

Soul Depths

“Out of the depths have I cried unto You, O Lord.” — Psalm 130:1.

It is of little moment to our present exposition that we determine the precise occasion in David’s history on which this Psalm was composed. Suffice, that it forms one of the richest and most tuneful of his poetical compositions, and unfolds one of the most spiritual and instructive chapters in his remarkable history. As such, it reflects the lights and shadows, the depths and heights of the Christian life, as more or less vividly portrayed in every believer’s history. That there are these opposites of soul-exercise in the experience of all the spiritual seed of David, of all to whom belong his “sure mercies”— not excepting David’s Lord— the history of the Church of God fully attests.

The Christian life is tortuous and chequered in its course. The royal path to glory is a divine mosaic paved with stones of diverse lines. Today, it is a depth almost soundless; tomorrow, a height almost scaleless. Now, a shadow drapes the picture, somber and rayless; then, a light illumines the camera, brilliant and gladsome. Here, the “song” is of mercy, sweet and entrancing; there, it is of judgement, sad and mournful. “When men are cast down, then you shall say, There is lifting up.” But, a divine Hand, veiled and invisible to all but faith’s eye, shapes and directs the whole; and, assured of this, the believing soul is trustful and calm.

“He led them about, He instructed them,” was the history of the Church in the wilderness; and each stage was a school, each condition a blessing, each event a lesson learned, and a new beatitude experienced,— learned and experienced as in no other. Variety, rich and endless, is stamped upon all God’s works and operations; not less is this seen in the circuitous path by which He is leading His people home to Himself. It is this ever-dissolving, ever shifting scenery of the Christian’s life that unfolds new views of God’s character, and brings him into a closer acquaintance with his own.

To the consideration, then, of these “depths” and “heights” of the Christian life, let us now devoutly and thoughtfully address ourselves. And may the Eternal Spirit unfold and apply His truth to the edification of the reader, and to the glory of His own name, for Christ Jesus’ sake! “Out of the depths have I cried unto you, O Lord.”

It may be proper to intimate in the commencement of our treatise, that the experience described in this, its opening chapter, must not be interpreted as that of an unregenerate soul. That there are “depths” of temporal adversity and mental distress, deep and dark, in the life of the unregenerate, is manifest; but, they are not the “depths” of God’s people. It is recorded of the wicked who prosper in the world, that they have “no changes in their life,” and “no bands in their death, and are not as other men.” But the saints of God dwell among their own people, and walk in paths untrodden by the ungodly. The experience, then, which we are about to describe is peculiar to the saints.

However profound these ‘depths,’ they are not the depths of hell, draped with its mist of darkness, and lurid with its quenchless flames. There is in them no curse, nor wrath, nor condemnation. Sink as the gracious soul may, it ever finds the Rock of Ages beneath, upon which faith firmly and securely stands. Whatever may be the depressions of the believer, it is important to keep in mind his real standing before God. From this no chequered spiritual history can move him. There is not an angel in heaven so divinely related, so beautifully attired, or who stands so near and is so dear to God, as the accepted believer in Christ, though earth is still his abode, and a body of sin his dwelling.

A practical lesson grows out of this truth. Let it be your aim to know your present standing as in the sight of God. Upon so vital a question not the shadow of a doubt should rest. “We believe, and are sure.” Faith brings assurance, and assurance is faith. The measure of our assured interest in Christ, will be the measure of our faith in Christ. This is the true definition of assurance, the nature of which is a question of much perplexity to sincere Christians. Assurance is not something audible, tangible, or visionary— a revelation to the mind, or a voice in the air. Assurance is believing. Faith is the cause, assurance is the effect. Assurance of

personal salvation springs from looking to, and dealing only with Jesus. It comes not from believing that I am saved, but from believing that Christ is my Savior.

The object of my salvation is not my faith, but Christ. Faith is but the instrument by which I receive Christ as a sinner. As the eaglet acquires strength of vision by gazing upon the sun, until at length, when fledged, it expands its wings and soars to the orb of day,— so the eye of faith, by “looking unto Jesus” only, gradually becomes stronger; and in proportion to its clear and still clearer view of Christ, brings increased, sweet, and holy assurance to the soul.

