

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

A MIGHTY PLEA.

A Sermon

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“Thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me.”—Psalm xxvii. 9.

IN times of distress it is somewhat a difficulty to have a choice of helpers, because while we are making our selection, the danger may have overtaken us. While the fox was considering which way to run, the hounds had seized him; while the sick man was selecting the physician, and judging of the medicine, his disease carried him off. It is well to be shut up to one sole help, if that help is all we need; it is for our good, in such a case, to have no alternative, but to have, as the old proverb hath it, Hobson's choice—that or none. The believer is exactly in that condition; he must trust in his God, or remain without hope. He dares not look to others as he once did, for he has discovered their incompetence; he cannot rely upon himself as once he was foolish enough to do, for he has learned by bitter experience the folly of self-confidence. He is compelled to look to the Lord alone. Blessed is that wind which drives the ship into the harbour; blessed is that wave which washes the mariner upon the rock of safety; and blessed is that distress which forces a man to rest only in his God. Such was the condition of the psalmist when he wrote the text, his spirit looked to God alone; in his past experience the goodness of the Lord shone forth as the pole star of his life's voyage, and, therefore, as to the future, he fixed his eye steadily on that one sure guiding light, and trusted in the God of his salvation.

In supplicating the Lord it is well to have a plea ready for use, a plea available under all circumstances and conditions, a plea of our own, not borrowed from the mouths of other men, and perhaps but half suitable to ourselves, but a plea which wells up from our own inner consciousness, and is our own personal plea, felt to be weighty in our own souls, and therefore confidently urged before the throne of grace. It is well to have a simple plea, and one which we can understand ourselves; for when we are in doubt we are like men in a mist, and

must have plain directions, or we miss our way. If we have a chart in a fog we want it to be a very clear one, or else we shall not be able to see it; and when we plead with God in trouble we want the plea to be a very plain one, or else our minds are so confused we shall not be able to urge it. A soul in sore distress is in no fit condition to puzzle itself over deep and dark reasonings, it wants a child's plea, just as Dr. Guthrie when near dying wanted "bairn's hymns." Blessed, then, is it if we have a plea like this of the text, "Thou hast been my help;" for this is a homely, personal, suitable, simple argument, not fetched from far by subtle wit, but grown at home in our own experience. He that runs may read it, and poor way-faring men may comprehend it; the illiterate can use it as well as the learned. "Thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me." Withal, this plea is good, and full of real power, and I hope before we have done this morning we shall be able to show that there is much heavenly logic in it, and that it is eminently full of that kind of argument which is most sure to prevail with the Most High.

Perhaps it may be well here to confess that the plea before us is not one which would ordinarily be available with our fellow creatures; for if they have helped us before they generally conclude that the next time we ought to knock at some other door. Francis Quarles has well expressed the usual manner of men:—

"Man's plea to man is, that he never more
Will beg, and that he never begged before:
Man's plea to God is, that he did obtain
A former suit, and therefore sues again.
How good a God we serve, that, when we sue,
Makes his old gifts the examples of his new!"

Yet there are exceptions to the general custom of mankind, for I read the other day a case in point, in Mr. Moody Stuart's "Recollections of Dr. John Duncan, of Edinburgh," who was a beautiful character, and a famous Hebrew scholar, and has lately gone to heaven, much to the loss of the Free Church. In that book I met with the following passage:—"He was easily imposed upon, but the imposition never soured him, and he was willing to submit to it for the chance of doing good. He said, 'I find they know how to get round me; they say, "You helped me before," and I can never resist that; it teaches me how to pray.'" And now I think of it many of us like to help our old pensioners, and they come up very boldly to our door, remembering the many times in which they have succeeded. If you grant a man a favour several times, he becomes very free in seeking it again. So it seems that even among men it may be a plea, "Thou hast been my help," and most assuredly it is most prevalent argument with God. No man shall be repulsed from the gate of mercy who comes with this upon his lips,—

"Thou hast helped in every need,
This emboldens me to plead.
After so much mercy past,
Wilt thou let me sink at last?"

