce in them a sanctifying effect. When God blesses and works by them, they separate us from the world: they bring before us the solemn realities of eternity: they lead us to look more narrowly how we stand before God; they purge out false faith, false hope, false love; they sift our evidences to the very centre; they bring us more into the presence of a heart-searching God, that we may lay ourselves open before him; they embitter sin to us; they bring death nearer to view; they quicken prayer; they stir up a spirit of supplication in the heart. And in these afflictions the Lord is at times pleased to manifest himself peculiarly to the soul. Many a child of God on a sick bed has found more of the presence and favour of the Lord than ever he knew before; and has had reason to bless God to the latest breath of his life that he had been pleased to afflict him, and chose that season in which to manifest his goodness to his soul.

Others of the Lord's family are **afflicted with providential trials**. The world have these as well as they; but the providential trials that the children of men are exercised with never drive them to God; they often, yea, usually drive them deeper and deeper into sin; they drive them into debt, to drink, and other bad courses, to drown their worldly cares, and often bring them eventually to the gallows and the scaffold. But the providential trials that the Lord's people have to pass through shew them what before was hidden from them, **that there is a God of providence**. Those who see him only as the God of grace see but one side of the Lord's face. But the providential circumstances the Lord's people are called to pass through bring more conspicuously before their eyes the other side of the Lord's countenance—

that of providence. When they see how God appears for them in their temporal circumstances, it causes the sweet flowings forth of faith and love towards their kind Parent; and this endears him to them more closely.

There are also **family afflictions**. These, the Lord's people have to pass through as well as the world. But family afflictions are not sanctified to the men of this world: they disunite instead of bringing together: they make the home miserable: but never bring into their hearts any looking to the Lord to heal the breach. But the Lord's family who have to pass through family afflictions often find a profit in them. Idols are dethroned, worldly affections are restrained: and that peace which they cannot find in the bosom of their families they are led to seek for in the bosom of their God.

Thus those temporal afflictions which passing over the men of the world are as the thunderbolt to strike, are to God's people a fertilizing shower, causing them to bring forth fruit to his honour; and thus the same cloud which hangs in vengeance over the men of this world, and with lightning-flash often hurls them into perdition, drops down fatness upon the children of God.

But there are other afflictions of a far deeper, far more cutting, and far more painful nature than any of those temporal afflictions which the Lord's people may be called upon to pass through—these are **spiritual afflictions**. The Lord's people are peculiarly circumstanced. I have endeavoured to shew that they have temporal afflictions in common with the rest of mankind; yet they have **them** in a peculiar way, as being sanctified to them. But spiritual afflictions are peculiar to them altogether; and, if we may give a balance of profit, we must assign a far greater share to spiritual afflictions than we can to temporal.

The weight of guilt upon the conscience; the distressing sensations that sin produces when God the Spirit charges it home upon the soul, is one of the afflictions which God's people are called to pass through. Indeed, without knowing the affliction of a guilty conscience for sin and for having transgressed against the Lord, no man can know the healing balm of the gospel. God's consolations are reserved for, and abound in proportion to these spiritual afflictions. So that he that would fain draw his neck out of the collar of affliction would also draw his neck out of the fulfillment of God's promises in giving consolation. The feeling of having sinned against God must lie heavy on every conscience made tender in God's fear. It is the first mark of life; and not merely the first mark of life, but it runs through the whole of a Christian man's experience. Does he daily sin? He is daily **so far as God lays it upon his conscience** afflicted in consequence of sin. And the more that the fear of God works in his soul, and the more that his conscience is made and kept tender and alive, the more is he afflicted by the sin which he daily and hourly commits. All the Lord's people suffer under this affliction: some indeed more deeply and perpetually than others. But just in proportion as the Lord would make the soul fruitful in his ways, does he afflict it with a deeper knowledge of sin, that it may prize the gospel more, receive pardon more graciously and abundantly, and bless God for the very stroke that has struck most deeply into the conscience.

**Temptations** form another source of spiritual affliction to God's people. The Lord's family often, in passing through temptations, think themselves different from all others. They can scarcely believe that any of the children of God are tempted as they are—that such vile thoughts, such base desires, such carnal imaginations, such wicked lusts, should

work in the minds of others, who appear to them to be holy and spiritual. And it is often a weighty part of the affliction that it is **peculiar**: for the Lord's people, especially in their younger days, before they have learnt how others are similarly exercised, often write bitter things against themselves in consequence of these temptations.

Temptations to infidelity, to blasphemy, to renounce the cause of God and truth, to commit the vilest sins painted in the imagination, to pride, hypocrisy, presumption, and despair: these various temptations lie heavy on a tender conscience, and cut deep just in proportion to the depth of godly fear within.