One simple, believing sight of Christ will produce more light and peace and joy than a lifetime of looking within ourselves for evidences and signs of grace. All the sinner’s merit, all his worthiness, beauty, and salvation, is centered in Christ, is from Christ, and Christ alone. And, by simply believing the great truth of the gospel, that Christ died for sinners— receiving Christ, not purchasing Him,— as God’s “unspeakable gift” of free and sovereign grace, will awaken in the soul the assured and grateful acknowledgment, “He loved me, and gave Himself for me.” But let us enumerate some of those soul-depths into which many of God’s people are frequently plunged, in which grace sustains, and out of which love delivers them. “Out of the depths have I cried unto you, O Lord.”

We place in the foreground of these “depths,” as constituting, perhaps, the most common— soul-distress arising from the existence and power of indwelling sin in the regenerate. There is not a fact in the history of the saints more clearly taught or more constantly verified than this: that, while the Holy Spirit renews the soul, making it a new creature in Christ Jesus, He never entirely uproots and slays the principle and root of sin in the regenerate. The guilt of sin is cleansed by atoning blood, and the tyranny of sin is broken by the power of divine grace, and the condemnation of sin is cancelled by the free justification of Christ; nevertheless, the root, or principle of original sin remains deeply and firmly embedded in the soil, ever and anon springing up and yielding its baneful fruit, demanding unslumbering watchfulness and incessant mortification; and will so remain until death sets the spirit free.

The inhabitants of Canaan were allowed by God still to domicile in the land long after His chosen people had entered and possessed it. They were to contract no covenant with them, either by marriage or commerce; but, laid under tribute, they were to remain subject to a gradual process of extermination, contributing to, rather than taking from, the wealth and power of Israel’s tribes. This is an impressive and instructive emblem of the regenerate! The old inhabitants still domicile in the new creature: original sin, individual corruption, and constitutional infirmity— surviving the triumphant advent of the converting grace of God— often challenging the forces of the Most High, and inflicting upon the soul many a deep and grievous wound.

Now, it is the existence of this fact that constitutes a source of so much soul-distress to the regenerate, bringing them into those “depths” familiar to the most gracious. When the Holy Spirit inserts the plough more deeply into the corrupt soil of the heart, turning up the fair surface, and revealing the hidden, deeply-seated, and but little-suspected, evil— the law of corruption for a moment stronger than the law of grace, the law of the flesh obtaining a temporary ascendancy over the law of the Spirit— then rises the dolorous lamentation out of the depths: “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? O Lord, out of the depths of my deep corruption I call unto You! My soul is plunged into great and sore troubles by reason of indwelling sin, whose name is ‘legion’— pride, self-righteousness, carnality, covetousness, worldliness— working powerfully and deceitfully in my heart, and bringing my soul into great straits and fathomless depths of sorrow.”

Beloved, when first you found the Savior, you imagined that the warfare had ceased, that the victory was won, and that, henceforth, your Christian course would be a continuous triumph over every foe, your path to heaven smooth and cloudless, until lost in perfect day! But your real growth in grace is the measure of your growing acquaintance with yourself. A deeper knowledge of your sinfulness, a more intimate acquaintance with the subterfuges of your own heart, has changed your paean of triumph into well-near a wail of despair; has hurled you as from the pinnacle to the base of the mount; and from the base, into a “depth” yet deeper you never supposed to exist, and out of which— the “slough of despond”— your cry of agony ascends to God.

But, deem not your case a solitary one; nor be surprised, as though some strange thing had happened unto you. Such "depths" have all the saints. All are taught in this school; all are brought into the region of their own heart, where their holiest and most experimental lessons are learned. Let not, then, the existence, sight, and conflict of the indwelling of sin plunge you in despair; rather, accept it as an unmistakable evidence of your possession of the divine nature, of the living water welled in your soul- the existence and warfare of which have but revealed to you the counter existence and antagonism of the latent and deep-seated evil of your heart.

But, not the indwelling of sin only, still more its outbreaking, describes another soul-depth of God's saints. What an evidence have we here of the truth just insisted upon— the indwelling power of sin in the regenerate! Truly, were there no indwelling root of sin, there would be no outgrowing fruit of sin. The mortification of sin in its principle, would be the mortification of sin in its practice. The death of sin in the heart of the Christian would, necessarily, be the death of sin in the life of the Christian. No fact more logical or self-evident. But where is the true believer who, as before a heart-trying God, can claim the entire uprooting of the indwelling principle of evil— who, unless awfully self-deceived, can in truth assert that he has arrived at such a degree of sanctification as to live a day, an hour, a moment, a sinless life?