I shall speak this morning thus: First, I shall try and depict *experience gratefully telling her tale*—"Thou hast been my help;" then *necessity*

urgently pleading experience—"Leave me not, neither forsake me;" and then *experience soundly instructing faith*—teaching her how to pray and how to expect an answer—"Thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me."

I. First then, dear friends, let us listen to EXPERIENCE GRATEFULLY TELLING HER TALE, "Thou hast been my help."

I, the preacher, can say, and must say, with all my heart, "O God, thou hast been my help." Rest a minute, and let the testimony be repeated by all who can declare it. I know that many of you, if this were the fitting time, would rise up and say, "O God, thou hast been my help." What should we have done without the help given us in time of need, given us from the Lord himself? How grandly has our God displayed his power and his mercy on our behalf. Many of you whose heads are adorned with the silver locks of age will say, with trembling, tearful emphasis, "Thou hast been my help." Ay, and those of you in middle life, battling with its cares and trials, can do no otherwise than cheerfully confess, "The Lord is my helper, and has long been such." And the younger ones among us, who have lately put on the harness, would not like to be left out, for even in their short conflict they have received such aid that they gladly own, "Thou hast been our help." If hands had to be held up now, that we might see at a glance those who could say that God has been their help, what a forest of hands would go up in this Tabernacle this morning! Yes, Lord, we thy servants, assembled here in thousands, do solemnly confess that thou hast been our help.

Now, as I cannot describe the individual experiences of every one here present, I will just say a little concerning the man who penned these words, as we find them in this Psalm, and as his experience is singularly like that of every other saint, we may perhaps touch most of you in some point or other. David could very early say, "Thou hast been my help," for while he was yet a youth the son of Jesse sought the Lord, and struggled into spiritual life. I should think that his early experience was a very distinct and marked one, and one in which much saving help was displayed. He had deep convictions of sin, a clear view of the great substitutionary sacrifice that was to be offered, and in the end he obtained a very joyful sense of justification by faith. David could look back to the days of his boyish conversion, when he fought hard with doubt and fear, and sin committed and sin dwelling within him, and yet was able to put his trust in the great sacrifice, so that he said in the retrospect, "Thou hast been my help." I invite every converted person here to look back upon that trying time when he was seeking the Lord with a burden of sin upon his back, assailed by a thousand sins, and hindered by ten thousand temptations. You were then most wonderfully helped. You were helped to fall at the foot of the cross, and helped to look up and view the perfect atonement there presented by the Redeemer; you were helped to leave your burden in your Saviour's sepulchre, and helped to come away with a new song in your mouth, the sweet flavour of which is there to this hour. You were helped to repent, and helped to believe; helped out of self-righteousness, and helped out of despair. In memory of that matchless help you may well resolve to trust in the Lord all the days

of your life. "Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice."

David, however, soon after his conversion, entered upon a scene of severe trial—at least, so I suspect. He appears to have been sent from home to serve as a shepherd boy in the wild places of Judea. I fancy that his condition with regard to his brethren was very like that of Joseph, they either envied or despised him. When Samuel went to Bethlehem to anoint him, you will remember that all the rest of the family were at home, and the youthful David was not summoned until the prophet specially required it, but, as though he were not worth noticing, he was allowed to be away, watching the flocks; and so also when he went, at his father's request, to the battle against the Philistines, his brethren treated him with great scorn, as though he had no business to come near them, or to associate with great men like themselves, in arms for their country. Poor David, therefore, was the marked one of the family, a speckled bird, the butt of household ridicule; but he could say, in looking back upon the times of his loneliness, "Thou hast been my help." Sweet were the songs which he sang amongst the sheep, such as "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." Happy were the quiet hours which he spent amidst the hills and vales of his native land, and by the rivers and the brooks where he made his flock to lie down. Many a time that harp of his, upon which he had learned to play so skilfully, had borne up his devout spirit on wings of music to the throne of God, when his young heart sang in solitude the praises of the Most High. Perhaps some of you look back upon your early troubles as among the bitterest you ever knew. We are always hearing people say that our young days are the happiest we shall ever see: it may be true with many, but there are others whose young days were darkened with sorrow; they had to bear the yoke in their youth, and they can say in looking back that it was good for them it was so, for in those times the Lord was their helper. David's father and mother had in a measure forsaken him, but God took him up. The Lord had regard to him when others despised him. He was the Lord's anointed when he was an alien from his mother's children. What joy it is if our early sorrows have left this inscription upon the tablets of our hearts, "Thou hast been my help."

