

## HELP FROM THE SANCTUARY Psalm 20: 1, 2

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“The Lord hear Thee in the day of trouble; the Name of the God of Jacob defend Thee; send Thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen Thee out of Zion.” [Ps 20:1-2](#)

THERE can be no doubt that the Psalms testify much of Jesus. The Lord Himself, before He “opened their understandings to understand the Scriptures,” said to His disciples, “All things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and **in the Psalms**, concerning Me.” [Lu 24:44](#) The Lord of life and glory, whilst hanging on the cross, cried aloud from [Ps 22](#)- “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” Nay, we find the very circumstances, which attended His crucifixion described in that Psalm with great minuteness; such as, “They gaped upon Me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of My bowels.” “They part My garments amongst them, and cast lots upon My vesture.”

Now I believe that [Ps 20](#) refers mainly to the same subject, and that it is the prayer of the church offered up to God the Father on behalf of the Lord Jesus. The church foresaw, by the Spirit of prophecy, the sufferings of her Head; she looked forward to the agonies and distresses that the Lord Jesus was to undergo for her, and the benefits that were to arise out of them; and, foreseeing these things, in the Spirit of prophecy, she poured forth [Ps 20](#) as a prayer to the Father on His behalf. The Holy Ghost framed this prayer for her by way of anticipation; and thus, as the apostle speaks, “The Spirit of Christ which was in her testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.” [1Pe 1:11](#) Viewed in this light, how earnest and how suitable are her petitions! “The Lord hear Thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend Thee; send Thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen Thee out of Zion.”

That this interpretation of the Psalm is not imaginary or forced, is evident from several expressions in it, which have a clear reference to Jesus. Thus, ver. 3 [Ps 20:3](#) it says, “Remember all Thy offerings, and **accept Thy burnt sacrifice;**” where the church prays the Father to accept that sacrifice which Christ was offering upon the cross. So ver. 4: [Ps 20:4](#) “Grant Thee according to Thine own heart, and fulfil all Thy counsel.” The **“heart”** of Christ was set upon the salvation of His church; and the **“counsel”** of Christ to be fulfilled

was “the counsel of peace.” [Zec 6:13](#) Nay, so certain was the church of Christ’s success in His covenant undertakings, that she says, “We will rejoice in Thy salvation” (ver. 5) [Ps 20:5](#) even before He went forth in the travail of His soul for the salvation of His people. But as an additional confirmation that this Psalm testifies of Jesus, we find His very name mentioned (ver. 6) [Ps 20:6](#) “Now know I that the Lord saveth His **anointed**; He will hear Him from His holy heaven with the saving strength of His right hand.” I need, perhaps, scarcely point out that the word “Christ” means “anointed,” and that therefore we might read, “Now know I that the Lord saveth His Christ.”

But I would by no means limit the interpretation of the Psalm to this one point. As the experience of Christ is the experience of the church, “He being tempted in all points like as we are,” He having travelled in the road which we have to walk in, the same words are applicable also to the experience of believers. Thus, though the verses primarily, I believe, and mainly apply to Christ’s experience, yet we may also apply them spiritually to the experience of every child of God who suffers with Christ. When, therefore, we have glanced a little at the primary meaning of the words, and shown how they refer to Christ Himself, we will then pass on to consider the text with reference to the experience of the people of Christ.

There was, then, “a day of trouble” to come upon Jesus; in fact, His whole life, from the cradle to the cross, was one continued series of trouble. But He had certain seasons of more especial suffering; such as the garden scene, when He “sweat as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground;” and those six hours of agony, when He was nailed to the cross, and not merely endured the most dreadful anguish of body, but also the tremendous wrath of God in His soul. It was to this season of distress that the church looked forward when she said, “The Lord **hear Thee** in the day of trouble;” implying that in that solemn season of distress the Lord Jesus would cry unto the Father; as the apostle speaks, [Heb 5:7](#) “Who in the days of His flesh, when He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared; though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered.” In His conflict with the powers of darkness “the name of the God of Jacob defended” Him. In that trying hour “help was sent to Him from the sanctuary,” and “strength was given Him out of Zion.”

I could not pass over this primary meaning of the Psalm without thus briefly pointing it out; but having done so, I shall pass on to the secondary meaning, and consider the text as applicable to the experience of the children of God.

The reason why this Psalm, as well as others of a similar nature, bears this two-fold interpretation, springs from this, that the experience of Christ and of His church are similar in kind, though not in degree. "As He is, so are we in this world." "Leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps." "If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son." "I fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." The Lord, therefore, when the sons of Zebedee asked Him that they might "sit, one on His right hand, and the other on His left hand, in His glory," said to them, "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of, and be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with?" They said, "We can." And what was His answer? "Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of, and with the baptism that I am baptised withal shall ye be baptised."

