

## **THE SOLEMN APPEAL AND EARNEST CRY OF A WAITING SOUL**

Preached at Zoar Chapel, Great Alie Street London, on Lord's Day Evening, July 20, 1845

"And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee. Deliver me from all my transgressions: make me not the reproach of the foolish." Psalm 39:7, 8

True religion is a solemn thing. And I firmly believe, that when God lays eternal realities with weight and power upon the conscience, He will make His people to know it to be a solemn thing. I do not mean to say, that there are not many times and seasons when it does not lie with weight and power upon the conscience. I am sure there are times with me when I seem to have no more religion, no more spiritual feeling, and can no more trace the work of God upon my conscience, than if there were no God, no heaven, no hell, no judgment, no eternity. But, through mercy, there are times and seasons when my heart is solemnized by the things of God; when they lie with that weight and power upon my soul, that I must feel them, whether I will or not.

Now it seems to me, that when David penned this Psalm by divine inspiration, he was in a peculiarly solemn frame of mind. I do not mean to say that he was not always in a solemn state of mind when he penned the Psalms. But there were, doubtless, degrees in this matter. There were times when he was more solemn; there were times when he was less solemn. But, it appears to me, looking at this Psalm, and viewing it in its different bearings, that when he penned it, it was a time of peculiar solemnity with his soul.

It seems that he had brought guilt upon his conscience by the free and immoderate use of his tongue—a frequent source of condemnation to God's tried family; and being stung with guilt on account of having been unable to bridle this unruly member, he breaks forth thus: "I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me." **Ps 39:1** The ungodly had taken advantage of expressions that had dropped from his lips; they had misrepresented and misinterpreted the words that he had inadvertently uttered. And being wounded, not merely with the guilt of having spoken unadvisedly, but also with the misrepresentations that had gone forth, he determines to put a check upon his tongue for the future, he would keep his mouth with a bridle, while the wicked was before him. Nay, more than that, he felt he had sometimes spoken inadvertently before God—that there was need not merely to bridle his tongue before men, still more before the ungodly, but he was not free to give utterance to everything before the Lord.

He felt that in the multitude of words, even before the Almighty, there lacketh not sin. He therefore goes a step further, and says, "I was dumb with silence: I held my peace, even from good." **Ps 39:2**—"I felt and found it to be the wisest way to give utterance to none of the feelings of my soul." But did this do? No. There was a holy flame burning upon the altar of his broken heart. "My sorrow," he says, "was stirred." "If I spoke, I had guilt; if I was dumb, I felt sorrow." "My heart was hot within me;" so that I could not keep my mouth, any better than my feelings under control: I was obliged to give vent to what was within. "While I was musing, the fire burned;" not merely was "hot" in my heart—not merely smouldering in the embers; but ready to blaze forth. "As I mused and meditated, and sat in solemn silence, revolving in my heart the dealings of the Lord, the

flame smouldering in the embers burst forth; .... the fire burned." Then, no sooner did the fire burn than the flame shewed itself—my mouth gave vent to the feelings of my soul, "Then spake I with my tongue." What was this that burst forth? During his silence he had been meditating on various subjects; the solemn realities of eternity especially had been resting upon his heart, 'Therefore,' he says, viewing the shortness of life, 'seeing what a poor dying worm I am—looking at the length of eternity, and the brevity of time,—"Lord, make me to know mine end!"—let the day of death be before my eyes; let me not put it far away from me. "Make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am;" or, as it is in the margin, "what time I have here." And then, looking at his own life, he says, "Behold, thou hast made my days as a hand-breadth"—no longer, no wider than the breadth of a hand, which an insect, a worm may crawl over in the space of a few seconds. And my age, however long, if it be prolonged to the utmost verge of man's life—"mine age is as nothing before thee," the eternal infinite Jehovah. When I look around me, and view the state of man, "verily every man"—not myself only—but "every man in his best estate"—his wealthiest, his healthiest, his most prosperous condition—"every man"—whoever he be—"in his best state, is altogether vanity"—nothing more, nothing less. In looking around, he saw what the condition of the world was—what a shew, what a vain delusion! He says,