But David did not merely suffer when he was young, but he did work for God—yea, grand exploits did he for his God and for his country while yet a youth, of which he could say with great fervour, "Thou hast been my help." It was no little thing when the shepherd lad rushed against the lion and took him by his beard and slew him; and when the bear had taken the lamb, it was no slight matter for a raw youth to battle with the monster of the wood and slay it in the name of God, that he might deliver his sheep from destruction. The Lord was his helper that day, and grandly did he feel it, when he went with his sling and his stone to meet the gigantic Philistine; and openly did he confess his faith when he came back with the giant's head, all dripping with gouts of gore, to magnify the Most High, who had delivered him and delivered Israel out of the hand of this mighty adversary. "Thou hast been my help." The Lord delivered me out of

the jaw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, and the Lord hath delivered me from the hand of this uncircumcised Philistine.

Now, my brethren, I do not ask you to look back upon what the Lord enabled you to do in your younger days by way of self-congratulation ; I do not ask the old soldier to "shoulder his crutch and show how fields were won" that he may command admiration from younger warriors ; but, that God may be glorified, I do ask you to remember how the Holy Spirit came upon you in those early days, and enabled you to be valiant for the truth. Perhaps you had more zeal than knowledge in those times, and possessed more confidence than prudence, but you did grand things for God, and God was with you ; so that you might be content to go back to all the mistakes of youth if you might win back again its simple trust and burning love ; at any rate, stand here to-day and own that whatsoever you may have accomplished which will bless your fellow-men and honour your God, the glory of it is all due to the help given you of the Lord.

David, after these first trying times, passed through another series of afflictions. He was called to court, but the king was jealous of him, and very soon he had to escape from Saul's murderous attacks. What continuous help did David receive from the God of his salvation ! He was almost taken prisoner in the caverns of Engedi, but God delivered him. He was well nigh captured among the hills, but Jehovah called off his pursuers. Many a time did he hold his life in his hand, for he was hunted like a defenceless partridge upon the mountains, but always by some means or other the Lord delivered him as a bird out of the snare of the fowler, the snare was broken and he escaped. Look back upon the troubles through which God has brought you, my beloved brothers and sisters. Remember the times in which your feet had almost gone, and your steps had well nigh slipped, and say with grateful emotion, "Thou hast been my help."

God helped David by raising him up many true friends. When he was in the cave brave spirits came to him, valiant and faithful men, who loved David as they loved their own souls ; and when he asked for a drink of water from the well of Bethlehem, they went, their lives in their hands, to gratify his wish, and let him drink of the water which he was accustomed to taste in his boyish days, for they were devoted to him. Now, it is no small thing to have good, kind, faithful, earnest friends and adherents ; and if you have had such, or have been favoured with parents, and brethren, and friends, who have been greatly attached to you, be sure to praise the Lord for them this morning, as I myself joyfully do in the midst of many tried and attached supporters, and say, "Thou hast been my help."

On one or two occasions David found the Lord to be his help when he was in positions where he might scarcely have expected the divine aid. When we plunge ourselves into trouble through our own fault, it is but natural to fear that we may be left to suffer for our folly, and it is peculiarly gracious on the part of our heavenly Friend to come to our rescue. David had unwisely sought refuge with the king of Gath, and there was placed in great jeopardy of his life, so that he had to play the madman in order to escape, but escape he did, through God's gracious help. Yet another time, in his unbelief, he went and

joined the army of this heathen king ; and if the lords of the Philistines had not spoken against his going down to the battle, he would have been placed in a very awkward position, in having been called to fight against his own countrymen, but God delivered him even then. With what regret may some of us look back upon our own follies, and with what thankfulness may we survey the mercy which plucked our feet out of the net. Where others would have left us in anger, because of our waywardness and ingratitude, thou, O Lord, hast been our help.