**The daily conflict** that we have to maintain in our souls against the world, the flesh, and the devil; the struggle of grace against nature, and of nature against grace; the sinkings of the one, and the risings of the other, that are perpetually going on in the souls of God's people—this ceaseless conflict is an affliction that the Lord's people are all called on to pass through.

But what profit is there in all these afflictions? Does God send them without an object in view? Do they come merely, as the men of the world think, by chance? No. There is profit intended by them. The apostle unfolds this very clearly in Heb. 12:10, where he says, our fathers "for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure: but God for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." The branch cannot bear fruit except it be purged: the love of sin cannot be cast out: the soul cannot be meekened, humbled, softened, and made contrite: the world cannot be embittered: the things of time and sense cannot be stripped of their false hue and their magic appearance, except through affliction. Jesus is a "root out of a dry ground:" there is "no form nor comeliness in him," except just in proportion



as afflictions exercise our souls, and the Spirit through them draws us into nearness of union and communion with him. Our greatest blessings usually spring from our greatest afflictions: they prepare the heart to receive them; they empty the vessel of the poisonous ingredients, which have filled it, and fit it to receive gospel wine and milk. They are made blessings in this respect also, that they stir up in us a "spirit of grace and of supplication;" that they draw forth and manifest the fruits and graces of the Spirit, which God has implanted. They are to us what the plough and the harrow are to the soil; they cause a preparation of heart in order to receive the consolations of the gospel. God, therefore, having chosen Zion in the furnace of affliction, "leaves in the midst of her an afflicted people." To be then without these afflictions, these griefs, these trials, these temptations, is to write ourselves destitute of grace. But our coward flesh shrinks from them. We are willing to walk to heaven; but not to walk thither in God's way. Though we see in the scripture, and in the experience of others, that the path to glory is a rough and rugged way; yet when our feet are planted in that painful and trying path, we shrink back; our coward flesh refuses to walk in that road. God therefore, as a sovereign, brings those afflictions upon us which he sees most fit for our profit and his glory, without ever consulting us, without ever allowing us a choice in the matter. And he will generally cause our afflictions to come from the most unexpected source. Our afflictions usually come upon us like a thunder-storm. We are looking into the wind for afflictions: but God causes them to come from precisely the opposite quarter. A trial therefore generally comes in a way most cutting to our feelings: in the way that of all others we should least have chosen: and yet in a way which of all others is most for our profit.

But how are we to know whether afflictions do profit us? We sometimes mistake in this matter. We imagine that afflictions are necessarily connected **at the time** with manifest blessing. If the manifestations and consolations of divine love do not come **at the very time** with the affliction, we are often disposed to believe that the affliction has passed over our head without profit. But we are not so to measure afflictions. Affliction is one thing, consolation is another. Affliction is to prepare the heart for consolation; but when and how the consolation shall come, God has not laid down any rule in his Word. Do the afflictions we pass through humble us? They do us good. Do they deaden the love of the world in our hearts? They do us good. Do they purge out hypocrisy? They do us good. Do they bring us more earnestly to the throne of grace? They do us good. Do they discover to us sins that we have not before seen? They do us good. Do they penetrate into our very hearts? Do they lay bare the corrupt fountain that we carry within us? Do they search and try us before a heart-searching God? Do they meeken and soften our spirit? Are they accompanied with a pouring out of the heart before God? They do us good. It is necessary that this preparation work should be done before the consolation comes. It is like a surgeon dealing with a diseased place. How painful the operation! How deep the knife cuts! How long it may be before the wound is healed! Yet every stroke of the knife is indispensable. He would not do his duty as a skilful and faithful surgeon if he did not dissect it to the very bottom. As pain before healing is necessary, and must be produced by the knife; so spiritually, we must be wounded and cut in our souls, as long, and as deeply as God sees needful, that in his own time we may receive the consolation.

2. But there is another word which the text contains as descriptive of the character of God's people, that is, **poor**; not necessarily, not always, poor in temporal circumstances.

Not but that the great majority of God's people are poor; not but that God has "chosen the poor of this world rich in faith." But we should give but a literal exposition of the text, did we confine it to temporal poverty; we must view it higher; we must look at its spiritual bearing, and interpret it as the Lord himself speaks, "Blessed are the **poor in spirit**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Now the Lord has declared, he will leave in the midst of Jerusalem a spiritually poor people. Are they so by nature? O no; they are not so by nature. They are not brought down into the depths of soul poverty except by the Almighty himself. They are by nature rich in their own eyes, as the Laodicean church esteemed herself. It is the work of grace upon their hearts that makes them poor; it is the stripping hand of the Spirit of God in their conscience that reduces them to poverty and ruin before the throne of mercy. And we become rich spiritually, not by adding to our natural stock, but by losing it. We become free by going to gaol. We have our debts paid by becoming bankrupts. We become partakers of the riches of Christ's grace and compassion by sinking down into the depths of soul beggary.

