THE PILGRIM'S SONG BOOK
By Oswald Chambers

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ABOUT OSWALD CHAMBERS (1874 -- 1917)

Oswald Chambers was born July 24, 1874, in Aberdeen, Scotland, and during his teenage years he was converted while walking home after a service conducted by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. His father, a Baptist minister, immediately attempted to lead him in the way of the Lord. After his conversion, and before he felt called to preach, Chambers studied Art at Kensington Art School and the fine arts and Archaeology at the University of Edinburgh. After he accepted the call to preach, he studied theology at Dundoon College.

After an initial period of spiritual "dryness" Chambers found a radiant reality in his relationship with Christ. With his new-found spiritual life, he conducted a Bible Teaching Ministry from 1906 to 1910 in the U.S., the U.K., and in Japan. On one of his trips to America he met Gertrude Hobbs, and in 1910 he and Gertrude were married. He affectionately called her "Biddy". On May 24, 1913, their daughter Kathleen was born.

In 1915 Chambers felt that he should help in the World War I effort. He became a YMCA Chaplain, and in October of 1915 he sailed for Zeitoun, Egypt, near Cairo, where he ministered to military troops. While there, Chambers' appendix ruptured. Though he suffered extreme pain for three days, he did not seek medical aid and refused to take a hospital bed that he felt was more needed for soldiers. Had he sought medical aid sooner, perhaps his life would have been spared. Finally, surgery was performed but, following the operation, Chambers died there in Egypt on November 15, 1917.

Perhaps many are unaware of the fact that Oswald Chambers actually wrote only one book: "Baffled To Fight Better." But his wife, Biddy, had been a court stenographer and was very adept at taking dictation at a rapid rate. Thus, she
recorded much of Chambers' teachings as he spoke in public, and after his demise she spent the remaining 30 years* [*one source said half a century] of her life compiling the more than 30 books bearing Oswald Chambers' name as the author.

"My Utmost For His Highest" is the best-known of those books, and it has been in continuous print in the United States since 1935. It is among the top-ten religious best-sellers, and with millions of copies in print it has become a Christian Classic. -- Compiled and Edited By Duane V. Maxey, Chandler, Arizona, August 7, 2006.

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FOREWORD

"Our own are our own for ever" has been said by one and another in differing words and in many languages. That is why time and distance are (in a sense) nothing in any human life that lives in the "Things unseen -- Eternal" where St. Paul had his abiding place.

And just as the essential beauty and sweetness of a rose is what stays with us, and not the very rose itself, so it is the personality of a beloved person or the spirit of a season of time (to put it like that) that abides with us for ever. In London's hurrying life; in the press of teeming humanity in a Chinese city; in the grinding monotony of a quiet countryside; on a parched soil under a burning sky; in deep Canadian winter snows, or in the peace of a leisured life -- the Yorkshire Moor away up at Wensleydale, with its waters and streams, its rushing winds and stealing lovely airs, its lights and its shadows, its cliffs and rolling spaces; above all, its magnificence of space and sky, is as present to bless and renew as if Wensleydale itself were here -- our very own.

It was at Wensleydale around Askrigg that, in the summer and autumn of 1915, a company of men and women gathered to spend some weeks in the most informal way of living, coming and going, alone or together, gathered with one implicit motive -- that of seeking to enter more deeply into a personal relationship with the Redeemer of the world, and into a deeper understanding of Redemption. The two people who created this most natural time of simplicity and freedom, lived that summer in a tiny cottage with Kathleen, then a gay and bonnie baby of two, and Mary of the deep and loving heart, and these Psalms and their exposition were part of the evening hour in the cottage. Some were given in the little plain unadorned Chapels in the villages:

"I to the hills will lift mine eyes":
"As the hills stand round about Jerusalem, So..."
"The sun by day..." "the moon by night..."
and always one sensed these were "Songs of Ascent," the marching, singing crowds, the hills, the stars -- that and the deep, deep life of the human race in its going through the ages of time -- one did not forget.

The war came into all our lives when those days ended. War, and the years that followed War -- and the world was never again as we had known it. The great Earth -- yes, and her glorious and most gentle loveliness and strength -- but the thought and world dream of pre-war days was for ever gone. Only the stern business of holding the eternal values in the strange world dream of these new days is left us as our task.

But the pure and vigorous life of the thought and worship of that time remains -- our own for ever; and the fresh strong gladness of its setting in the moors is ours for all time for ever ours.

I to the hills will lift mine eyes;
From whence shall come mine aid?
My help it cometh from the Lord
Who heaven and earth hath made.

Katherine Ashe.
Cairo,
July, 1940.

*  *  *  *  *  *  *

01 -- PSALM 120

We can judge a nation by its songs. The minor note is indicative of a crushed, but unconquered people. In the Bible there is nothing altogether minor; nothing, that is, of the nature of despair. The Bible deals with terrors and upsets, with people who have got into despair -- in fact, the Bible deals with all that the devil can do, and yet all through there is the uncrushable certainty that in the end everything will be all right.

The Songs of Ascents are the autobiography of the children of God; they reveal their inner secrets. These Psalms express not the outward, but the inward condition of the children of God, when they realize that they are pilgrims. We do not immediately realize that we are pilgrims; when a child is born into the world it is welcomed and for a time it feels perfectly happy and at home. Neither when we are born again do we realize at once that we are pilgrims; rather, we feel more at home on the earth than ever; we have come into contact with the Creator of it all, and

Heaven above is brighter blue,
Earth around a sweeter green.
But as we go on, this sense of at-home-ness disappears and ultimately we realize a deep alienation to all that the world represents, and we recognize that we are "strangers and pilgrims on the earth," that "here we have no continuing city." That mood is represented in these Psalms. God seems to delight to stir up our nests; it is not the devil who does it, but God; this is curiously unrecognized on our part.