David obtained help under very strong temptations. It was a very strong temptation when he saw his adversary in the cave all alone, and might with one stroke of his sword have taken off his head. He was helped of God to spare his foe, and he only cut off the skirt of the king's robe to let him see how completely he was in his power. Help also did he need when, in the dead of night, he went with Abishai, his captain, through the sleeping hosts of Saul, and came to the place where lay his cruel enemy asleep. His spear stood temptingly near his pillow, and a deep sleep was on him, and Abishai said, "Let me smite him, let me smite him but once, one stroke shall end it all." Who among ordinary men of war must not have wished to let that one single blow be struck ? In what surer manner could a bitter quarrel be ended ? But no, "I will not lift up my hand against the Lord's anointed." David must have felt that God was superlatively his helper that night to keep back his hand from blood. You, too, dear friends, have been in such a position that you were strongly tempted to the wrong ; impulses both of your own nature and of Satan were strong upon you, and you had almost put forth your hand unto iniquity ; but you have been kept with an unblemished character to this day, and you are compelled to say this morning, "Thou hast been my help."

Ay, and David could recollect, again, when God helped him in times of direst distress. Perhaps the greatest sorrow of David's life, before he fell into sin with Bathsheba, was the destruction of Ziklag. He came back from the Philistines' country to his own town of Ziklag, and found the town totally sacked, **everything** taken away, and, what was worse, his own wives and children, and those of all his men, carried away captive. David might have borne up under this had his friends cheered him, but they were so exasperated that they fell upon him angrily, and spoke of stoning him. He was their leader, he was not to blame in any respect for their loss, but sheerly in the bitterness of their hearts they spoke in foolish anger and hot haste. Generally at such times men want a victim, and in this case they would have made their noble leader the object of their wrath. It is written, "David encouraged himself in the Lord his God," and sorely did he need to do so. God brought him out of it, for he never lost a farthing by the sack of Ziklag, nor any of his men ; they recovered their wives and their children, and, beside that, not only all their own goods, but all the spoil the plundering band had taken from other places. David could have sung, and no doubt did sing, "Ebenezer, hitherto the Lord hath helped us!" or, in the words of the text, "Thou hast been my help." Have not you had your Ziklag, you business man, when things were going all to the bad, you could not

help yourself, and bankruptcy stared you in the face? You did what you could, but it seemed as if you must be ruined; that was your Ziklag, and the Lord helped you. Or perhaps there was disease in your house; one child had gone, another was sickening, your wife was laid by, you were unable yourself to lift hand or foot to help, all things were against you—it was your Ziklag. Or perhaps you are a minister of the gospel, and there was in your church spreading disaffection and cruel ill will, and no one was found to stand up for you; though you had been faithful before the Lord God of Hosts, you seemed quite left and deserted. It was your Ziklag, but you were helped through it, and therefore, I beg you, do not, for the glory of God and for the comfort of tried saints, keep back your testimony, but say, “I was brought low, and he helped me, and, therefore, blessed be his name.” We do not talk enough about our deliverances. When you get home this afternoon, after dinner, if a friend or two should call in, you will go over your bad times and your troubles, but you will not recapitulate your mercies. Have we not had enough of complaining? let us touch another string, and bless the Lord for all his lovingkindness. What a tale some of us could tell of his mercies! No novel that was ever composed could possibly equal in interest my own experience of God’s goodness, and I think there are many here of whose lives the same could be said. Rich with incident, crowded with wonders, crammed full of miracles have our lives been, for God has dealt so well with us that we often stand astonished at what he has done. “Thou hast been my help.” Oh, yes, I will sum up the whole of my life in the one sentence, and, as we have seen a portrait sketched in a few lines, so will I give you my whole career in miniature: “Thou hast been my help.”

Listen, then, to the song of experience, and hasten to join in it. It is most charming and cheering: “Thou hast been my help.”