But the Lord's people are spiritually poor in two ways. They are poor **actually**; and they are **poor in spirit**. They are poor **actually** as to divine attainments. They are poor **in faith**, so as not to be able at times to muster a single grain. They are poor in **hope**, for often their frail bark is tossed by the waves of despondency. They are poor in **love**, for often they cannot feel a spark of affection towards the Lord or his people. They are poor in **spiritual-mindedness**, for they cannot raise up their affections from earth to heaven. They are poor in **prayerfulness**, for often they cannot heave forth a single sigh or cry to God. They are poor in **strength**, for they cannot stand against temptation, and are unable to

produce in their souls one gracious desire, one spiritual feeling. Thus **actual** poverty makes them poor **in spirit**. It is not like the actual poverty of man naturally, which is carefully disguised and cloaked over; but those who are poor actually are poor in spirit before God. They feel it, and are often exercised about it, and distressed in their souls because they are so poor. They would be rich, but cannot produce in their hearts any true riches. And this conviction of their own poverty makes them poor in spirit before God. They cannot come to him "rich, and increased in goods;" their cry is rather, "My leanness, my leanness; woe unto me!"

III.—This leads me to the last mark which God the Spirit has stamped upon the Lord's people—that "**they trust in the name of the Lord.**" Is there no connection between these two points? Is there no spiritual bond between their affliction and poverty, and their trusting in the name of the Lord? Yes: the closest. They would not trust in the name of the Lord, if they were not afflicted and poor. The Lord himself brings them to trust in his name—that is the object of his dealings with them. But they cannot be brought to trust in his name except by being afflicted and poor. I will shew you how. Until they are afflicted in their bodies, circumstances, or families, they are hanging upon the world. They are seeking to gather a crop of happiness from nature's polluted soil: they are trying to re-enter into that earthly paradise from which their first parents were driven: they hope to die in their nests, and multiply their days as the sand. And this leads them from the Lord. They cannot trust in his name as long as they are seeking comfort outside of him.

So also with respect to their spiritual afflictions. There is no trusting in the name of the Lord until sorrow and affliction have done their work in the heart. We are looking to our own

righteousness, strength, wisdom, and holiness. Whilst these remain unbroken, there can be no inward, heart-felt faith; no simple reliance, no implicit confidence. These afflictions, and this poverty, then, by purging out of our hearts false faith, empty confidence, and delusive expectations, bring us, in the hand of the Spirit, to trust only in the name of the Lord.

But what is meant by the expression, in the text, "**the name of the Lord?**" By "the name of the Lord," we are to understand the Lord's revealed perfections; whatever he has declared concerning himself. But more especially are we to understand by "the name of the Lord," the only-begotten Son of God; as he said to Moses, "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions; **for my Name is in him**" (Ex. 23:20, 21); that is, my essential attributes; all that "I Am," the great "I Am," is all in him. So that, to "trust in the name of the Lord" is to trust in what Jesus is and what Jesus has for the benefit of his people.

"The name of the Lord," then, comprehends all that God has revealed concerning himself: and all that dwells in Jesus Christ. It therefore comprehends the glorious Person of Christ, the Object and Centre to which all God's people turn: Immanuel, the Mediator between God and man: the great High Priest over the house of God: the Saviour of the lost, the Hope of the hopeless, and the Help of the helpless.

Now, our afflictions when sanctified, and our poverty when felt, prepare the heart to trust in Jesus. Why? Should we trust in him, if we could trust in ourselves? Should we hope in him, if we could hope in ourselves? Should we hang upon him, if we could hang upon the creature? But we **do** trust in