"Surely every man walketh in a vain shew!"—their pursuits, their acts, their pleasures, their desires, their anxieties, their fears, are all equally vain. They are all in a masquerade—they are all deceiving themselves—they are all deluded by the arch magician—the god of this world hath blinded their minds. "Surely they are disquieted in vain." Wordly cares, and temporal anxieties disquiet them; but surely it is in vain;

they lead to no result; they bring forth no fruit; they do not terminate in their good, or in God's glory. And if I go to the rich man, who seems of all men to be the most envied, I see, says the Psalmist, "he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them." When he is laid in the grave, the riches he has been heaping up, and selling his soul to Satan for—who shall gather them? The lawyer, the broker, and the spendthrift may gather all he has heaped together, and scatter them like dust before the wind. And then he appeals to his own soul in the words of the text. This is the connection of the text with the preceding verses. He turns within. He had been taking a solemn survey around,—looking at man in his best estate—viewing him in his most beautiful form;—then he turns his contemplation to his own soul, and appeals to God and his own conscience for the truth of what he says, "Now Lord, what wait I for?" Do I differ from the ungodly? Have I the same mind as they? Am I pleased with the same things as they are? Am I heaping up riches, not knowing who shall gather them? Am I walking in a vain shew? "And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee. Deliver me from all my transgressions; make me not the reproach of the foolish?"

Looking at these words, we may observe there are four distinct clauses in them. Therefore, without making any other division, I shall endeavour to take them up as the Holy Ghost has revealed them, and consider them one by one, endeavouring to trace out the mind of the Spirit in them.

I.—We begin with the **solemn enquiry**, the **direct appeal** that he makes to the Lord. "And now, Lord, what wait I for?" Now that I have looked at others—at the condition of men at large—now that I have seen that mine own life is but a hand-breath—now that I have viewed the shortness of time, and

length of eternity—now, Lord, to what resolution have I come in my own conscience—"What wait I for?"

Let us see, **first, what he did not wait for**—in other words, look at it **negatively**; and **then see what he did wait for**, and view it **positively**.

1. Now **what did he not wait for?** What is meant by the expression "wait?" It implies the expectation of the soul after something—the desire of the heart to receive something. What did he not thus wait for? One thing that he did not wait for was, the **good opinion of man**. The good opinion of men is the all in all of some people's religion—the grand pivot on which it turns, the hinge on which the door of their profession swings. "What am I thought of? Do I stand high in the opinion of this or that person? Do the minister and people speak well of me? Do they endorse my religion, and stamp it with their approval?" O depth of rottenness! O wretched delusion; O spawn of a deceitful heart!—that a man should be looking at the good opinion which his fellow creatures entertain of him and resting the foundation of his hope upon the fickle, wavering opinion of a worm of earth! "No," says David, "I do not wait for that." The good opinion of men has often been obtained by the greatest of hypocrites, who have crept into churches for the basest purposes, and while honoured and well-esteemed, have had but a lie in their right hand. Whilst some of God's own tried, exercised, and perplexed family have been set at nought, despised, and trampled down, from the mistake of man's judgment. As Solomon says, "I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth." **Ec 10:7**

2. In saying to the Lord—"What wait I for?"—he was not expecting **to gain worldly advantage from his religion**. if your religion stands upon worldly interest: if to advance

yourself in lucre, in honour, in power, in the world, has been the root and core of your profession, it is rotten to the very centre. Now what induced you **I address myself to all that profess truth here present** to make a profession? What was the secret motive that brought you out of the world? Was self interest, filthy lucre, honour, praise, admiration. the root and bottom of your religion? Depend upon it, if it was so, it is rotten to the very centre. Unless sovereign grace prevent, that which began wrong will end wrong; that which is based in hypocrisy will end in despair; that which began in deceit will end in an overwhelming curse.

3. In saying "what wait I for?"—he was **not waiting to see which way the tide turned;** he was not waiting to observe from which quarter the wind blew; but he was for starting at all hazards, without waiting for the shifting and veering of man's applause. In other words, he was not a **time-server.** But how many such characters there are in the church of God, whose religion is but one continual timeserving! They never think of the honour of God; they have no single eye to His glory; they have no inward craving after His approbation—no holy fear of His great name—no desire to be right before Him; but are ever watching and waiting, crying and bowing, and looking to the creature, and the creature only. Thus, all their religion is one wretched makeshift: and like a waterman, they are watching which way the tide turns before they venture their bark upon the river of profession.