II. Our second point is NECESSITY PLEADING EXPERIENCE. “Thou hast been my help; *leave me not, neither forsake me.*”

First, thou hast been my help, therefore it is consistent with thy holiness to help me. Lord, I am a poor sinner, unworthy to be noticed, and my doubts and fears sometimes tell me that it would not be fit for thine infinitely holy majesty to look upon such a rebellious worm as I am. But, Lord, thou hast done it already, thou hast been my help; and if it were not wrong for thee to help me once, it will not be wrong for thee to help me twice. If it did not stain thy spotless robe to hold out thy hand to a fallen and condemned soul in years gone by, it will not stain thy purity to lend me thine hand again. I therefore bless thy condescending goodness, and ask thee not to leave me!

Thou hast been my help, therefore, in the second place, it is within thy power to help me; for, Lord, my case to-day is not worse than it was when thou didst help me before, or, if it is, thou art all-sufficient. Lord, help me out of this affliction, for thou didst redeem me on a former occasion. I was weak and friendless then, and could not help myself, but thine own arm of mercy was fully equal to the emergency. Lord, I know it is quite sufficient now. If thou hadst never delivered my soul out of such a puzzling, perplexing, and intricate case as mine, I might have doubted, but as thou hast already been my help in times

of great strait, when no way of relief was visible, thou art able to help me again; therefore I lay hold upon the hand of thy power, and the arm of thy strength. Thou hast been my help; therefore thou canst help me again, O Jehovah! I know thou canst!

Again, my appeal is to thy *wisdom*. Lord, thou hast been my help, and if thou dost not help me now, all that help will go for nothing. It is of no use to have helped me so far, if thou dost not help me to the end. Now, Lord, I know thou dost not begin to build, and then leave the work incomplete, so that they that go by may say, "He began to build, but was not able to finish." Thou hast made an investment in me, good Lord, thou hast gone deep in expenditure of mercy and love with a poor worm like me, and if thou stay thine hand, Lord, thou wilt lose all thou hast invested. Thou must go right through with it, Lord, or else thou wilt have lost all the works of thy love and thy power and thy goodness which thou hast already so lavishly spent upon me. Is not that good pleading? "Thou hast been my help"—Lord, if it were wise to help me so far, it must be wise to go through with it. Would it have been wise to bring Israel into the wilderness, and feed them with manna for thirty years, and then to let them die of starvation? What would the Egyptians say? Would they not ask, "Wherefore did he bring them into the wilderness? Why did he conduct them so far, and afterwards suffer them to perish?" Well does our poet put it,—

"The work which wisdom undertakes,
Eternal mercy ne'er forsakes."

For, if it is wise to begin with it, it must be wise to carry it on. Lord Jesus, thou hast loved my soul as Jacob loved Rachel, and he was bound to serve for seven years to win her, and if he had served six and a half years, and then left off, he would never have had his Rachel; and thou hast in thine infinite love served for me these years, but if thou leave off now, I shall never be thine at last; my poor soul must perish unless, till the last hour of life, thou still shalt wait upon me in mercy, and refresh me with thy grace. To my own soul at this moment this plea, "Thou hast been my help," is a very powerful hold upon divine wisdom, and is an urgent reason why I may ask for grace still to be given me.

Perhaps the backbone of the argument lies in the attribute of *immutability*. "Thou hast been my help, if thou canst change, then canst thou leave me; but if thou be indeed Jehovah, I am that I am, the same for ever and for ever, if thou hast once blessed, thou art bound by the force of thy nature to bless right on, as long as thou art God and I require thy blessing." Hast thou not said, "I am God, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." What blessed notes that text contains. He who has kept you to this day if he changed might leave you, but since he cannot change he will bear you right through. How wicked we are to doubt our faithful God! The sun rose yesterday, and nobody doubted but what it would be up this morning, and there is not a man living but what believes the sun will shine to-morrow. Do you trust the sun, and will you not trust the God who kindles its light? The tide comes up to the

shore and then recedes according to the regular motion of the moon, and everybody trusts the tide and is prepared for its incoming and its outgoing, and can you trust the unstable sea, and its fickle wave, and not rest upon the immutable God? Ye say the thing that was shall be, and surely God was for ever and ever, and has kept his promises to his people, and therefore the thing shall be. If heaven above can be measured, or the earth searched out, if the ordinances of the sun and of the moon can be changed, then may God forsake his people, but it cannot, shall not be while he is still the same.

I think there is one more argument here, namely, a plea to God's *love*. "Thou hast been my help." Lord, surely if thou didst love me enough to help me before, thou dost love me enough to help me still. It is the plea of a child to a father. "Father, thou hast always fed me, wilt thou let me starve? thou hast always clothed me, wilt thou let me be naked?" It is the argument of a spouse to her husband as she says to him, "My husband, thou hast never failed me yet; whatever I have needed thou hast supplied to me; leave me not, neither forsake me." You know how the plea hath power with a heart which is touched with true affection. It is with us and our God as though he had guided us halfway through a wilderness. We did not know one inch of the road, and had no provision for it, but he has helped hitherto. If, when he had brought us right into the centre of the waste, he should say to us, "Now I am going to leave you," if we were in such a plight that on an arid sand, where there was no pathway and no shelter, our guide should say, "Now I must leave you to yourselves," we would clutch him by the sleeve and say, "Leave me not; I pray thee do not leave me, else why hast thou brought me here at all? All the kindness of the past will be but cruelty, a studied tantalizing of me, if thou leave me. Why didst thou bring me here? All the way I have come I have depended upon thee for everything; I could not have found my way so far alone, and wilt thou leave me now?" Oh, methinks no man would be so brutal as to resist such an argument. He would say, "If in my kindness I have undertaken the conduct of this poor ignorant creature, and brought him so far, I cannot leave him till I have landed him safely at home." Shall the Lord be less kind than man? Imagine that a child has fallen into the sea, and you are a strong swimmer and have swam from the boat and clasped the child, and you are bearing him on your shoulders and swimming to land. Suppose you should suddenly say, "My child, I have done something for you, but will do no more; I must drop you into the sea." Would not the little one say, "Sir, you picked me up when I was sinking; I should have been dead long ago but for you. Do not throw me off, sir; strike out again, sir; let me still cling to you." We may reason in the same manner with God. "My God, my God, if thou hadst meant to let me be lost, why didst thou not do it years ago, and let me go down to hell without hope? But now thou hast given me a hope of heaven, thou hast let me know something of the joy of holiness; some love to thee and some longings after thee have stirred my soul. Wilt thou leave me now, O my God? It cannot, must not be." The pleading is mighty, brethren,

I know of none better: "Thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me."

III. Now, thirdly, and briefly, here is EXPERIENCE INSTRUCTING FAITH.

My venerable brethren and sisters, the first word of this instruction is to you; experience says to faith, "Trust God, for he has been your help *so long*." How long? Fifty years some of you. How old are you? Seventy, eighty? God has been your help, then, all that time. How long do you expect to live? To be eighty. You are seventy now. Ah, you have seen through seven-eighths of life that he is a faithful God, cannot you trust him for the other eighth? Your sun is going down, its shadows are lengthening, but from early dawn all through the hot noontide he has been good to you, cannot you trust him for the last few hours of eventide? Surely, surely God deserves that such long-continued kindness should not be received with ungrateful doubts. If he had meant to be a liar to you, you would have found him out before this. If his promises were intended to be failures, they would have been failures to you before you had gone so far. Oh, believe him for the rest of life, and go singing into heaven, "Thou hast been my help." May the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, enable you thus to put down all unbelief.

The Lord has been our help *so constantly* that the fact confirms our faith. If in looking back upon our lives we could find a point or two where God had failed us, we might then let our faith flag. I can only speak as I find: I cannot find one instance in all my life in which God was untrue or unkind to me. If we never doubt God till we have cause for it, we shall never entertain any doubts so long as we live. Yesterday, as I looked at some little birds in a cage, I thought to myself, "These poor little creatures are entirely dependent upon those who feed them. If seed and water be not supplied to them, they cannot help themselves, and must die, and yet there they sit and sing with all their might. Their state of dependence never distresses them; they have perfect confidence in their keepers." And, I thought, that is just my position. I am God's singing bird. Perhaps I wonder where I shall get my bread from, or my sermon for next Sabbath day, and a great many cares and troubles come to me; but why should I be troubled? Instead of mistrusting my keeper, who has fed me these many years, had I not better sit and sing as loudly as ever I can? Would not that be the best thing to do. The bird does it, and why should not a man do it, who is supposed to have more wit than a bird, but who sometimes does not seem to have half as much? Come, brethren, come! the Lord has constantly been true, let us not doubt.