ourselves, we **do** hope in ourselves, and we **do** hang upon the creature, till we are cut off. The Lord finds us hanging upon self, the world, the creature—glued and riveted to them all. He therefore cuts asunder this natural union, and brings us out of it, that we may have a felt union with the Lord of life and glory. He takes us out of the old olive tree, and grafts us into the good olive, to receive of its root and fatness. But can this be done without being cut off, and thus having our natural union broken asunder? We remain upon the old stock; we still grow upon the old tree; we bear nothing but the rank berries of the wild olive tree, till the sharp grafting knife comes to cut the soul from the old stock, and graft it into the Lord of life and glory. These afflictions therefore are needful, that by them we may be cut off the old stock, and grafted into the new olive tree. You complain that your afflictions are so deep, your trials so cutting, your temptations so severe! They must be cutting, deep, and severe. Till they have broken in twain the old union—till the scion is fairly cut off, there is no grafting into the new stock. Therefore they must be deep; for is not the natural union deep? They must be sharp: for is not the natural union close? They must be cutting, and felt to be cutting; for when the scion is cut from the old olive tree, does it not bleed at every pore? There cannot be separation without cutting. Will the skilful gardener, when he takes out his knife to graft the scion, make but a slight incision in the bark? That is but playing; that is what a child might do with his penny knife. There is a work to be executed, a result to be brought about: sap is to flow into the scion. And that cannot be effected without separation and grafting into the new stock. Therefore, by these afflictions and exercises the old union is cut through. And when the old union is cut through, the blessed Spirit grafts us into a living union with the Lord of life and glory.

We are brought to trust in his **Person**. And O, what sweet views does the Lord sometimes indulge the soul with of the glorious Person of Immanuel! What sympathy, compassion, and tenderness does the soul see in him, "who is over all, God blessed for ever," the great High Priest over the house of God! What beauty and glory did my soul see in him when I lay on a sick bed since I saw you face to face! Thus, when the beauty of Immanuel is seen by the eye of faith, a measure of his grace experienced in the heart, and he becomes the centre of all our hopes and wishes, how do the affections, feelings, and panting desires of the soul flow to, and centre in him!

They are brought also, in trusting in the name of the Lord, to trust **in his blood**, that blood which "cleanseth from all sin"—the blood of "Immanuel, God with us"—that holy, that healing blood, which sprinkled on the conscience makes it whiter than snow. O the virtue, the validity, the efficacy of Christ's atoning blood upon a poor sinner's conscience! This atoning blood is a part of "the name of the Lord;" and the poor and needy—the tempted, tried, afflicted, exercised, and distressed children of God—are brought by their sorrow, affliction, and trials, in the hands of the Spirit, to trust in this atoning blood as cleansing them from all sin.

And what a beauty and glory do they see also in his **justifying righteousness**, What a comely robe, what a refuge, what a harbour, what a shelter to the soul exposed to the thunderbolts of divine vengeance! They are brought to trust in this righteousness; and by trusting in it, to "trust in the name of the Lord."

They are brought to trust also in **all the perfections of God**, as revealed in the face of Jesus Christ—to trust to his **unfailing faithfulness to his sovereign purpose**; to the

stability of the eternal covenant; to the promises spoken by his mouth; and to the words that dropped from his expiring lips, "It is finished!" In trusting to these heavenly certainties, these immovable foundations, they "trust in the name of the Lord."

And in trusting to the **sympathy, tenderness, condescension, lovingkindness,** in a word, to the heart of Immanuel, they are trusting also "in the name of the Lord." Thus they trust in the compassion and sympathy that dwell in the bosom, and gush in overflowing streams from the heart of the Lord of life and glory.

But who needs this tender pity and sympathy? The destitute, the afflicted, the exercised, and the disconsolate. Is it not so naturally? The healthy, the mirthful, the gay, the lively—do they want sympathy, tenderness, affection, bowels of pity? They want them not. But the distressed, the afflicted, the sorrowful, the mourning, and the desponding—these need sympathy. Is it not so spiritually? What can our souls know of the sympathy, the compassion, and the tenderness that flow forth from the broken heart of Immanuel, unless we are in circumstances to need his sympathy, his pity, his love? Our afflictions, therefore, and exercises bring us into the situation to draw them forth: as the infant draws forth the milk from its mother's breast, so to draw forth into our hearts the sympathy and tenderness of Immanuel. In trusting to this sympathy, and in hanging upon this tenderness, we "trust in the name of the Lord."

And everything that the soul sees in Jesus, every grace, beauty, and loveliness that the eyes of the understanding behold in him, when the heart is touched by the Spirit—to trust in all these, is to "trust in the name of the Lord." In a word, all that Jesus is, and all that Jesus has; the whole of



his divine nature, the whole of his human nature, the whole of his complex nature as God-Man—all that Immanuel was in eternity, and all that Immanuel will be to all eternity—all his glorious fullness able to satisfy the wants of all his church as her risen and glorified Head—all is comprehended in one word, "the name of the Lord." This is the strong tower, into which the righteous run, and are safe.