4. He was not waiting for his **old nature to undergo a radical change;** he was not expecting to become more holy, righteous, and pious in himself; he was not waiting to be sanctified perfectly, so as to be free from the very being of sin.

Now we will turn and look at the other side of the picture, and see **what he was waiting for**. "Now, Lord." He appeals to the Most High; he lays his conscience, with all its intricate movements, before the footstool of a heart searching Jehovah. "Now, Lord, what wait I for? Thou knowest." I will shew, if God enable me.

1. He was waiting for **the testimony and approbation of God in his own conscience**. Now a man can never wait for the testimony and approbation of God in his own soul till he is delivered from waiting for testimony and approbation of the creature. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other." **Mt 6:24** We cannot be veering and shifting betwixt God and man—we shall be either waiting for the favour and testimony of man, or waiting for the favour and testimony of God. But David could appeal to the Lord and what he was waiting for, was the gracious testimony and inward witness of the favour and approbation of God Himself. Now, can you say so, in solemn moments of waiting at God's footstool? Is there a looking up, and waiting for, a panting after the inward testimony of God in your soul?—a turning your eyes away from the creature, and looking wholly and solely to God Himself? Is there a thirsting after the testimony of God, after His manifested favour, the witness of His Spirit, the smiles of His love, the sheddings abroad of that blessing which maketh rich? If so, you can say, "Lord, what wait I for?" It is for Thy smile, Thine approbation, the dropping in of Thy grace, mercy, and truth into my conscience.

2. He was waiting for **a manifestation and revelation of a precious Jesus**. Now the Lord the Spirit will bring all our religion, sooner or later, to the centre in the Son of God. He will gather up all our scattered feelings, and concentrate all

the spiritual desires, affections, thoughts, and sensations of our soul in Immanuel, "God with us." When the soul is thus guided and led, and brought to centre in Jesus all its hopes, all its expectations, all its desires, all the hidden emotions of the divine life; when all the varied feelings of the heart are brought to flow unto, and centre in the great High Priest over the house of God—then the soul can say before God, "Now, Lord, what wait I for?" The appearing of the Son of man, the revelation of a precious Christ, the manifestation of His dying love, the sprinkling of His atoning blood, the shedding abroad of His ineffable loveliness and beauty.

Now, we cannot come here, unless we have seen something of the beauty of the Son of God. We must have had in our own consciences, through the teachings of the Spirit, a discovery of the glorious Person, and perfect loveliness of Immanuel; we must have seen him by the eye of faith, as the only Mediator between God and man, felt our hearts fluttering within us through the solemn sensation produced by the sight, our conscience melted down at His blessed footstool, and every tender affection of our soul flowing unto Him. Till we are brought here, our eyes are looking everywhere but to the right quarter;—to our own religion, our own piety, our own evidences; to what we have done, or what we hope to do for the Lord: we are staring and gazing a thousand different ways. But when the Lord gives living faith, brings a precious Jesus near, and shows His glory and beauty, this draws up our spiritual affections, and gathers up all our gracious feelings into His own blessed bosom, Thenceforth all our religion centres in Him, and we can say, "What wait I for?"—the manifestation of Jesus, the appearing of the Son of God, the kisses of His blessed lips, the smiles of His countenance, and the coming over all the mountains of unbelief of this most precious Immanuel.



3. "What wait I for?" **The teachings of God the Spirit.**

When we are thoroughly emptied of ourselves—when our knowledge is shown to be ignorance, our wisdom folly, our righteousness filthy rags, and our strength weakness, then we begin to long after the teachings of the blessed Spirit. We must be purged and tried before we can value and receive the treasures of grace. When we are well exercised and tried in our souls, then we begin to long after the teachings of the Holy Spirit, that He would shed abroad the love of God in our soul, visit and guide us, overshadow us with His holy presence, and drop into our hearts His secret unction. Before we are brought here, we know not the personality of the Holy Ghost. We have no evidence in our conscience that He is God; we cannot worship and adore Him as the Third Person in the blessed Godhead. But when we are brought to this spot, that we know nothing without His teaching, feel nothing without His giving, and are nothing without His making—this makes us pant and sigh after His teachings and leadings; and we are brought to wait in the posture of holy adoration and still quietness for the dew and unction of the Spirit to fall upon our conscience.

4. "What wait I for?" **To know Thy will, and do it.** We have no desire by nature to know the will of God; or if we know it, we have no desire to do it. For that will is contrary to ours. That will is spiritual—ours is carnal; that will is holy, ours is unholy; that will is pure, but ours is averse to all good. Therefore, by nature we cannot desire to know, and do the will of God. But when He makes Jesus dear and precious to us—lifts our hearts up to Himself—then we desire to know the will of God; and not merely to know that will, but do it when known. Now could we be brought in singleness of eye to know God's will, and do it, it would relieve us from a thousand perplexities. What is the cause of many of our perplexities? Nature bids us one thing, conscience another:

the law of God in our mind points one way, and the law of sin in our members points another. It is this conflict within, the warring of the two principles one against the other, so that we cannot walk in the path of obedience, which so perplexes the soul. But when we are brought to this point. "Lord, let me know Thy will; and let me do Thy will. at whatever price, at whatever cost; however it may pain my flesh, let me know it. and do it"—whenever we are brought there, though it makes the cross itself more heavy than before, it relieves us of much exercise and perplexity, because it makes the path plain before us.

Now, David could say, on all these points. "What wait I for?.... Dost Thou not know, Lord, and I wait for them?" This implies tenderness of conscience, simplicity of object, godly tear and ardent desire after God's honour and glory. So that no man can utter these words, sincerely and simply. from the bottom of his heart, in whose soul the Lord has not begun, and is not carrying on. His own gracious operations.

II.—But he adds another word. "**My hope is in Thee.**" There is a connection between these two clauses. He had appealed to God—"What wait I for?.... Am I a timeserver, a hypocrite, a double-minded man, a perverse rebel? Thou knowest. Lord, there is in me another mind another spirit, another nature, which cleaves to, and loves Thee." "What wait I for?" I wait on Thee because my hope is in Thee.

What is it to be able to say, "my hope is in thee?" To feel that in the Lord rests all the hope of our troubled minds; that in Him is deposited all our treasure "**for where a man's treasure is, there will his heart be also**"; that He is our rock, whereon we venture for eternity, in the face of sin, death, and hell. "My hope is in thee." Not in myself—fickle and feeble; not in my own righteousness—defiled and

polluted; not in my own strength, which is utter weakness; not in my own resolutions, which are to be broken; not in the creature, wayward and wavering. No: it is in Thee, Lord.

Before we can be brought to this point—to hope in God—we must know something of His Person and character. Observe, it does not say, "I hope **on** God," but "**in** God." It is one thing to hope **on** God—another thing to hope **in** God. When we hope on God, we hope on His attributes, on His perfections, on His invitations, on His promises. But this is not the Person of Jehovah. This is not a looking into His very heart and bosom. This is not the repose of the soul in the Triune God, as personally revealed to it. The **on** is external—the **in** is internal. The **on** is when the soul is at a distance—the **in**, when it comes to the very centre of the bosom of Jehovah. So that it is not the same thing to have our hope **on** God, as **in** God. We cannot have our hope **in** God till we have entered the sanctuary within the veil, till we have looked into the sympathizing bosom of Jesus, till all the emotions and desires of our heart have pierced beyond transitory things, and mounted beyond the dark cloud that hovers over earth up to the very bosom of the Three-One God, to anchor there, as our hope for eternity. Now, when we can say, "My hope is in thee," in Jehovah-Jesus, in His sympathizing bosom, in His atoning blood, in His finished work, in His justifying righteousness; for I have a vital union to Him, as the head of the church, "God over all, blessed for ever;" when we can say, "My hope is thus in Him, centering in His very bosom;" then comes, "What wait I for?"