How contrary would such vain boasting be to the recorded experience of the most matured believer- the most advanced and holy Christian! Listen to the language of David: "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is ever before me." Listen to job: "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Listen to Peter: "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Listen to Paul: "Sinners; of whom I am chief." Who, with such examples before him, will profanely claim perfect freedom, not merely from the indwelling existence, but from the outbreaking effects of sin?

But who can fully describe the soul-sorrow; one of the profoundest depths of the regenerate occasioned by the consciousness of sinful departure from God? "And Peter went out, and wept bitterly." The penitence of Peter was a type of all true penitents, whose backslidings the foregoing acknowledgments recall to remembrance. And what a mercy that our Heavenly Father does not leave His wandering child to the hardening tendency and effect of his backslidings; but, sooner or later, His Spirit, by the word, or through some afflictive discipline of love, recalls the wanderer to His feet, with the confession and the prayer- "O Lord, pardon my iniquity; for it is great." "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed." These confessions of sin what gracious soul does not echo? Surely every heart that knows its own plague will make them its own; and thus the Holy Spirit fashions our renewed hearts alike.

There are also "depths" of mental darkness and despondency into which gracious souls fall. Many a shaded and lonely stage of the Christian's pilgrimage lies in the way to heaven. Through many a dark, starless night the spiritual voyager ploughs the ocean to the desired haven where he would be. It is far more the province of faith to work and travel and sail in the dark than in the light, in the night season than the day. And thus, this essential and precious principle of the regenerate soul is put to a more crucial and certain test than when the path of the believer is decked with smiling flowers and radiant with unclouded sunshine. It is, "Faith in the dark, Pursuing its mark Through many sharp trials of love."

In the family of God there are not a few Christians of a morbidly religious tendency of mind, whose Christian career through life is seldom relieved and brightened by a solitary thrill of joy or ray of hope. While the reality of their conversion is undoubted by all but themselves, they seem to have settled down into a spiritual state of despondency and despair in which all evidence is ignored, all comfort refused, and all hope extinguished. In vain you unfold the gospel in all the fullness of its message, the freeness of its overtures, and the preciousness of its promises. They repel you with the reply that its provisions, invitations, and comforts are for others but not for them; that theirs is not the blessedness of those for whom these glad tidings are sent.

Tell them of God's great love in the gift of His Son of Christ saving sinners to the uttermost, rejecting none who come to Him; of the blood that has a sovereign efficacy in its cleansing from all sin; remind them that, when God begins a work of grace in the soul of a poor sinner,

He never leaves it incomplete; that, although the sun in the firmament is often obscured by a cloud, yet all the while it shines as intensely brilliant as though not a shadow veiled its light; and that thus it is with the Sun of Righteousness and the child of the light walking in darkness; you but deal with a believer on whose brow the "agony of anxious helplessness" is stamped.

But until a power infinitely mightier than the human is exerted, morbid melancholy will still claim the victim as its own. Religious delusion is the great characteristic of souls in a state of morbid religiousness. But is there no remedy? Has not the gospel its appropriate instructions and helps for a soul thus overshadowed and depressed? Surely there are divine steps out of this "depth," might we but succeed in unveiling them to the desponding eye. Our true process will be to trace it to some of its more fruitful and proximate causes, the discovery and statement of which may suggest more than half its remedy. To this attempt let us address ourselves.

We do not hesitate placing in the foreground of causes producing spiritual despondency, one which, perhaps, is the most common, though the least suspected of all- the physical constitution and state of the afflicted one. In this case the physician who prescribes for the body, rather than he who ministers to the soul, may be the most appropriate and useful adviser. So intimately united are the two constituent parts of our organism- mind and body, there must necessarily be a continuous action and reaction of the one upon the other; and the peculiar condition in which both may be at that moment, must of necessity, exert a powerful and reciprocal influence.

Now, in numberless cases of morbid religious despondency the cause is purely physical. This may, perhaps, shock the piety of some, and not the less supply ground of attack upon religion on the part of others; nevertheless, the psychological fact remains the same. A disturbed and unhealthy condition of any one vital organ of the body, may so powerfully act upon the mind, and that in its turn upon the Soul, as to tinge the mental and moral perceptions, distort the most simple truths, embitter the sweetest consolations, and shade the brightest hopes and prospects of the soul.