But **how** do we trust in him? We cannot trust in him till we **know** him. Do I trust a man whom I do not know? It would not do in this metropolis. I must know a man to trust him. So spiritually. We must know that the Lord deserves our trust before we can put our trust in him. We must have proved his faithfulness before we can fully rest upon him. In a word, "trust" implies this—though we cannot see the object of our trust, yet we rely on him from the knowledge we have of his faithfulness. It is like the wife, who has implicit confidence in her husband: he is away from her: but her confidence in his faithfulness fails not. It is the confidence of a child in his parent, which ceases not, though the child be at school, and separated by many miles. It is the trust of friends when divided by distance. Trust does not require sight: it relies upon the Object trusted in from what we know of him, though present sight and present experience be denied. It is so spiritually. It is a poor trust that requires sight. "We walk by faith, not by sight." The nature of faith is to trust in the dark, when all appearances are against it: to trust that a calm will come, though the storm be overhead: to trust that God will appear, though nothing but evil be felt. It is tender, child-like, and therefore is an implicit confidence, a yielding submission, a looking unto the Lord. There is something filial in this: something heavenly and spiritual; not the bold presumption of the daring, nor the despairing fears of the desponding: but something beyond both the one and the other—equally remote from the rashness of presumption,

and from the horror of despair. There is a mingling of holy affection connected with this trust, springing out of a reception of past favours, insuring favours to come: and all linked with a simple hanging and depending of the soul upon the Lord, because he is what he is. There is a looking to, and relying upon the Lord, because we have felt him to be the Lord; and because we have no other refuge.

And why have we no other refuge? Because poverty has driven us out of false refuges. It is a safe spot, though not a comfortable one, to be where David was, "Refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul" (Ps. 142:4). And until refuge fails us in man, in self, in the world, in the church, there is no looking to Christ as a divine refuge. But when we come to this spot, "Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living" (Ps. 142:5)—'If I perish, I will perish at thy feet—my faith centres in thee—all I have, and all I expect to have, flows from thy bounty—I have nothing but what thou freely givest to me, the vilest of the vile'—**this is trust**. And where this trust is, there will be a whole army of desires at times pouring themselves into the bosom of the Lord: there will be a whole array of pantings and longings venting themselves into the bosom of "Immanuel, God with us."

But this trust must be **tried**. It is so naturally. We cannot trust persons till we have tried them. And if we have tried them, and proved them unfaithful, we will not trust them. What is our nature to be trusted in? Man. a poor dying worm is not to be trusted in for anything: and God makes us to feel that none are to be trusted but himself. Thus, by afflictions and by poverty of spirit communicated by them, he leads us to trust only in his name. And this trust will never be put to confusion. This expectation will never be cut off. We may have to walk in darkness, much darkness: yet there will be a secret looking unto, and enquiring of the Lord in the midst of

the darkness, that will not be disappointed. "He that believeth shall not make haste."

In this congregation there are, doubtless, those who know what it is to be afflicted—doubtless, those who know what it is to be poor in spirit. Now, my friends, just look at the tendency of these afflictions; at the fruit, which springs out of them. Do look at this point—What have they done for you? That is the point my eye is fixed upon as regard myself. What do afflictions do for me? What is the fruit produced by them? Have they brought you—have they brought me—to this one thing—to trust in the Lord—to come more simply, more singly unto him who is "able also to save to the uttermost?" Have they drawn forth a larger degree of submission to his will—a greater measure of reliance and confidence in him—a more frequent and closer communion with him—a more simple hiding ourselves in him, as having none other to hide ourselves in? Now, if our afflictions and trials have not produced this, I am sure it will often bring us to a stand to know what good they have done us. It is a thing, which has often tried my soul. The afflictions of body and mind, which I have had to pass through often seem to leave me just as they found me. I can bear afflictions when they do me good: nay, in my right mind, I would rather have afflictions and temptations, however sharp and cutting, if they do my soul good, than be at ease in Zion, and settled on my lees. But this often tries my mind—they seem to do my soul so little good. Yet this I have felt them to do they make me to trust more in the name of the Lord. There is a weaning effect produced by them; a more earnest searching of heart: a more simple looking to him who alone can guide and keep. There is a cutting of the thread of the world: and embittering of the things of time and sense: more fervent desires after God's favour and presence: and tenderer confidence raised up in the name of the Lord as all my heart's desire.

These are some of the marks and evidences of the children of God. Have, then, your afflictions, trials, and exercises brought you to feel more earnestness of heart; given you more simplicity of purpose in the depths of that conscience into which none but the eye of God can look; led you to see more in Jesus than ever you saw before; to cleave more with your heart to that which before you viewed only in your judgment? Then they have done your soul good; they have stamped upon you this mark, whatever men may say or think, which God has put upon his own sheep, and by which they will be known in the day when he maketh up his jewels—"I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord."