

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

PRAYER TO GOD IN TROUBLE AN
ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE.

A Sermon

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 9TH, 1879, BY

C. H. SPURGEON,

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“And call upon me in the day of trouble ; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.”—Psalm l. 15.

THE Lord God in this Psalm is described as having a controversy with his people. He summons heaven and earth to hear him while he utters his reproof. This indictment will show us what it is that the Lord sets the greatest store by, for his complaint will evidently touch upon that point. We are informed most plainly that the Lord had no controversy with his people concerning the externals of his worship ; he does not reprove them for their sacrifices and burnt offerings ; he even speaks depreciatingly of these symbolical sacrifices, and says—“I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goats out of thy folds.” His complaint was not concerning visible ceremony and outward ritual ; and this shows that he does not attach so much importance to outward things as most men suppose him to do. His complaint was concerning inner worship, soul worship, spiritual worship : his reproof was that his people did not offer thanksgiving and prayer, and that their conduct was so inconsistent with their professions that clearly their hearts went not with their outward formalities. This was the essence of the charge against them. They were faulty, not in visible religiousness, but in the internal and vital part of godliness : they had no true intercourse with God though they kept up the appearance of it. We see then that heart worship is the most most precious thing in the sight of the Lord. We learn what is that priceless jewel, which must be set in the gold ring of religion if the Lord is to accept it.

Nor is it hard to see why it is so ; for it is plain that if a man had kept the ritual of the old law to the very full yet he might not be in sincerity a worshipper of God at all. He might drive whole flocks of his sheep to the temple door for sacrifice, and yet he might feel no spiritual reverence for the Most High ; for it has been proved times without number that the most careful and zealous attention to external ceremonies is quite consistent with the absolute absence of any true apprehension of God and

hearty love for him. Habit may keep a man outwardly religious long after his mind has forgotten the Lord; yea, the conscious lack of inward and vital grace may drive a man to a more intense zeal in formalities in order to conceal his defect. It is written, "Israel hath forsaken his Maker, and buildeth temples." You would think if he built temples he must recognise his God, but it was not so; within those buildings he hid himself from him who dwelleth not in temples made with hands. Beneath the folds of vestments men smother up their hearts, so that they come not to God; fine music drowns the cry of the contrite soul; and the smoke of incense becomes a cloud which conceals the face of the Most High.

Great sacrifices might often be an offering made to a rich man's personal pride. No doubt certain kings that gave great contributions to the house of God did it to show their wealth, or to display their generosity, somewhat in the spirit of Jehu, who said to Jehonadab, the son of Rechab, "Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord." A great sacrifice might be nothing more than a bid for popularity, and so an offering to selfishness and vanity. With such sacrifices God would not be well pleased. Alas! how easy it is to defile the worship of God and nullify its quality, till like milk which is soured it may be utterly rejected. I am sure you know right well that it may be so in the simplest form of public worship, such as our own. Bare as is our mode of service there is room for self. Singers may lift up their sweet voices that others may hear how charmingly they sing; ministers may preach with graceful eloquence that they may be admired as men who are models of exquisite speech; believers may even pray devoutly, that their fellow Christians may see how gracious they are. Alas! this blight of self may come into any and every part of outward service, and turn the worship of God into an occasion for self-glorification. Thus does Belshazzar drink out of the vessels of the sanctuary, while the buyers and sellers turn the temple into a den of thieves. Wonder not, therefore, that God looks with but scant complacency—I was about to say with bare tolerance—upon the abundance of outward worship, because he sees how easy it is for it not to be his worship at all, but a mere exhibition of man's carnal glorying.

Many, too, have performed outward worship with a view to merit somewhat of the Lord: they have supposed that God would be their debtor if they were zealous in furnishing his altars and frequenting his courts. If they have not put it in that coarse form it has certainly come to that, that they hoped to be held worthy of particular regard if they were zealous above others. Some have superstitiously dreamed of obtaining prosperity in this world by observing holy days and seasons, and many more have hoped to have it set to their account at the last great day that they have heaped up the offertory, or given a painted window, or built an almshouse, or attended daily service year by year. Now, what is this but an offering to selfishness? The man performs pious and charitable deeds for his own good, and this motive flavours the whole of his life, so that the taint of self is in every particle of it. The Jew might offer bullocks or sheep for his own salvation, and what would this be but the manifest worship of self? It brought no glory to God, and did not mean his praise. Wonder not, therefore, if the Lord speaks thus slightly of it all.

What the Lord missed in his people was not temple rites and offerings, for in these they abounded, but he missed the fruit of the lips giving glory to his name. He missed first their thankfulness, for he says unto them, "Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High;" and next he missed in them that holy, trustful confidence which would lead them to resort to him in the hour of their need: hence he says, "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." Brethren and sisters, have you failed in these two precious things? Do you fail in thankfulness? The Lord multiplies his favours to many of us, do we multiply our thanks? The earth gives back a floweret for every dew-drop: are we alike responsive to plenteous mercy? Do the bounties of his providence and the favours of his grace teach us how to sing psalms unto the Ever-merciful? Do we not too often permit divine mercies to come and go in silence as if they were not worthy of a thankful word? Have we a time and season for God's praise? Is it not too often huddled into a corner? We have a closet for our prayers, but no chamber for our praises. Do we make it a point in life that whatever is neglected the praises of God shall have full expression? Do you, my brethren, in everything give thanks? Do you carry out to the full this sentence: "From the rising of the sun to the going down of the same the Lord's name is to be praised"?

May I also venture to ask whether you pay your vows to him? In times of sickness and sorrow you say, "Gracious Lord, if I am recovered, or if I am brought out of this condition, I will be more believing, I will be more consecrated. I will devote myself alone to thee, O my Saviour, if thou wilt now restore me." Are you mindful of these vows? It is a delicate question, but I put it pointedly, because a vow unredeemed is a wound in the heart. If you have failed in your grateful acknowledgments, remember that these are the things which God looks for more than for any ceremonial observance or religious service. He would have you bring your daily thankfulness and your faithful vows unto him, for he is worthy to be praised, and it is meet that unto him should the vow be performed.

It is not to thankfulness, however, that I am going to ask attention this morning, so much as to the other sacrifice—namely, *prayer in the day of trouble*. Let me say at the outset that I am struck with wonder that God should regard it as being one of the most acceptable forms of worship, that we should call upon him in the day of trouble. Such prayers seem to be all for ourselves, and to be forced from us by our necessities, and yet such is his condescending love that he puts them down as being choice sacrifices, and places them side by side with the thankful paying of our vows. He tells us that our call for his help in the hour of distress will be more acceptable to him than the oblations which his own law ordained, more pleasing than all the bullocks and rams which liberal princes could present at his altars. Be not backward then, beloved, to cry to him in your hour of need. If it pleases him and profits you, you ought not to want a single word from me to excite you to do what seems so natural, so comforting, so beneficial. Are our cry of anguish and our appeal of hope acceptable to God? Then let us cry mightily unto him. Are any of you in the black waters? Call upon him. Are you in the hungry desert? Call upon him. Are you

in the lions' dens, and among the mountains of the leopards? Call upon him. Whether you are in peril as to your souls or your bodies, do not hesitate to pray at once, but say to yourself, "Why should I linger? Let me tell the Lord my grief right speedily; for if he counts my call a worthy sacrifice assuredly I will present it with my whole heart."

Let us look to this matter and see the value of this form of adoration. Our first head shall be, that *Calling upon God in the day of trouble brings honour to God in the very act*; secondly, it brings honour to God *in its answer*, for there is coupled with such a prayer the blessed assurance, "I will deliver thee"; and thirdly, it brings honour to God *in our after conduct*, for it is written, "Thou shalt glorify me."

I. May the Holy Spirit the Comforter enable us to see that CALLING UPON GOD IN THE DAY OF TROUBLE BRINGS GLORY TO HIM IN ITSELF. I beg you to notice the time that is specially mentioned. Calling upon God at any time honours him, but calling upon him *in the day of trouble* has a special mark set against it as peculiarly pleasing to the Lord because it yields peculiar glory to his name.

Note then, first, that when a man calls upon God sincerely in the day of trouble *it is a truthful recognition of God*. Outward devotions suppose a God, but prayer in the day of trouble proves that God is a fact to the suppliant. The tried pleader has no doubt that there is a God, for he is calling upon him when mere form can yield no comfort. He wants practical matter-of-fact help, and he so realises God that he treats him as real, and appeals to him to be his Helper. God is not a mere name or a superstition to him; he is sure that there is a God, for he is calling upon him in an hour when a farce would be a tragedy, and an imposture would be a bitter mockery. The afflicted suppliant perceives that God is near him, for he would not call upon one who was not within hearing. He has a perception of God's omnipotence by which he can help, and of God's goodness which will lead him to help. You can see that he believes in God's hearing prayer, for a man does not call upon one whom he judges to be a deaf deity, or upon one whose palsied hand is never out-stretched to help. The man who calls upon God in the day of trouble, evidently possesses a real and sincere belief in the existence of God, in his personality, in his power, in his condescension, and in his continual active interposition in the affairs of men; otherwise he would not call upon him. Many of your beliefs in God are a sort of religious parade, and not the actual walk of faith. Many have a holiday faith which enables them to repeat the creed, and say with the congregation, "I believe in God the Father Almighty"; but in very deed they have no such belief. Do you, my hearer, believe in God the Father Almighty when you are in trouble? Do you go to the great Father at such times and expect help from him? This is real work, and not hypocritical play. There is solid metal about the faith which follows the Lord in the dark, cries to him when the rod is in his hand, and looks to him not for sentimental comforts in prosperity, but for substantial help in bitter adversities. What we want is facts, and trial is the test of fact. Sharp furnace work does away with mere pretence, and this is one of its great uses, for that grace which, like the salamander, lives in the fire is grace indeed.

I say, again, that very many publicly declared creed-faiths are mere shams, which like the leaves of autumn's trees would wither and fall if one

sharp winter's frost should pass over them. It is not so when a man in the dire hour of his distress casts himself upon God, and believes that he is able to succour and to help him. Then there is evidence of true reliance and real confidence in a real God, whom the mind's eye sees and rejoices in. It is this actuality, this making God real to the soul, which makes our calling upon God in the day of trouble so acceptable to him.

There is more here, however, than this first good thing. When a man calleth upon God in the day of trouble it is because he seeks and in some measure enjoys a *spiritual intercourse with God*. "Call upon me in the day of trouble." That call is heart language addressed to God; it is the soul really speaking to the great Father beyond all question. How easy it is to say a prayer without coming into any contact with God! Year after year the tongue repeats pious language, just as a barrel-organ grinds out the old tunes, and there may be no more converse with the Lord than if the man had muttered to the ghosts of the slain. Many prayers might as well be said backwards as forwards, for there would be as much in them one way as the other. The abracadabra of the magician has quite as much virtue in it as any other set of mere words. The Lord's Prayer, if it be merely rehearsed as a form, may be a solemn mockery. But prayer in the day of trouble is honest speech with God, or at least a sincere desire in that direction. Many are the words which pass between the Lord and the afflicted saint. He crieth, "Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation. Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me. Hide not thy face from me, for I am in trouble. Hear my cry, O God, attend unto my prayer!" With multiplied entreaties does the heart thus hold converse with the Lord, and the Lord taketh pleasure in it. He loves to have his people draw near to him in spirit and in truth, and because calling upon him in the day of trouble is an undoubted form of fellowship, therefore he regards it with complacency.

Now, as I have already said, in the sacrifice of bullocks there was no intercourse with God in the case of a great many, and in external devotion, whether it is performed in a cathedral or in a humble barn, there is frequently no coming near to God; but when we believingly call upon God in the day of trouble then there is no mistake in the matter, we are holding converse with God,—“the righteous cry, and the Lord heareth.” Intercourse with the unseen, spiritual Father is genuine indeed when it is carried on against wind and tide, under pressure of sorrow and weight of distress: the Lord give us to carry it on whatever may happen to us.

Yet is there more than this, for the soul not only comes into God's presence, but in calling upon God in the day of trouble it is *filled with a manifest hope in God*. It hopes in God for his goodness, for it is a belief in that goodness which is the reason why it feels able to pray at all. The soul hopes in his mercy, or it would dwell in silence and never lift up another cry to heaven. Amid a sense of deserved wrath the heart has a trust in infinite grace, and hence its call.

A soul calling upon God honours his condescension. The troubled one saith within himself, "I am less than the least of all his mercies, yet he will regard me. When I consider the heavens, the work of his fingers, I wonder that he should visit man, but I believe that he will do so, and that he will condescend to look upon the contrite and humble, and will deliver them out of their distresses." There is a hope, then, in

such a prayer which honours God's goodness and condescension, and equally pays tribute to his faithfulness and his all-sufficiency. He has promised to help those that call upon him, therefore do we call upon him; and he has all power to keep his promise, therefore do we come to him, and spread our case before him. Little as the act of calling upon God in the day of trouble seems to be, it puts crowns upon all the attributes of God in proportion to the spiritual knowledge of the suppliant. I venture to say that if the greatest king of Israel had presented before God, on some solemn day, ten thousand of the fat of fed beasts, and poured out rivers of oil, it might be highly possible that God would not be so well pleased with all that royal zeal as with the cry of a poor, humble woman whose husband was dead, and whose two sons were about to be taken for bondmen, who had nought in the house save a little oil, and then in her extremity cried, "O God, the Father of the fatherless, and the Judge of the widow, out of the depths deliver me." There may be more honouring of the Lord in a ploughboy's tear than in a princely endowment; more homage to the Lord in the humble hope of a dying pauper than in the pealing anthems of the cathedral, or the great shout of our own mighty congregation. The publican's confession, and his hope in the mercy of God, had more worship in it than the blast of the silver trumpets, and the ringing out of the golden harps, and the songs of the white-robed choristers, who stood in the courts of the Lord's house, and led the far-sounding hallelujahs of Israel.

This calling upon God in the day of trouble, again, pleases the Lord because it exhibits *a clinging affection to him*. When an ungodly man professes religion, as such men often do, he is all very well with God as long as God pleases him. Sunshiny weather makes such a man bless the sun: if God smiles upon him he says that God is good. Ay, but a true child of God loves a chastening God. He does not turn his back when the Lord seems angry with him; but then it is he falls prostrate in humble supplication, and cries, "Show me wherefore thou contendest with me: I will not believe thee to have any real spite against me: if thou smite me there must be some wise and good cause for it: therefore show me, I beseech thee." It is very sweet, brethren, when God sends you a great deal of trouble to love him all the more for it. This is a sure way of proving that ours is not a hireling love, which abides while it gets its price, and goes when wages fail. God forbid that we should have Balaam's love of reward, and Judas's treacherous greed. A dog will follow a man as long as he throws him a bone, but that is a man's own dog which will follow him when he strikes him with the whip, and will even fawn upon him when he speaks roughly to him. Such Christians ought we to be who will keep close to God when he is robed in thunder. It is ours to will that God shall do what he will's and ours to call upon him in the day of trouble, and not to call out against him when times are hard. I would trust my God as unreservedly as Alexander trusted his friend, who was also his physician. The physician had mixed a medicine for Alexander, who was sick, and the potion stood by Alexander's bed for him to drink. Just before he drank, a letter was delivered to him in which he was warned that his physician had been bribed to poison him, and had mingled poison with the medicine. Alexander read the letter, and summoned the physician into his presence,

and when he came in Alexander at once drank up the cup of medicine, and then handed his friend the letter. What grand confidence was this! To risk his life upon his friend's fidelity! Such a man might well have friends. He would not let the accused know of the libel till he had proved beyond all dispute that he did not believe a word of it.

Is not our heavenly Father in Christ Jesus worthy of even a grander faith? Shall I ever mistrust him? The devil tells me, my Lord, that this affliction which I am suffering will work me ill. I do not believe it. Not for a moment do I believe it, and to prove that I have no suspicion, I accept it joyfully at thy hands. I joy and rejoice in it, because thou hast ordained it, and I call upon thee to make it work my lasting good. I will take bitter at thy hand as well as sweet, and the gall shall be honey to me. If we act thus we shall be imitating the patience of Job. When his wife bade him curse God and die, what said he? "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" It seems to me we cannot glorify God better than by thus calling upon him in the day of trouble, and thus showing that we do not believe ill of him, or suspect him either of error or unkindness. We go further, and are assured that infallible wisdom and infinite love are at the bottom of every trial which afflicts our spirit: thus we glorify the Lord.

There is in connection with this clinging affection a most *steadfast confidence*. They who call upon God in the day of trouble become quiet and unshaken, and abide in full assurance as to the Lord on whom they rely. O troubled one, do not be agitated, do not run away to others, but call upon God in calm faith. Do not sit down in silent despair and fretfulness, but call upon God; do not be soured into a morose state of mind, nor go into the sulks, but call upon the Lord as one who cannot be driven to curse or to be in a passion, but gives himself to prayer. It is a blessed thing when we can say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him," and can feel that whatever happens to us we never will start aside from our firm conviction that the Lord is good, and his mercy endureth for ever. It was a brave speech of Zwingle when amid furious persecutions he said "Had I not perceived that the Lord was preserving the vessel I should long ago have abandoned the helm. I behold him through the tempest strengthening the cordage, adjusting the yards, spreading the sails, and commanding the very winds. Should I not, then, be a coward, and unworthy the name of a man, were I to abandon my post? I commit myself wholly to his sovereign goodness. Let him govern; let him hasten or delay; let him plunge us into the bottom of the abyss: we will fear nothing." That is the word which I admire. "Let him plunge us into the bottom of the abyss: we will fear nothing." This is the bravery of a child who knows no dread because he is in his father's hand, and his trust in his father cannot admit a fear. Calling upon God enables men to face trouble, and play the man, since they doubt not of a blessed outcome from all things, however contrary they may seem to be. Our business is to be as confident in God at one time as at another, since he is the same evermore, and mere changes in circumstances are matters unworthy to be taken into the estimate. What are circumstances while Almighty God has the rule of them?

In fine, this it is which God accepts as honouring him, that in the day

of trouble we should take all our troubles to him, pour out our hearts before him, and then leave the whole case in his hands. The childlike uncovering of the heart to God alone is very precious to him. There are times when it is wise to advise a troubled heart to be quiet before men.

“Bear and forbear and silent be,
Tell no man thy misery.”

But it is always wise to bare the bosom to the Lord's eye. Is the slander too vile to be communicated even to a single friend? Then follow the example of Hezekiah and spread Rabshakeh's letter before the Lord. Is the trial too severe, inasmuch as others are obliged to suffer with you, and are therefore turned to speak bitterly against you? Then imitate David at Ziklag, and encourage yourself in the Lord your God. Hide nothing. Reserve nothing. Tell it all, and then trust about it all. When you have once put the burden before the Lord leave it with him. Do all that lieth in you, that prudence can dictate, or common sense suggest, or industry effect, but still make the Lord your mainstay, your buckler, your shield, your fortress and high tower. Say to yourself, “My soul, wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him.” If you can do this, not once and again, but throughout your whole life, you will glorify the Lord greatly, and in your holy confidence and childlike faith the Lord will take as much delight as in the golden harps which ring out his perfect praises before his eternal throne. If we could reproduce Job and Enoch in one person, the patient saint continually walking with God, we should indeed show forth the glory of our heavenly Father. And why not? Blessed Spirit of God, thou canst work us to this selfsame thing!

A critic may sneeringly say, “It is a very natural thing for a man to cry out to God in the day of trouble, and certainly a selfish thing to run to the Lord because you need his help.” “Besides,” says another, “it must be a very distracted prayer that such a person offers, and faith under troublous circumstances is a very elementary virtue.” But, my good sirs, hearken. Surely the Lord knows best what pleases him, and if he declares his delight in our calling upon him in the day of trouble, why should we dispute with him? It is so, for he has said it. As for us, who dare not raise such quibbles, let us not be moved by them, but continue to call upon him in the day of trouble, and we shall certainly glorify his name.

II. When we call upon God in the day of trouble IT BRINGS HONOUR TO GOD THROUGH THE ANSWER which the prayer obtains. “I will deliver thee.” I ask you, troubled saints, to follow me while I repeat the text with variations, for that is about all I shall attempt. “Call upon me in the day of trouble”—there is the prayer commanded. “I will deliver thee”—there is the answer promised. In these words we have a *practical answer*. It is not merely “I will think about thee, I will hear thee, I will propose plans for thee, and somewhat aid thee in working them out,” but, “I will deliver thee.” Thou shalt have solid, substantial aid. Either I will keep thee out of the trouble of which thou art afraid; thou shalt be delivered by never having to endure it: the Egyptians that thou seest to-day thou shalt see no more for ever: thou drest the stone at the mouth of the sepulchre, but thou shalt find it rolled away. Or else, if thou must come into the trouble, I will deliver

thee whilst thou art in it : like Noah, thou shalt be surrounded by the deluge, but the floods shall not overflow thee ; like the three holy children, thou shalt be in the furnace, but the fire shall not kindle upon thee. Thou shalt go through the trouble triumphantly, as Israel went through the Red Sea on foot. Thou shalt have such sustaining grace that thou shalt glory in tribulation, and rejoice in affliction. I will also bring thee out of it altogether : for these things have an appointed end. Like Joseph, thou shalt come forth out of prison to sit upon the throne ; like David, thou shalt leave the caves, and the rocks of the wild goats, and I will set thy feet in a large room ; like Daniel, thou shalt be taken from among lions and set among princes. The promise may be kept in several forms, but in one shape or another it must be carried out ; for he who cannot lie hath said, "I will deliver thee." Dear friend, grip those words and never let them go. You troubled ones, the Lord says, "Call upon me." Have you been already much in supplication? Now, then, take to yourselves what the Lord himself gives you : "I will deliver thee." Somehow or other a way of escape must be made, for God's word never fails, and he hath said, "I will deliver thee."

Notice, next, that it is a *positive answer*. It is not, "I may, perhaps, deliver thee"; but, "*I will*." It is not, "I will endeavour to do it," but, "I will deliver thee." Did unbelief say, "But how?" Friend, leave the "how" with God. Ways and means are with him. He says, "I will deliver thee." To turn round and ask "How?" is to forget that he is God all-sufficient.

"Remember that omnipotence
Has servants everywhere."

Unbelief is very ready with its questions, and too often it enquires, "When?" Friend, leave the "when" with God. He does not tell us when, but the deliverance must come at the right time, because if he were not to deliver us till after we had perished it would be no deliverance at all. If deliverance came too late it would be a mere mockery. The promise comprehends within itself the implied condition that it shall be a timely deliverance, for otherwise how should the delivered one live to glorify the name of the Lord? Again I would say to you, dear friend, get a grip of this promise, "I will deliver thee." Do not let my Master's promise be blown away like the sere leaves from the trees, but hold it fast as for life. Wave this before thee, and thy foes will flee as from a two-edged sword. Quote the divine word, "I will deliver thee," and legions of devils will flee before thee. Remember how Paul put it : "Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver : in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us."