What this cup was, the Lord's own words declare, when, in the gloomy garden, "He prayed, saying, O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." [Mt 26:39](#) This cup was the cup of suffering on account of imputed sin-the cup of God's wrath. "In the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture, and He poureth out of the same." [Ps 75:8](#) "Stand up, O Jerusalem, which has drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of His fury." [Isa 51:17](#) This cup Jesus drank to the very dregs; and some drops of it are tasted by every one of His people. His baptism, too, was a baptism, a complete immersion into, suffering; and with this too are His faithful followers baptised. It is, then, from this union of Christ and His people in suffering that the Psalm derives its two-fold meaning.

1.-"The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble." Viewing then these words as applicable to the experience of the child of God, we find mention made of "a day of trouble." All who shall be saved in Christ with an everlasting salvation will have more or less of a day of trouble. This day of trouble may come upon some at their first setting out; on others in the middle of their course; and on others just before the end, before the Lord sweetly visits their souls, and takes them to eternal rest. But "a day of trouble" must come, sooner or later, upon every child of God. This is that day spoken of in Jeremiah. [Jer 30:7](#) "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it! it is even the time of Jacob's trouble: but he shall be saved out of it." This "day of trouble" is when sin is laid as a heavy burden upon a man's conscience; when guilt presses him down into the dust of death, when his iniquities stare him in the face, and seem more in number than the hairs of his head; when he fears he shall be cast for ever into the bottomless pit of hell, and have his portion with the hypocrites.

**This “day of trouble” is not literally a day, a portion of time meted out by the rising or setting sun, a space of twenty-four hours. The hands of a clock, or the shadow of a dial, cannot regulate spiritual troubles. A day here means a season, be it long or short, be it a day, or a week, or a month, or a year. And as the season cannot be measured in length, so the trouble cannot be measured in depth. The only wise God deals out various measures of affliction to His people. All do not sink to the same depth, as all do not rise to the same height. All do not drink equally deep of the cup; yet all, each in their measure, pass through this day of trouble, wherein their fleshly religion is pulled to pieces, their self-righteousness marred, their pleasing prospects of propitiating the favour of God broken, their presumptuous hopes crushed, and they brought into the state of the leper, to cry, “Unclean, unclean.” Until a man has passed through this day of trouble, until he has experienced more or less of these exercises of soul, and known guilt and condemnation in his conscience, until he has struggled in this narrow pass, and had his rags of creature righteousness torn away from him, he can know nothing experimentally of the efficacy of Jesus’ atoning blood, nor feel the power of Christ’s resurrection.**

**Now in this day of trouble the living soul will groan, being burdened. The blessed Spirit who has convinced him of sin, is in him as a Spirit of grace and supplications, and enables him to sigh, and cry, and pray to the Lord out of the depths of a troubled conscience. And here we see a marked distinction between the convictions in the reprobate that end in despair, and the convictions in the child of God, that terminate in blessed deliverance.**

**Whenever convictions fall upon the natural conscience of a vessel of wrath, there is in him no crying and sighing unto God for mercy. He may indeed “howl upon his bed,” but he does not “cry unto God with his heart” [Ho 7:14](#) he has not received the Spirit of grace and of supplications so as to draw near the throne of grace, nor has he any of those feeble glimpses of hope, which encourage the quickened elect to cry still more after mercy. But with him all is one black, lowering cloud of despair, through which no beam of hope breaks, one scene of unmitigated anguish, such as we read of concerning Judas, who went out and hanged himself, without one cry for mercy and pardon.**

**But the elect, who pass through this “day of trouble,” wherein their fleshly religion is broken to pieces, their towering presumption brought down and their fleshly hopes scattered, are not left to sullenness or despair. A spirit of prayer is given them; they are “led with supplications” [Jer 31:9](#) they “seek Him that turneth the shadow of death into the morning” [Am 5:8](#) and “the Spirit itself maketh intercession for them with groanings-which cannot be**

uttered.” They are thus enabled to pour out their souls before the Lord [1Sa 1:15](#) and speak to Him out of the abundance of their complaint and grief. Thus the children of Israel sighed by reason of bondage in Egypt; [Ex 2:23](#) thus Moses cried unto the Lord at the Red Sea; and thus Nehemiah prayed to the God of heaven, in the presence-chamber of Artaxerxes the king. [Ne 2:4](#) Being thus enabled spiritually to pray and cry, their groanings, desires, and breathings enter into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. This is implied in the words, “the Lord **hear thee.**” But the Lord will not, cannot hear any prayer that is not of His own inspiring. He bows down His gracious ear to the utterance of His own breath in the soul. In the living soul, then, during the day of trouble, it is not sullen silence, it is not reckless despair, it is not one black scene of unmitigated horror; but, amidst its trouble, there bursts forth the “well of water springing up into everlasting life;” there is the going forth of an inward spirit of supplication in the soul, with fervent wrestlings, at the throne of mercy.

Now, have your souls known anything of this day of trouble? I do not ask whether it commenced with the first work of grace upon your soul, nor how long it lasted, nor how deep it went. These are circumstances, which vary according to God’s good pleasure. Paul had three days of trouble, [Ac 9:9](#) the thief on the cross perhaps not three hours, the jailer at Philippi perhaps not three minutes; and Zion, as soon as she travailed, brought forth children. But I must ask, Has your soul known anything at all of this day of trouble? Now, if you have never known a day of trouble, you have never known what it was to pray in the Spirit, nor to have your prayers heard; for “the Lord hears in the day of trouble.”

But what are the petitions that the soul puts up in the day of trouble? What are its chief wants and most urgent desires?

1. Its most pressing want, and its most importunate desire is **for the pardon of sin;** and this not merely viewed in the letter of God’s Word, not merely received as a doctrine of the Scriptures, but inwardly revealed as an experimental reality, as a felt substance, as a divine testimony sealed in the court of conscience by God Himself. A man may for a long time try to stave off this deep sense of his own ruin and misery; but, sooner or later, the Holy Ghost will “lay judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet,” and make him feel in the depths of his conscience that unless pardon be spoken into his soul by the mouth of God Himself, unless peace be enjoyed through the blood of the Mediator, he must sink forever into the depths of endless woe. Then arises the cry for pardon, for the conscience to be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, that it may be purged

from guilt and condemnation, and from all dead works, to serve the living God.

2. Another urgent want and importunate cry of the soul in this “day of trouble” is after **the manifestation of Christ’s righteousness**. The holy law of God curses and condemns it. This strips off all the rags of creature righteousness. The blessed Spirit then enlightens the eyes of the understanding to see Christ’s righteousness in the Scriptures, shows the suitability and all-sufficiency of this glorious robe, and kindles fervent desires to receive it as a covering from the hands of God. The seeking soul thus becomes interested in that blessing-“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” Nor can anything satisfy it but the manifestation of Christ’s righteousness to justify it from the curse of the law and the guilt of sin, and clothe it with a robe in which it may stand accepted before the eyes of a heart-searching Jehovah, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. If this be so, what must we say of those that fight against imputed righteousness-that with daring blasphemy call it “imputed nonsense?” Must we not say that all such testify to their own condemnation, and openly proclaim that they never knew a day of trouble, and never hungered and thirsted after righteousness? For if they had seen what they were in the sight of God, had their heart been opened up to them in its true colours, and their “secret sins been set in the light of God’s countenance,” they would have been so pricked in their conscience-they would so have seen their own righteousness as filthy rags, that under the blessed Spirit’s operations, they would have hungered and thirsted, panted and cried, after the manifestation of that glorious righteousness of Jesus “which is unto all, and upon all them that believe.”

3. Another urgent want and pressing desire of the soul in the “day of trouble” is for **a special manifestation of Christ**. I will tell you, friends, what brings a man to cry after these manifestations and revelations, which the world calls enthusiasm and fanaticism, and professors say is mere delusion-it is having wants, exercises, doubts, fears and troubles; it is being brought into that spot where nothing can deliver the soul from the lowest hell but the personal, individual, experimental, supernatural manifestations of the mercy and grace of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Now, till a man is brought more or less into “the day of trouble,” he will trifle with God, he will sport and play with truth; and the solemn verities of eternity will be to him little less than idle tales. But when he is arrested, tried and condemned by God’s holy law, and brought by the Spirit into those depths out

of which he feels he cannot deliver himself, nor any human arm deliver him, **then** he is taught in the depths of his soul to sigh and sue after the manifestation and revelation of God's mercy and grace in the face of Jesus Christ. And until he gets these sweet manifestations in his conscience, he cannot taste the peace of God which passeth all understanding.

It is not, then, having passed through a day of natural trouble, which stamps us as Christians, for "man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward" [Job 5:7](#) Nor is it altogether trouble about our souls that stamps us as Christians; for many have been troubled about their souls, and it has been but the natural convictions of the reprobate. Nor is it having sighs and cries (**though these are, in a measure, an evidence of life**) that stamps a man fully and decidedly as a Christian, for we must wait the issue before it can be fully decided whether it is "the great and exceeding bitter cry" of Esau, or the spiritual sigh of the prisoner of hope. But those things stamp a man as a Christian, which do so in his own conscience. Those things seal a man outwardly that seal him inwardly-that is, receiving out of Christ's fulness some testimony of mercy and grace, some smile from His blessed countenance, some intimation of His special love.

II.-"The name of the God of Jacob defend thee." The word "**hear,**" in the preceding clause, implies that there was a petition put up; the word "**defend,**" in the present, implies that there were enemies, for if there were no enemies, why need the church pray-"The name of the God of Jacob **defend thee?**" The connection, then, of the two clauses of the verse shows that in "this day of trouble" there are enemies that attack the soul.

1. **Satan**, for instance, is an enemy, as his very name signifies, that takes advantage of this day to drive the soul into despair. His keen eye perceives what is going on. He sees the troubled countenance, the tottering knees, the downcast look; his sharp ear hears the lamentations poured forth, and therefore he comes in with all his infernal enmity and malice in order to sink the sinking soul, to strike the dying dead.

2. **Guilt**, with his knotted club, as Bunyan describes him, is another enemy that falls hard upon the soul in this day of trouble. His blows fall always upon the tenderest parts, and sadly bruise the conscience.

3. **Persecutors and professors of every kind** are enemies in the day of trouble. As Job speaks, "Those whose fathers I would have disdained to set with the dogs of my flock"-**"Now am I their song, yea, I am their byword; they mar my path, they set forward my calamity."** [Job 30:1,9,13](#) As the strong and fat cattle thrust with side and shoulder and push all the diseased with their horns, [Eze 34:21](#) so when a poor soul is smitten with

pining sickness, all the presumptuous professors in the country butt at him. “Now,” say they, “he is made manifest. He is proved to be a hypocrite, as we always thought him.”

4. But even **some of the children of God** may prove to be enemies to the soul passing through the day of trouble. Job found it so when he cried, “My friends scorn me; but mine eye poureth out tears unto God.” [Job 16:20](#) Nay, the Lord’s own disciples seem to ‘have doubted **Him** when they said, “But we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel.” [Lu 24:21](#)

From these and all other its outward and inward enemies, the soul needs defence. The church therefore prays, “The name of the God of Jacob defend thee.” But why should she use the expression, “**the name** of the God of Jacob?” For this reason; the “name of God” implies all those perfections and attributes that God hath revealed concerning Himself. We are known, each of us personally, by a name; and when the name is mentioned, it recalls to our mind not only the person himself, but all those peculiar features of character by which each individual is known. Thus “**the name of God**” in Scripture signifies everything that God has revealed concerning Himself. In this it is that “the name of God” differs from God. The infinite Jehovah is incomprehensible to finite creatures; but he has graciously revealed certain parts of His character, which they can comprehend when spiritually revealed. Thus the Lord told Moses, “There shall no man see Me and live;” and therefore He adds, “Thou shalt see My back parts, but My face shall not be seen.” When the Lord, then, had put him into the cleft of the rock, we read that “He descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord.” [Ex 34:5](#) That is, all that might be known of His gracious and glorious character. So He says of the Angel (**i.e. Jesus, the Messenger of the covenant**), whom He would send before Moses to keep him in the way, “**My name** is in Him” [Ex 23:21](#) that is, all that may be known of Me, all My revealed attributes. When, therefore, the church prays for the travailing soul, “The name of the God of Jacob defend thee,” she asks the God of Jacob to put forth those gracious attributes and perfections which He has revealed concerning Himself. All these are enlisted on behalf of the Church of God.

1. For instance, there is the **mercy** of God. The mercy of God is a part of the name of God, for His name is merciful. He so proclaimed it in the ears of Moses, “The Lord, the Lord God, **merciful** and gracious.” This mercy, then, the church supplicates as the defence of the soul in the day of

trouble. To “defend” a person is to interpose in his behalf, to throw a shield before him; thus there must be some interposition of mercy, some stepping forward of this gracious attribute, some flowing forth of the compassion of the eternal God, some visible appearance (**I mean visible to faith**) of this name of the Lord as a strong tower, or as a shield and buckler.

Sin gives **Satan** his power. Then, if mercy pardons sin, it defends the soul from his assaults; and the proclamation of mercy in the conscience beats him effectually back.

Sin arms **guilt** with his knotted club. Then if “mercy rejoiceth against judgment” [Jas 2:13](#) it disarms this cruel enemy. But only manifested mercy can overcome manifested guilt; and therefore what the living soul wants is not merely to see mercy declared in the Word of God, but for this mercy to step forth out of the bosom of the Most High, and to flow into it through the atoning blood of Immanuel, that where sin hath abounded, there grace may much more abound.

2. Again, in the name of God is implied also **the faithfulness** of God; for this is one of His revealed attributes. He is therefore called “**the faithful God**, which keepeth covenant and mercy” [De 7:9](#) and the apostle says, “**God is faithful**, by whom ye were called,” etc. [1Co 1:9](#) It is declared of Him that “He cannot lie” [Tit 1:2](#) and He tells His Zion, “Yea, they may forget; yet will not I forget thee.”

Now this faithfulness of God to His covenant, to His promises, to His oath, to everything which He has revealed on behalf of the poor and needy, stands forth to defend His children in the trying hour. Everything may fail, yet this faithfulness fails not. “Once have I sworn by My holiness, that I will not lie unto David.”

3. **Love** is another revealed attribute of God, and is therefore included in the name of God; for “God is love.” But what so eager, so prompt to defend a beloved object as love! It is “strong as death,” and triumphs over every foe. What more suitable, what more precious defence than a taste of this love! Therefore connected with the promise-“Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty” (**that sight which kindles love**), we read, “His place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks.” [Isa 33:16-17](#)

Time will not suffer me to enlarge upon the other revealed attributes of God which are contained “in the name of Jehovah;” but all are at different times needed to defend the timid, helpless soul. I have shown how this blessed name defends the soul from the assaults of **Satan and guilt**; but he needs a similar defence from his other enemies, such as **the taunting professors of religion**. This David felt when he said, “Let Thy mercies come unto me, O Lord; **so shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me**” [Ps 119:41-42](#) Perhaps in times past, as “evil communications corrupt good manners,” he has, through an intimacy with vain, confident professors, learnt some of their evil ways; he has perhaps talked too boastingly, has walked too much in the footsteps of those who are at ease in Zion; has stood upon an eminence where God has not placed him. Now, when he is compelled with shame to take the lowest room, when he is brought to be low in a low place, he confesses with guilt and confusion of face how he has been led away, how he has been deluded, how he once thought himself safe, and now finds that that safety was nothing but carnal security.

When, then, he is brought down from unwavering confidence into doubts, fears, and suspicions lest the whole work should be unsound from the beginning, his eyes are opened to see where his former associates are; and as he freely speaks what he deeply feels, it calls forth their wrath and contempt. Their taunts and jeers wound him, as they wounded David when he said, “Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud.” I must say for myself, that though for a short time I was connected with some of these vain, confident professors, I never could get into their security. I could not see where the fault lay, but there was a hardness about them, which always repelled me; and when I found the lives of some of the highest in faith were to the grossest degree immoral, the thread of our connection was soon broken. But it is not so with all; and when their taunts are painfully felt, it needs the name of the God of Jacob to defend the soul.

But why should it be the “name of **the God of Jacob?**” Because such is the name of a **covenant** God. We therefore read that “Jacob is the lot of His inheritance.” It is only as a covenant Jehovah that the name of God can be known, or when known can defend the soul. Then, by “the God of Jacob” we are to understand the Three-One Jehovah in eternal covenant engagements; and by His “name” we are to understand all His revealed offices, attributes, and perfections, as engaged on behalf of the elect. This

name of the Lord is a strong tower, and upon all the glory manifested in it shall be a defence.

III.-“Send thee help from the sanctuary.” The church goes on with her prayer, supplicating help from Him from whom alone help comes. But whence is this help to spring? **“From the sanctuary.”** That is the place whence the help must come. Not from the exertions of free-will; not from attempts to work out a righteousness with which God may be well pleased; not from making one’s self a Christian by taking up at random the opinions of others; not by plastering and white-washing ourselves over with “decided piety;” not by stealing an experience from others, and going about dressed up in borrowed plumes; not by resting upon doubts and fears, guilt and corruption, as evidences; not by pinning our eternal all-in-all upon the sleeve of some good man; not by creeping under the wing of a minister, and there getting warmth and shelter. All these delusions and devices of Satan and the flesh are swept away when God puts forth His hand upon a man’s conscience. It must **then** be “help from the sanctuary.”

But what is the sanctuary? It is not any building made with hands, though the tabernacle under the Levitical dispensation was called by that name, but only so as a standing type of the human nature of Jesus, “the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man.” {[Heb 8:2](#)} Paul therefore calls the Levitical tabernacle, “a worldly sanctuary” [Heb 9:1](#) as opposed to the heavenly sanctuary. I therefore understand by “the sanctuary” in the text, not the typical sanctuary below, but the antitypical sanctuary above, the immediate presence of Jehovah, Holy, Holy, Holy, the Lord God of hosts; the eternal abode of light, life and glory; the throne of holiness, majesty and power; whence the eternal covenant, ordered in all things and sure, originated, and out of which everything that blesses, comforts, strengthens and satisfies the soul proceeds.

Now this is the place whence the child of God wants help. And if this help comes out of the sanctuary, it will be filled with the fragrance and odour of the sanctuary. Before the high priest, under the Levitical dispensation, entered into the most holy place on the great day of atonement, he was to take a censer full of burning coals from off the brazen altar, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil. He was then to put the incense upon the fire, that the cloud of the incense might cover the mercy-seat. [Le 16:12-13](#) This was typical of the intercession of Jesus, now in the sanctuary as the “High Priest over the house of God.” The incense of His mediatorial work fills and perfumes the court of heaven. But when the high priest came out of the sanctuary, did not his garments

smell of the incense, which had filled the most holy place? Would he not come forth fragrant with the odour? And as the incense was only burnt before the mercy-seat, would not the fragrance which surrounded and came from him be a certain proof to the people that he had been within the veil? So it is with every blessing that comes out of the sanctuary, where Jesus now sits at the right hand of God. It comes down as a good gift and a perfect gift from the Father of lights, and perfumed with the incense of the sanctuary. Coming from heaven, it breathes forth the air of heaven, and conveys a measure of heaven into the soul.

Thus it carries with it His own stamp; it bears with it His own signature. And it is this heavenly fragrance, which distinguishes all fancied blessings from real blessings; all presumptuous confidence from living faith; all false religion from true religion; all the delusions of enthusiasm and wild dreams of insanity, from the witness of the Holy Ghost in the soul. There is no fragrance, no savour, no power, no sweetness, no heavenly dew in any counterfeit that comes from Satan, from men, or from ourselves. They may imitate the shape and colour of the flower, but they cannot give it fragrance. But wherever help comes out of the sanctuary, out of the fulness of the church's covenant Head, out of the presence of God and the Lamb, out of the courts of heaven, directly and immediately into the soul, it comes laden with heavenly fragrance and divine odour. It therefore carries with it a reality, a sweetness and a savour, which nothing but a testimony from God Himself can communicate. Now here is a test to try your faith by. If you have no doubts about your state, and stand, as you believe, secure in Christ, whence arose that confidence? Did it spring from, and is it continued by, "help from the sanctuary?" And did this help come in the way of some word, some promise, some smile, some manifestation, some sweet discovery out of the courts of heaven into your conscience? And when it did so come, did it come down into your soul fragrant with holy odour? did it breathe a heavenly atmosphere? and, letting down a measure of Christ's presence into your heart, did it fill you with love to Him? You may well doubt whether you have received any testimony from God, unless it has wrought some of these effects in your soul. If it came down from heaven, it carried your soul up to heaven whence it came down. All true religion comes down from the Father of lights. Not one grain or atom of it did nature ever manufacture. Satan may counterfeit the operations of the blessed Spirit, and the imitation may be so near the original as to perplex, if not deceive, the most discerning; but Satan cannot communicate what he does not possess, and what he

cordially hates-the heavenly savour, sweetness, power and holiness, that accompany the Spirit's testimonies. These must be breathed into the soul from the lips of God Himself, or we can never have one grain or atom of them.

“Send thee help from the sanctuary.” When the soul has to pass through the trying hour of temptation, it wants help from the sanctuary. And nothing but help from the sanctuary can ever stand it in any stead. All other help leaves the soul just where it found it. Now why does the Lord send help from the sanctuary, but because the soul to whom help is sent stands interested in the Father's love, the Saviour's blood, and the Spirit's teachings-interested in the eternal covenant transactions of the Three-One Jehovah. Help is sent him from the sanctuary, because his name has been from all eternity registered in the Lamb's book of life, graven upon the palms of His hands, borne on His shoulder, and worn on His heart. He was in the sanctuary when his covenant Head stood up on his behalf, and in the Lord's book all His members were written when as yet there was none of them. He was then **virtually** in the sanctuary before all time, and he will be **personally** in the sanctuary after all time. But he must be “made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.” As he is predestinated to inhabit that sanctuary, he must have a nature suited for its holy delights. Now it is receiving help from the sanctuary that fits him to inhabit it.

Communications of life and grace out of it make him a new creature, and produce spirituality and heavenly mindedness. The breath of heaven in his soul draws his affections upward, weans him from earth, and makes him a pilgrim and a sojourner here below, “looking for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” [Heb 11:10](#)

IV.-“And strengthen thee out of Zion.” What is Zion? It is “the city of the living God” [Heb 12:22](#) “the heavenly Jerusalem.” Zion is the place, which God hath eternally blessed; to which His eyes are from one end of the year to the other; and out of which He has promised every blessing that His loving heart can bestow. It is on this holy hill of Zion that He has set His King; [Ps 2:6](#) He hath chosen it, and said of it, “This is My rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it” [Ps 132:13-14](#) It is out of Zion, then, thus blessed, that the Lord strengthens His saints. Through ignorance and self-righteousness, the newly quickened soul will often be looking for help to Mount Sinai; but that mountain is a mountain of curses. It was “the mount that burned with fire, and where was blackness, and darkness and tempest” [Heb 12:18](#) No dew of God's favour, nor “small rain” of His

tender mercy ever fell there; nor can **strength** ever come from that fiery mount. The law is weak through the flesh, [Ro 8:3](#) and therefore cannot minister strength to those that are under it. It says, “Do, and live;” but it cannot give power to perform, nor communicate life. Every spiritual blessing and strength, then, comes out of Zion, for “there the Lord hath commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.” All the treasures of grace and glory are in Mount Zion, and out of Zion do they therefore come into believing souls. God has blessed the church with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ [Eph 1:3](#) and out of His fulness do all His members receive, and grace for grace. {[Joh 1:16](#)} One of these spiritual blessings is **strength**; and therefore the church says, “In the Lord have I righteousness and strength” [Isa 45:24](#) Yea, the Lord Himself is the strength of His people, as David says, “The Lord is the strength of my life” [Ps 27:1](#) and “God is our refuge and strength” [Ps 46:1](#)

But what does strength imply when spoken of as a communicated blessing? “The Lord strengthen thee out of Zion.” Surely it implies weakness in the party strengthened. Just as mercy implies guilt, and can only suit the guilty, so strength implies weakness, and can only suit the weak. We therefore read of Jesus that He is “a strength **to the poor**, a strength **to the needy** in his distress.” [Isa 25:4](#) “They that stumbled” (**that is, through tottering knees**) “are girt with strength” [1Sa 2:4](#) and again, “He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might He increaseth strength.” [Isa 40:29](#)

Now we gather from this that there are testimonies from God in the soul, short of a full deliverance into the light and liberty of the glorious gospel. For if we look at the prayer offered up here, we read of **defence**, of **help**, of **strength**, and it would indeed be hard to say that there was no help nor strength communicated short of full deliverance. These things admit of degrees from their very nature, and are proportionate to the necessity of the case. There is a being “holpen with a little help” [Da 11:34](#) and strength according to the day [De 33:25](#). Now, however men high in the letter of truth, but destitute of the feeling power, may jeer at everything short of a full deliverance and a constant assurance, the exercised children of God prize any testimony that comes from Him. Any coin that bears the stamp of Heaven’s mint, any testimony that carries with it an evidence that it came from the courts of heaven, will be highly prized by the living soul. For what such want is **realities**. If the Lord is pleased to give him but a small coin, if it comes from the courts above, and bears the image and

superscription of dying love, it makes him rich indeed; it is an evidence of eternal bliss, a sure testimony that his name is in the book of life.

But proud professors, who feel nothing of the difficulties of the way, who are never tried nor harassed with temptations, and know nothing of what it is to pour out their souls before God, despise the small coin, and would rather have a forged piece of money, provided it were bulky and large, than have a smaller piece stamped in heaven's own mint, which they could not make so great a display of.

I have sometimes said that if a thief come into a man's house, and see a sovereign and a halfpenny lying upon the mantel-piece, he will take the sovereign in preference to the halfpenny. And so you will find in religious matters that a hypocrite in Zion will rarely choose a little experience. He will steal the best he can lay his hands on, and the more deeply dyed in hypocrisy, the more will he usually boast of his depths and heights. You will never find professors in dead assurance prizing small testimonies. There is no crying in their soul after a smile from the Lord, or a word from His gracious lips. Nor do such ever sigh after true humility, or tenderness of conscience, or brokenness of heart, or access unto God. Such things are too little and too low for them to prize. They cannot make a show with them before men, and that is all the religion they understand or care about; for they know nothing of being solemnly blessed in the depths of conscience.

Now I am well convinced that when the soul is passing through spiritual trouble, what it wants is something from God; but it never presumes to dictate to Him in what way the blessing shall come, nor how great it shall be. The living soul cannot go with daring presumption to the throne of grace to **claim** spiritual blessings; but its cry is that the Lord would bestow His favours in a way of mercy through the blood of the Mediator. And this it seeks and pleads for in a way of special manifestation, and that often in the smallest degree. Thus when pressed with guilt and shame, it seems brought often to this, that if God will give it but one word, it will for ever praise and bless His holy name; if He will bestow but one smile, it will ask no more; if He will but drop one sweet soft testimony, that will satisfy him of his adoption into the family of God.

“Ah! but,” say our towering professors, “nothing but the full assurance of faith will ever do.” Why, if the soul is in trouble and distress, and wants relief, strength, and help from God, it does not dare to prescribe to God how much to give. Does the beggar, standing at my door in rags, reject the

copper coin? If he does, it shows he is an impostor, and only fit for the tread-wheel. No, if he is really what he professes to be, he will thankfully take a penny. So the child of God who knows what it is to be a beggar, spiritually to feel soul poverty, will not dare, with the presumptuous professor, to **claim** mercy and grace; but will come as a poor needy insolvent and bankrupt, thankful to receive any crumbs that may fall from God's table, or any drops from that river "which maketh glad the city of God." If the widow's mite was acceptable to God, as showing the widow's heart, shall not any token from God, however small (**though in reality no gift from Him can be so called**), be acceptable to us as showing God's heart towards us?

The communication of strength is perhaps the least perceptible of God's gifts. We find it out often by the absence of it, as Samson "wist not that the Lord had departed from him," until the Philistines came upon him. Till the moment came for him to defend himself, he said, "I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself." [Jg 16:19-20](#) And the Lord makes us sensibly, and often very painfully, feel that "without Him we can do nothing," before He leads us into that other and brighter mystery, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

Let me run over the chief particulars that I have laid before you from the text, and see how truth and conscience can answer them throughout. Has the Lord then raised up in your hearts and mine some of the feelings that I have been attempting this morning to describe? And first, with respect to the day of trouble spoken of in the text, has this day passed upon you? I am not asking **when** it came, nor **how** it came. I am not going to inquire whether it came through some sermon heard, or passage of Scripture applied with power, or in a less marked manner. Such circumstances vary in nearly every case, and do not affect the reality and genuineness of the work. The most important point is, Has it come at all? Have you ever passed under God's rod? "Yes," say you, "I have known a day of trouble. I have passed through a season of spiritual distress."

Let us go now a step further. Let us have things as plain as we can make them. What were your feelings under this day of trouble? Had you any earnest groans and sighs for deliverance? Was there poured out upon you a Spirit of grace and of supplications, whereby you were enabled to pour out your hearts unto God? It was so with Hannah, [1Sa 1:15](#) with David [Ps 18:6](#), with Hezekiah [Isa 38:2-3](#), with Jeremiah [La 3:55](#), and even with the Lord Himself in the days of His flesh [Heb 5:7](#). And here lies the great difference between the elect in trouble and the reprobate in trouble, that

the former seek the Lord, but the latter do not; as Elihu speaks [Job 36:13](#), “The hypocrites in heart heap up wrath; **they cry not when He bindeth them.**” Was this the experience of your soul in the day of trouble?

Again, when in the day of trouble, what did you petition the Lord for? Could anything satisfy you short of a testimony of His mercy? The conscience, when there is divine life in the soul, cannot be quieted with the mere act of prayer? It has no real peace until it is purged by the blood of sprinkling; and if the burden go off without it, it will return again and again until atoning blood speaks pardon. And we do well to remember that this help comes from the sanctuary, and this strength out of Zion. Many people’s religion seems to be of this kind. They have passed through convictions, and from those convictions have received some deliverance, not, however, out of Zion, but out of Sinai. A few resolutions to mend their lives-if churchmen an attendance at the Sacrament, if Dissenters a getting themselves baptized and joining the church-some such reformation heals all the wounds of conscience. But this is obtaining a deliverance from Sinai, not from Zion. Nay, a person may have gospel language in his lips, and yet cleave to the law of works in his heart. He may profess to believe all the doctrines of grace, and never have felt the power of any one of them, may be sound in the letter of gospel truth, and never have been divorced from the first husband. Legality and self-righteousness are not confined to Arminians and Pharisees. They often come abroad in gospel attire, and reign and rule unsuspected where most loudly disclaimed.

To some here it may be now a day of trouble-I mean spiritual trouble; and as you are passing through it, many sighs and cries are going up out of your heart. “The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee.” And may we not turn the prayer into a promise, and say to every mourner here present, “He will surely send thee help from the sanctuary, and will strengthen thee out of Zion.”