Whilst our hope is **on** Him, not "in" Him, we may be waiting for many things. We have not been fully separated from the world; we have not come to the slaughtering stroke that cuts to pieces all our own righteousness; we have not had the grafting knife fully passed through the scion to separate it

from the old stock. But when we can say, "My hope is **in** Thee; all my soul's hopes, all my soul's affections, all my soul's desires, are in the precious Lamb of God;"—then we can say, "What wait I for?"... "Is not my all there? Does not my hope centre there? Is He not the winner of my affections, the Lord of my heart, the God of my soul, and the guide of my feet? Is He not my Creator, Preserver, Saviour and Mediator?.... What wait I for?" Shall I go to the creature, when there is the Creator? look to man. When there is God? go to a worm of earth, when there is Jehovah, the Rock of Ages? "What wait I for?.... Why. I wait for Thee because my hope is in Thee, and because I expect to receive everything out of Thee."

III.—Is it not strange that all this should be consistent with a deep personal knowledge of sin?—"**Deliver me from all my transgressions?**" What a strange expression! Here is a man whose affections and desires are of a spiritual nature, and all whose hopes and expectations spring from, and centre in the Three-one God. Why, should you not expect this man to have no sin at all? no inward transgressions, no external backslidings, no slips nor falls? Should you not expect him to be perfectly holy and pure? Yet the same Spirit that uttered, "what wait I for? my hope is in thee," breathed forth this petition and cry of a brokenhearted sinner, "Deliver me from all my transgressions." It is not, then, our holiness, nor our purity, nor our piety which bring us near to the Lord; but our felt sinnership, our guilt, our filth, our condemnation, and our shame. And when the blood of Jesus is sweetly applied, it brings the soul through all these things, and above all these things, into His bosom. And yet to be a transgressor still! We will look at the words a little more closely, if God enable.

"**Deliver me from all my transgressions.**" What! "**all** my transgressions?" Yes, "**all** my transgressions." You see David

was but a sinner still. What is transgression? It is stepping beyond the narrow line—disobeying the word of God, the will of God, the mind of God, the dictates of the Spirit in a tender conscience, and the workings of godly fear in the soul. But how is this? How can a man be in this posture, "Now Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee;" and yet be feeling the workings of base transgression in his heart? It is a mystery, and always will be a mystery, except to the exercised family of God. This is the source of the mystery—that they carry within their bosom a defiled and polluted nature; a nature utterly incurable—a nature so thoroughly saturated with evil, as absolutely to be irremediable in this life.

Now, David felt the workings of these transgressions. He knew what it was to have a lustful eye, a backsliding heart, and filthy imagination, a roving, roaming, and carnal mind. perpetually transgressing God's holy will and word. He knew what it was to be entangled in the snares that Satan spread for his feet, to be caught in the besetments of a wicked heart, and be ever stumbling through the corruptions of his nature. He knew what it was to be a sorrowful captive, a poor broken-hearted soul, exercised with a daily, and sometimes an hourly conflict. And how came he to know this? It was waiting upon the Lord, whereby he received light to see it—it was waiting upon the Lord, whereby he received life to feel it. It was hoping in the Lord, having his anchor there, that made him feel more the tossings to and fro of the sea of iniquity within. But sin was his burden. It was not his joy—it was not his glory. He could not feel comfortable, nor happy as a transgressor. It was the trouble of his heart, and the very grief of his soul that he was one. And I believe a man is dead in sin who feels otherwise.

I have no idea of a hardened transgressor among the children of God, or of a seared conscience in the living family.

I know by painful experience, that stripes follow sin; and if we transgress God's holy word, we shall be visited for it. Then this cry, "Deliver me from all my transgressions" **and this delivers us from hypocrisy** follows. We can no longer walk with the clean-handed and the clean-hearted. We can no longer boast of our own uprightness and consistency. We fall down as poor, guilty sinners, we smite upon our thigh, and we remember the sins of our youth. We dare scarcely at times look up to heaven, but say, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

In crying to the Lord to deliver him from all his transgressions, there were **three things** specially connected with sin, from which David desired to be delivered.

1. One is, the **guilt** of sin. Now, wherever there is transgression in a child of God, there must be guilt. I do not care what he has passed through—what his experience is—however the atoning blood and pardoning love of the Saviour may have been felt—guilt will be assured to follow sin, as the shadow follows the sun. Now, when a soul feels it has transgressed against a holy and pure God, it will desire and cry earnestly to be delivered from the guilt of its transgression. Nothing can really do this for the soul, but that balmy blood, the blood of the Lamb of God. Which "cleanseth from all sin." This can, and does deliver the people of God from the guilt of sin.

2. There is also, the **filth, shame, and confusion** that sin produces in the conscience. The conscience becomes defiled through sin, and filth and shame cover the heart. Now, in crying to be delivered from all our transgressions, we desire to be delivered from the filth and shame, from their pollutions and defilement. Do you not feel how sin pollutes, how sin indulged hardens and defiles the conscience, the

heart, and the imagination? So that, when you would go into the sanctuary of God, and have heavenly and spiritual feelings, some lust that you have indulged, some idol that you have set up in the chambers of imagery, comes with a polluting flood into your holiest moments, defiles your conscience, and makes you feel "a beast before God"—"yea, more brutish than any man"—"a worm and no man." Now, when you feel this, we want to be delivered from the filth of sin, as well as the guilt of it. How is this done? By having a divine plunge into the fountain which was once opened for sin and uncleanness; so as to feel the filth and shame of sin for ever done away.

3. There is besides the **dominion** of sin. How hard sin strives for the mastery in a man! Few persons, comparatively speaking, know the power of sin. They give way to it, and then they do not feel it; or their corruptions are not stirred up, and their souls are not exercised. With some, one lust governs, and keeps out the rest. If pride fill the throne of the affections, it shuts out covetousness; and if covetousness rule, it keeps out pride. So that, being under the power of one sin, the door is shut against the rest; and they think they are free from sin, because they have not the conflict with it that others of God's people are exercised with. But he who watches the movements of his heart, he who is tried by the conflict, he who is perpetually assaulted by "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life"—he knows what it is for sin to be perpetually seeking to gain the mastery over him. And O, what struggles, sighs, and groans does the poor child of God pour out into the bosom of his heavenly Father, that he may not fall a victim to the power of sin.

Now all these things—the guilt of sin, the filth of sin, and the power of sin—did David cry to the Lord to deliver him from.

And I believe it will find a responsive echo in every God-taught breast. We cannot know the guilt of sin without crying to be cleansed from it; we cannot experience the power of sin without crying to be washed from it; and we cannot experience the power of sin without crying to be delivered from it.

IV.—There was one thing more in David's breast; there was a feeling besides that lay deep in that holy man's bosom: **"Make me not the reproach of the foolish."** Who are these foolish? I believe them to be persons in a profession of religion, utterly destitute of the feeling power of it in the heart—the five foolish virgins, who had lamps, but no oil. These foolish ones know nothing of the workings of sin and corruption in the heart of a child of God: they know nothing of the powerful temptations that Satan is continually seeking to ensnare them by; still less do they know anything of the agonising struggles in a tender conscience that they may not be entangled in the snares of the wicked one. These foolish ones are very consistent, upright, virtuous, and amiable, viewed as moral characters. There is much in them exceedingly admirable to nature; and yet they are foolish; for they have not the grace of God in them which makes them wise unto salvation. They do not know the treachery of their heart, the temptations of Satan, nor the inward struggles of a gracious principle against the corruption of depraved nature. But being so consistent, so upright, so virtuous, so moral, so amiable, and so honourable, they know no pity for the slipping and halting.

Now what David feared very much was this—lest by his slips and falls, lest by the transgression of his lips, the transgression of his hands, or the transgression of his life, he should be made "the reproach of the foolish." These foolish ones, unexercised and unplagued, who know nothing of the



inward workings of sin, and the strugglings of a living soul against it, he knew would point the finger of scorn against every poor, Satan-tempted, sin-plunged transgressor.

But why did he utter this cry? It was because he felt a conflict in his soul. So powerful were his temptations, so subtle were the snares that Satan was spreading for his feet—and so weak his flesh to stand against the temptations, that he felt if God Himself did not hold him up by His own almighty arm fall he should, fall he must, and thus become "a reproach to the foolish." Well; but should we not expect something better from David than this? Why, was he not a holy man, a heavenly-minded man, led up from time to time into sweet communion with his God? What! this good, gracious, holy, and heavenly-minded saint talk in this way? It is a mystery, and ever will be a mystery, that the same man who could solemnly appeal to God that he waited only for His smiles and the testimonies of His approbation—that all his hopes centred in Him, and all his spiritual affections flowed unto and rested in Him—that this same man was so tempted in his soul, so tried in his mind, so plagued by the unceasing conflict betwixt nature and grace, that he should cry as a poor broken-hearted sinner at the footstool of mercy, "Deliver me from all my transgressions."

Is it not a sweet encouragement to a poor, sin-burdened wretch, that this holy man was thus exercised? Suppose you had the bright part only of David's character—his holiness, his spirituality, his heavenly-mindedness, and his love to God; and had not the darker shades—his corruptions, temptations, conflicts, and perplexities. Suppose the Holy Ghost had revealed only one portion of David's experience, his blessings and manifestations, and neglected to record the cries and groans of his troubled soul; would God's poor, tried, and tempted family have gone to the Psalms as to a

full breast of consolation? But the Lord the Spirit has mercifully unfolded both parts of David's experience; the bright lights, and the dark shades—the workings of grace, and the workings of nature—the deep sinkings, and the sweet deliverances; turning him out to our view, just as he was—not exalting the man, but magnifying the grace of God in him. We can read in the Psalms his experience, and feel the same workings in our own bosom. For this purpose they were revealed, that they might be a standing consolation, a breast of ever-flowing milk, to the poor and needy, hungering and thirsting after righteousness; that the Lord's exercised family might thus have a sweet testimony raised up in their hearts, that they are treading in the footsteps of the flock, and that their spot is the spot of God's children.

Let us endeavour to gather up these fragments. I have endeavoured to trace out their connection—to show you how David came into this solemn frame, and then how he breathed out his soul before the Lord. Can you and I find any echo here? Do look at it—it will bear close inspection. If you are a child of God, you will not mind a cross-examination. You will lay your whole soul at times bare before a heart-searching God, and say, "Search me, and try me, and see if there be any wicked way in me." Can we then walk step by step with this holy man of God?—"Now, Lord, what wait I for?" Do we know what it is to wait upon the Lord, to plead and wrestle with Him at His footstool, that He would appear for us? Can we lay down our feelings side by side with the feelings of David? Then the same Spirit that prompted the one prompts the other. Can we go a step further—"My hope is in thee." It is a great word to use: we may say it unadvisedly—we may say it delusively—we may say it hypocritically. Can we say it **honestly**? That is the question. What manifestations, what testimonies, what discoveries have we had? What goes out, and what comings in? What

cries, and what answers? What tears and what wipings away of tears from our eyes? What afflictions, and what consolations? We must know some of these things in order to be able to say, "My hope is in thee."

Let us go a step further. Are we unplagued, unexercised professors, that have never loathed ourselves for the guilt of sin, and never felt its filth and power? Or if we be these unburdened, untried professors, we cannot say with a feeling heart and conscience, "Deliver me from all my transgressions;"—"more in number than the hairs of my head"—transgressions in heart, lip, and life; transgressions morning, noon, and night; proud transgressions; covetous transgressions; hypocritical transgressions; transgressions of every kind, every colour, every shade, and every hue. But when we come as penitents to the footstool of mercy, we can say, "Deliver me from all my transgressions." Have we ever feared, cried, and groaned within us, lest we should be made a reproach of the foolish? lest our sins should break forth? lest our lusts should desolate our soul? lest our temptations should so overpower us as to cast us altogether down? Have we ever feared and quaked within us lest the foolish should point the finger of scorn at our falls and backslidings? Why if we can come in here. surely, surely we may use the words. "Make me not the reproach of the foolish."

Thus our personal experience will coincide with that of the Psalmist. We shall have testimony that the same Spirit is teaching us who taught him. We shall travel on side by side, and view our experience in his experience; for "as in water, face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." Thus we shall bless and praise God that ever He led David into these paths and gives us some testimony that the same Spirit that guided him is guiding us, and will bring us eventually to the same place where David now is; when God

will wipe away tears from off all faces, and give us to see,  
face to face, the glory of the Lamb.