Notice next, that the promise is *personal*. "I will deliver thee." It is not said, "My angels shall do it," but "*I will deliver thee*." The Lord God himself undertakes to rescue his people. "I will be a wall of fire round about them." "I the Lord do keep it ; I will water it every moment : lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day."

Then, too, it is personal to its object : it is the same man who calls upon God in trouble who shall be a partaker of the blessing. "Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver *thee*." It is personal, personal *to you* ; therefore, dear friend, personally believe in this personal promise of thy God.

Recollect, also, that *it is permanent*. You pleaded this promise, some of you, fifty years ago : it is as sure to-day as it was then. If you have a banknote, and take it to the bank and get the cash, it is done with : but my Master's banknotes are self-renewing. You can plead his promise a hundred times over, for his word abides for ever ; it is fulfilled only to be fulfilled again. Like a springing well, which is always full and flowing, so my Lord's grace-words abide and continue in all their wealth of blessing. God's promise made two thousand years ago is as valid as if it had been uttered this morning, and never yet expended upon a single soul. "Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee" is a word for this very hour. Where are you at this moment, you troubled, downcast one? You said just now, "I shall never be happy any more." Recall those words. Eat them with bitter herbs of repentance : "Trust in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." You said "That blow has crushed me ; I could have borne anything else, but this trial I cannot bear." Tush ! Do you know what you can bear? What said the apostle? "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Only have faith in God, and obey and believe the text : "Call upon me in the day of trouble ; I will deliver thee." Can you not take God at his word? If you can you shall find his promise true, and God will be glorified in delivering you. What praise will come to his name if he lifts you up out of the low dungeon ; if he snaps your fetters ; if he tears away your entanglements ; if he makes plain your intricate path ; if he brings you through difficulties which now seem to be impossibilities, and gives you to rejoice in him through them all ! Why, then, his name will be glorified far more than by the offering of ten thousand bullocks, and rivers of oil.

III. Lastly, if you trust your God in your distress and are, therefore, delivered, **THE LORD WILL BE GLORIFIED IN YOUR CONDUCT AFTERWARDS**. When a man prays to God in the hour of trouble, and gets deliverance, as he is sure to get it, then he honours his great Helper by *admiring the way in which the promise has been kept, and by adoring and blessing the loving Lord for such a gracious interposition*. I know some of you have seen enough of the hand of the Lord in your own cases to make you wonder and admire for ever and ever.

Next, you will honour him by *the gratitude of your heart*, in which the memory of his goodness will for ever be recorded. This devout gratitude of yours will lead you in due season to bear *testimony to his faithfulness*. You will be indignant at unbelief and will war against it by personal witnessing. You will be very tender towards those who are now in trouble, as you once were, and you will long to tell them of the blessed rescue which God is prepared to perform for them as he did for you. Your mouth will be open, your witness will be enlarged, you will speak as a man who has tasted and handled these things for himself. Others will be impressed as you tell the story of what the Lord hath done for your soul. At the same time, you will *personally grow in faith* by the experience of your heavenly Father's love and power, and in days to come you will glorify him by *increased patience and confidence*. You will say, "He has been with me in six troubles, and he will be with me in the seventh. I have tried and proved my God, and I dare not doubt him." Your serenity of mind will be more deep and lasting, and you

will be able to defy the power of Satan to drive you out of your joy in God. I know also that you will try to *live more to his praise*. As you see him bring you out of one difficulty and then another you will feel bound to his service by fresh bonds. You will become more a consecrated man than you ever have been. You will jealously protect your remaining days from being wasted by sloth or desecrated by sin. And let me tell you that even when you die, and come up the banks of Jordan on the other side, you will long to glorify your God. When the angels meet you I should not wonder but what one of the first things you will do will be to say, "Bright spirits, I long to tell you what the Lord has done for me." Even as you are going up towards the celestial gates, as Bunyan pictures, I should not wonder if you began to say to your guide, "Help me to sing; I cannot be silent. I feel I must

‘Sing with rapture and surprise
His lovingkindness in the skies.’”

Should the bright spirit remind you that you are climbing to the choirs where all the singers meet, you may answer, "Yes, but I am a special case: I came through such deep waters; I was greatly afflicted. If one in heaven can praise him more than another, I am just that one." The angel will smile and say, "I have escorted many a score up to glory who said just the same." We each one owe most to God's grace, and hope to praise him best. Some of you may think that you are love's deepest debtors, but I know better. I am not going to quarrel with you, but I know one who is so undeserving and yet receives such mercy that he claims to take the lowest place, and most humbly to reverence boundless grace. Yea, I myself, less than the least of all saints, claim to have received most at his hands. I would fain love him most, for towards me he has shown the utmost love in treating me as he has done. Am I not saying for myself that which you each would say for yourself? I know it is so, and hence it is that God is glorified by the reverence and love of those whom he delivers in answer to prayer.

I want you to notice with care the persons mentioned in the first clause of the text. You do not see yourself; you only *hear* of yourself. It is "Call upon me." God is there. There is no direct mention of *you*; you are hidden; you are such a poor, broken-down, dispirited creature that all you can do is to utter a cry and lie in the dust. There stands the mighty God, and you call upon him.

Now, look at the next clause, "I will deliver thee." Here are two persons: the Lord stands first, the Ever-Glorious and Blessed, "I," and far down there are you. "I will deliver *thee*," poor, humble, but grateful "Thee." Thus we see the Lord unites with his poor servant, and the link is deliverance.

When you come to the third clause, do you see where you are? You are placed first, for the Lord now calls you into action—"Thou shalt glorify *me*." What a wonderful thing it is! For God to put glory upon us is easy enough, but for us to put glory upon him, this is a miracle of condescension on the part of our God. "Thou shalt glorify *me*."

"But," saith one in this place, "I do love the Lord, but I cannot glorify him. I wish I could preach, I wish I could write sweet hymns, I wish I had a clear voice with which to sing out the Redeemer's praises,

but I have no gifts or talents, and therefore I shall never be able to glorify him." Listen: you will be cast into trouble one of these days, and when you are in trouble you will find out how to glorify him. Your extremity will be your opportunity. Like a lamp which shines not by day you will blaze up in the dark. When the day of trouble is come you will cry, "Lord, I could not do anything for thee, but thou canst do everything for me. I am nothing, but Lord, in my nothingness, I, poor I, do trust thee, and fling myself upon thee." Then you shall find that you have glorified him by your faith. I think you might almost be content to have the trouble, might you not? It seems as if you could not glorify him anyhow else, and to glorify him is the main object of your existence. Some Christians would scarcely have brought any glory to God if they had not been led by paths of sorrow, and made to wade through seas of grief. God gets very little glory out of many professors, and he would have still less if they had been allowed to rust their souls away in comfort. The brightest of the saints owe much of their clearness to the fire and the file. It is by the sharp needle of sorrow that we are embroidered with the praises of the Lord. We must be tried that the Lord may be glorified. We cannot call upon him in the day of trouble if we have no such day; and he cannot deliver us if we have no trouble to be delivered from; and we cannot glorify him if we are not made to see the danger and the need in which he displays his love.

I leave the blessed subject of the text with you, as a souvenir, till we meet again. The Lord be with you till the day break and the shadows flee away. Pray, also, that he may abide with me, and with all my brethren in the ministry; and may we all in yonder world of rest glorify him, who will then have delivered us completely from all evil, to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 1.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—194, 196, 700.