Depressed child of God, suffering from this cause, be of good cheer! The Lord, who loves you- loves you not less when all is dark as when all is light- knows your frame, and remembers that you are dust. Your present mental cloud-veil does not, and cannot, extinguish the heavenly light within you, touch your spiritual life, or separate you from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus your Lord. The divine nature, of which you are, through grace, a partaker, rises as far above the condition of the body as the infinite rises above the finite. The spiritual life of your soul flows from, and is bound up with, the life of God in heaven.

And if there is any gentleness and sympathy in Christ (and who can doubt it?) which clusters with a deeper intensity around a child of His love, it is he who, suffering from physical disease, pain, and languor, is at the same moment battling, as an effect, with morbid religiousness and mental despondency; and these, in their turn, gendering spiritual doubts and distress touching the happiness of the present, and the hope of the future. Little think we with what tenderness and gentleness Jesus deals with the 'sick one whom He loves,' and what consideration and forbearance He exercises towards those who, through bodily infirmity and physical suffering, are plunged into depths of religious melancholia, bordering, it may be, on the very verge of despair and self-destruction! Jesus, who built your frame, remembers that you are dust;' and from no heart in the universe pulsating with love towards you, flows such intelligent compassion, such patience, forbearance, and tender sympathy as from Christ's.

But there are spiritual causes yet more potent- to which this morbid, self-condemning action of the mind may be traced. Let us glance at one or two of them. The substitution, for example, of the work of the Spirit in the soul, for the work of Christ for the soul, supplies a fruitful cause of religious doubt and despondency in many Christians. God, in the exercise of His grace, never intended that the sources of our Christian evidence and spiritual fertility should be within ourselves. It was His purpose to lodge our entire salvation in Christ; at the same time leaving undisturbed our individual responsibility and duty to "give all diligence to make our calling and election sure;" and thus "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling," encouraged by the assurance, that it is "God that works in us to will and to do of His good pleasure."

To look, then, within ourselves for spiritual light, joy, and hope, is just as unwise and vain as

to put sound for substance, the sun reflected from the bosom of a lake, for the sun blazing in mid-heaven. It is to Christ obeying and suffering, bleeding and dying for us, that we are to look for our evidences, fruitfulness, and hope, and not to the work of the Holy Spirit wrought in our souls. Essential to our renewal and sanctification as is the work of the Spirit, He did not atone for us. He is not our Savior, nor His work our salvation, necessary and precious as is His office in the economy of Redemption.

Christ alone is our Redeemer, His righteousness our justification, His blood our pardon, His merits our standing before God; and it is looking to Him in faith, to His mediation, merits, and fullness, that we arrive at any degree of spiritual evidence, fruitfulness, and assurance. Turning within yourself for marks and signs of grace, and finding instead nothing but sin, and darkness, and change, how are you to become a firm believer and a joyful Christian? Looking to your experience, your fitful frames and feelings, and not by faith to Christ, the wind is not more capricious, nor the tide more changeful, than will be your peace and comfort, your holiness and hope.

But, try the experiment of looking away from yourself to Jesus. Pass by even the cross, the atonement, the gospel, and the sacrament, and rest not until you find yourself face to face, heart to heart, with a PERSONAL, living, loving SAVIOR, -the gracious words breathing in sweetest cadence from His lips- Oh listen to their music, you sin-disturbed, soul-desponding ones!- "Come unto ME, all you that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you REST." "Look unto ME, all the ends of the earth, and be saved: for I am God, and there is none else." "I am the door;" "I am the bread of life." In all these gracious invitations we hear the voice of a Personal- "I AM" -of a Personal Savior.

Cease, then, to deal with dogmas, feelings and experience, however elevated or depressed, and behold the Lamb of God, contemplate His Person, study His work, feast upon His word, revel in His fulness, bathe in the sea of His love, and let Him be all in all to your soul. Thus turning the eye from yourself and dealing only with the Person of Jesus, the cloud will uplift from your mind, "the winter will depart, and the flowers appear, the time of the singing of birds will come, and the voice of the turtle be heard in the land;" and your soul, thus bursting from its icy fetters, its wintry sterility and gloom, into the beauty and fragrance of its new spring-life of joy, will be "Like the sweet south wind, that breathes upon a bank of violets, Stealing and giving odors."

In how many cases this spiritual despondency may be traced to the idea, incessantly haunting the mind, of having committed the unpardonable sin, the sin against the Holy Spirit! But how groundless this fear! Apart from the probability, and we might in a qualified sense add, the impossibility, of the fact, the holy fear and trembling which the apprehension creates, is of itself a sufficient contradiction of such a thing. But, what was the sin against the Holy Spirit which Jesus denounced in terms so appalling? Clearly, it was that of ascribing to the agency of Satan the Divine power by which He wrought His wonderful miracles. "This fellow does not cast out devils but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils." Then said Jesus, "All sins shall be forgiven to the sons of men ... But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit has never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation."

Such clearly was the sin against the Holy Spirit. Can it be yours, my reader? Impossible! You have never been tempted, or if tempted have never yielded to the temptation for a moment-loathing and rejecting it- of ascribing the Divine works of Christ to Satanic power! Oh no! Banish, then, from your mind the appalling thought, this groundless fear; and clasp in the arms of your faith and love afresh the gracious, sin-atonement, sin-forgiving Savior, who has never permitted you to fall into this 'depth of Satan,' and who will, with the temptation, give you grace, that you may be able to bear and victoriously to repel it.

Others of God's saints are often plunged into great depths of soul distress, occasioned by the doctrine of Election. Through the misrepresentations of some teachers, and their own crude notions of the doctrine, they extract bitterness from one of the sweetest and clearest truths of God's word. But, divine and precious as the doctrine of Election is, it is not a truth with which we have immediately to do in the great matter of personal salvation. Election belongs to God alone; it is His eternal and profound secret, with which we have nothing to do but unquestionably to believe. "Secret things belong to God;" and this is one of the most

profoundly secret. The truth with which we have to do is our effectual calling; this made sure, the certainty of our election follows; our calling is the effect and consequence of our election. Hence the order in which the Holy Spirit, by the apostle, places these truths: "Be diligent to make your calling and election sure."

The first and lowest link in the chain of your salvation is your calling by the Spirit. Called by sovereign grace to see your sinfulness, to accept Christ; and evidencing the reality of your calling by a pure and holy life, you have made sure of the last and the highest link of the chain, and may calmly leave the fact of your eternal election to everlasting life with God, in whose hands it is alone and safely lodged. With the divine decrees, happily, you have nothing to do. You are not called to believe that you are one of the elect; but you are called to believe in Jesus Christ- that you are a poor, lost sinner, feeling your need of the Savior, looking only to His blood and righteousness as the ground of your pardon, justification, and final glory. Thus called by grace to be a saint of God, election will become to you one of the most encouraging, comforting, and sanctifying doctrines of the Bible.

Cease, then, to trouble your soul as to this divine and hidden truth, and deal directly and only with Christ. Then will your soul, ascending from this 'depth' of doubt and despondency in which too long you have lain, and rising into the region of light, joy and hope, will sing as you soar- "My soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler: the snare is broken, and I am escaped." "Whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified."

The word of God speaks of the "depths of Satan" (Rev. 2:24). Some of these "depths" mark the experience of many of the saints. The members of Christ's body must, in a great degree, be conformed to their Head; and no chapter of our Lord's life is more instructive than that of His temptation in the wilderness. "Tempted in all points like as we are," He thus, during those forty days' and forty nights' conflict with the devil, was learning how to succor those who are tempted. There are "depths" in Satan's temptations of various degrees; some deeper and darker than others. Some of the Lord's people are tempted to doubt, and almost to deny, the work of grace in their soul; some are tempted to limit the power and willingness of Christ to save them; others are attacked in the very citadel of their faith, sorely tempted to deny the truth of God's word, the veracity of His character, and a future life beyond the grave. How many saints there are whose temptations lie within the circle of their families; others within the sphere of their calling in life; others in their service for Christ; and not a few within the very church of God itself!

There is no part of the Christian armor so invulnerable which Satan will not attempt to pierce, and no place so retired or engagement so holy where his "depths" are not concealed! Are you thus tempted, child of God? Have you fallen into some of these "depths of Satan"? "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you;" for, "there has no temptation taken you but what is common to man: but God is faithful, who will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it." The Lord will not leave you to perish in these wiles or to sink in these depths of Satan; but while in them will instruct you in truths, and teach you lessons, learned only in this fiery and trying school and, when spiritually and effectually learned, He will 'pull you out of the net,' and raise you above the 'depths,' more perfectly assimilated than ever to the image of your Lord, once tempted in all points like as you are; and who knows how to succor those who are thus tempted.

We must not omit the depths of affliction and trial into which, more or less profound, all the Lord's people are plunged. The language of David, and of David's Lord, is that of all the spiritual seed of David: "Deep calls unto deep at the noise of your waterspouts: all your waves and your billows are gone over me." Deep and billowy and dark are often the waters through which the saints wade to glory. "The Lord tries the righteous;" and He tries them because they are righteous, and to make them yet more righteous still. It was deep in the fathomless depths that Jonah learned the most precious of all truths: "Salvation is of the Lord." It was in the cave of Adullam- in the lion's den- in the noisome pit in the jail of Philippi- in the isle of Patmos- in the garden of Gethsemane; that David, and Daniel, and Jeremiah, and John, and Jesus, were brought into the richest teaching, holiest lessons, and most blessed experience of their lives.

And shall we, beloved, plead exemption from these depths of trial, tribulation, and sorrow? Ah no! what losers should we be were it so! Who would not follow in the footsteps of the flock? Above all, who would not walk in the footsteps of the Shepherd of the flock, who, though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered"? Look up, then, you sinking child of sorrow! Are you enquiring of the Lord, "Why am I thus tried, thus afflicted, thus chastened?" Listen to His answer: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten."

Reader, resolve all this discipline of trial and of sorrow through which your God is calling you to pass- the loss that has

lessened your resources, the bereavement that has broken your heart, the trial that has saddened your spirit, the temptation that has assailed your faith- into the everlasting and unchangeable love of your Father in heaven. "For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives." Therefore, "despise not you the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when you are rebuked of Him."

Out of the depths of affliction and sorrow the Lord will hear your cry, and from them will raise you. The promise will stand good to the end- the promise upon which many a soul, sinking in deep waters, has clung with faith's undying grasp: "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you: when you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon you." Welcome, O welcome, the sanctified discipline of trial and sorrow that proves your conversion real, your title to heaven valid, and your hope in Jesus such as will not expire when the cold damps of death are gathering around it; but will become stronger and more luminous as the lamps of earth recede and fade, and those of heaven approach nearer and grow more bright. Lord, if your furnace thus refines and your knife thus prunes- rendering your "gold" more pure and your "branch" more fruitful

"Let me never choose or to live or die,
Bind or bruise, in your hands I lie."

Not anticipating the subject of the next chapter, we would close the present by reminding the believer thus exercised that, as sure as there are in the experience of the saints 'depths' of soul-trouble and conflict, depths of spiritual and mental despondency and despair, 'depths' of trial and sorrow, 'depths' of temptation and need- "a night and a day in the deep" -so there are deliverances; and in God's own time those deliverances will come. "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which has great recompense of reward."

Did the Lord ever leave His child to flounder and sink and perish in his 'depths'? Never! He invariably sends help from above, takes them in His arms, and gently draws them out of their 'many waters,' just as He lifted up Joseph from the deep pit, and Daniel from the lions' den, and Jeremiah from the loathsome dungeon. Cheer up then, you sinking, desponding one! Behold the bright stars that shine and sing above your head- those "exceeding great and precious promises" of God, "which are all yes and Amen in Christ Jesus;" and behold the "rainbow in the clouds" -the symbol and pledge of God's covenant faithfulness to make good those promises, and deliver you out of all trouble.

And, oh, what a glorious deliverance awaits the believer from out the depths of the grave on the morning of the first resurrection, when the trump of Jesus will wake all them who sleep in Him. "Awake and sing, you that dwell in dust: for your dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." Such is the resurrection-song which will float in its sweetest cadence over the grave- penetrating its deepest recesses, and waking its profoundest slumber- of all who departed this life in Christ's faith and fear.

In view of the believer's present deliverance from the body of sin, suffering and death, and in anticipation of his future deliverance from the pit of corruption, with a body molded like unto Christ's glorious body- no more sin, no more sickness, no more sorrow, no more death, no more separations- may we not join with the deepest gratitude of our hearts in the beautiful thanksgiving which we pronounce over the holy dead: "Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of those who depart hence in the Lord, and with whom the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity: let it please You, of your gracious goodness, shortly to accomplish the number of Your elect, and to hasten Your kingdom; that we, with all those that are departed in the true faith of Your holy name, may

have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in Your eternal and everlasting glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Out of the depths I cry,
Oppressed with grief and sin;
O gracious Lord, draw nigh,
Complete Your work within.
O listen to Your suppliant's voice,
And let my broken bones rejoice.
'Out of the depths I cried,
Overwhelmed with wrath divine,'
Said Christ, when crucified
For guilty souls like mine:
His cries were heard-He died,
and rose Triumphant over all His foes.