And then he has helped us *so singularly*. Some here present have been in very remarkable tribulations, trials the like of which have not befallen other people—at least, so they think—have fallen to their lot, and yet they have had singular rescues and helps. Well, then, when you come into the singular predicament of dying, you shall have the singular grace of being able to rejoice when you die; or, if any other remarkable trial should waylay you between here and heaven, you shall find extraordinary deliverance from him who has been your help.

And I might say, in closing, God hitherto has helped us in such a way that *he has glorified himself*. We could not have believed that he could have so delightfully illustrated his divine attributes as he has done in our past biography. There have been such flashes of light out of his excellent glory that we have been astounded. So it will be to the last. God will be glorified in our mortal bodies while we live and when we come to die. He has been our help, and he will be our help till like a scroll this world is rolled up, and time itself expires, and we have reached eternity.

I have two or three more thoughts to utter, and I have done. To self-righteous persons our text can have no sweetness. You have always done your best, and have been very religious, and believed that you deserved eternal life, and you have been on very good terms with yourselves. God has not been your help; you did not want it; you have done very well without it. You do not want washing in the blood of Jesus, you were never a very great sinner; you do not require help from the Holy Ghost; you have always been able to attend to the formalities of religion without assistance from supernatural power: this is your secret judgment of your condition. You cannot say, "Thou hast been my help;" and I dare say you do not pray, "Leave me not, neither forsake me." You do not see the need of it. Well, your fancied salvation is such an one that the sooner you are rid of it the better; it is such an one that if you can put a millstone about its neck and sink it in the sea, you will do well; for if you do not do that, it will sink you in hell for ever. That hope of salvation which is not grounded upon Christ and the power of God, but which rests in self, is nothing but counterfeit; it is damnation gilded, nothing better. Away with it! away with it! And oh, may you be made to go as guilty, as helpless, as dependent entirely upon mercy and divine strength, and then you will be in the way of salvation, but not till then. Oh, may the Spirit of God teach you this!

I have here some poor trembling soul who is seeking Christ, and he says, "O sir, I could not use the plea of the text this morning." Well, beloved friend, perhaps not in the strong sense in which the Christian can, but you may still use it in a measure. For instance, you want to be forgiven, you want to be saved. You can say to your heavenly Father, "O God, thou hast preserved my forfeited life, thou hast bidden the sun to shine upon the evil as well as the good, thou hast sent the showers and the harvest for me as well as for the best of thy servants; oh, if thou hast done this, do more, and send me the gifts of thy grace." Besides, poor heart, you can say, "Thou hast given me the Sabbath, thou hast permitted me to go and sit with thy servants; though the meanest of them all, thou dost permit me to hear the voice of gospel invitation. Thou dost speak to me, and say, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved'; oh, crown these gifts by giving me faith, by granting me life, the life of thy Holy Spirit. Save me, save me with a great salvation." I think that is good pleading; and especially if you can add, "O God, thou hast set forth thy son Jesus to be a propitiation for sin, and declared that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life: I do trust in him, and rest my soul alone upon him. Do not reject me!"

let me know thy great salvation, or I languish, faint, and die." You shall not be long in such a case as that. If thou believest, all things are thine; if thine only hope be in him who bled on the tree, thy transgressions are already blotted out. Go, and sin no more! Peace be unto thee! Be of good courage! The Lord has looked upon thee already with an eye of love; thou art his, and he will never leave thee nor forsake thee, world without end.

God bless you all, dear friends, and he shall have the honour and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalms xxvii., xxviii.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—911, 735, 734.

I BEG to thank many sermon readers who have helped the Orphanage during the past week. The Father of the fatherless bless them in return. There is great need, for the amount needed every week is £70, but in this work I can say, "Thou hast been my help." He will not forsake his own work.

C. H. SPURGEON.