The peace of this world can never be the peace of God. The peace of physical health, of mental healthy-mindedness, of prosperous circumstances, of civilization—none of these is the peace of God, but the outcome of the souls of men being garrisoned by the prince of this world (see Luke xi. 21). When we are born again from above and realize that we belong to God, we begin to recognize the element of destruction that there is imbedded in many of our Lord's words, e.g., "Think not that I came to cast peace on the earth: I came not to cast peace, but a sword." We realize that the reasoning of the world is not in accordance with the Bible, and we find we are alien to it.

Direction In Distress

"In my distress I cried unto the Lord, and He answered me." (v. 1.)

If I am a child of God, distress will lead me to Him for direction. The distress comes not because I have done wrong, it is part of the inevitable result of not being at home in the world, of being in contact with those who reason and live from a different standpoint. We blunder when we try to make out that the prosperity referred to in the Old Testament is intended for us in this dispensation. Plainly that prosperity has never yet been fulfilled in the history of the world; it is going to be fulfilled, but it does not refer to this dispensation, which is the dispensation of the humiliation of the saints, not of their glorification. One of Satan's greatest delusions is to decoy folks off on to blessings that are merely secondary. We become sidetracked if we make physical health our aim and imagine that because we are children of God we shall always be perfectly well; that there will be great manifestations of God's power, thousands saved, etc.

"In my distress..." There are elements in our circumstances if we are children of God that can only be described by the word 'distress'; it would be untruthful to say it was otherwise. "Then will I go unto God," says the Psalmist, not "with joy," but "unto God Who is my exceeding joy." We go to God when we have no joy in ourselves and find that His joy is our strength. Are our hearts resting in the certainty that God is full of joy although with us it is 'clouds and darkness' because we are pilgrims?

"I called upon the Lord, and He answered me." It is one thing to cry to God and another thing to hear Him answer. We don't give God time to answer. We come in a great fuss and panic, but when all that is taken out of our hearts and we are silent before God, the quiet certainty comes -- 'I know God has heard me.'
Deliverance From Deception

"Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips and from a deceitful tongue." (v. 2.)

One of the hardest things on earth to bear is deception, especially when it comes through our friends. We do not need the grace of God to stand the deception or slander of an enemy, human pride will stand that; but to be wounded in the house of our friends takes us unawares. Judas had "lying lips"; we read that he "kissed Jesus much." Are we honest with our lips? It is only Christians who can be frank with one another, because their disposition has been altered by God (cf. Ephesians iv. 29).

"What shall be given unto thee, and what shall be done more unto thee, thou deceitful tongue?" (v. 3.)

Most of our relationships are carried on with discreet deceit. The words 'shrewdness.' 'diplomacy.' 'at e keep a bittie to yersel.' express an attitude essential in the life of the world, but a Christian has no time to be a dabster with his tongue, no time to profit by being clever. The teaching of the Sermon on the Mount is never to look for justice but never to cease to give it. We waste our time looking for justice; we have to see that we always give it to others. 'If you are My disciple.' Jesus says, 'people won't play you fair; but never mind that, see that you play fair.'

"Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper." (v. 4.)

The Bible reveals the tongue to be the worst enemy a man has (see James iii. 6-8) -- "Sharp arrows of the mighty" -- they never miss their mark. The same thing is true when we are born again, God sees that our words get home; but if we are not born again our words rankle and sting and annoy and spread destruction. Sarcasm is the weapon of a weak, spiteful nature, its literal meaning is to tear the flesh from the bone. The antipodes of sarcasm is irony -- conveying your meaning by saying the opposite; irony is frequently used by the prophets.

Distraction For A Dwelling

"Woe is me, that I sojourn in Meshech, that I dwell among the tents of Kedar! My soul hath long had her dwelling with him that hateth peace." (v. 5.) Our Lord lived for thirty years in that atmosphere (see John vii. 5). We sing, "There's no place like home," but the author of that song was far away from home when he wrote it. The description the Bible gives of home is that it is a place of discipline. Naturally we do not like what God makes; we prefer our friends to our God-made relations. We are undressed morally in our home life and are apt to be meaner there than anywhere else. If we have been captious and mean with our relations, we will always exhibit that spirit until we become "new creatures in Christ Jesus." That is why it is easier to go somewhere else, much easier often to go as a missionary than to stay at home. God alters the thing that matters.
In A Dilemma By The Disputers

"I am for peace, but when I speak they are for war." (vv. 6, 7.)

There is nothing more terrible than for people to take what you say and to turn it into dispute (el. Psalm cix. 4)- We are not to keep things back, but we realize that if we stand for God there will be the dilemma of dispute. "They say: What say they? Let them say." Paul says the same thing -- "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self." (I Corinthians iv. 3.)

In a crisis we are always in danger of standing true to something that is acclaimed by this world rather than standing absolutely loyal to God. Had our Lord been a patriot, He would have been a traitor to His country in submitting to the Roman dominance; He ought to have led an insurrection -- 'This dominance is wrong, We must break it.' Instead of that, He bowed His head to it. He submitted to the providential order of tyranny knowing that through it God was working out His purposes. "Knowest thou not that I have power to release Thee, and have power to crucify Thee? Jesus answered him, Thou couldest have no power against Me, except it were given thee from above." (John xix 10, 11.)

Note: -- No notes are available on Psalm 121.

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02 -- PSALM 122

Gladness Of Comradeship

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." (v. 1.)

God begins with us individually in the experience of conscious salvation, then He unites us to one another. Notice the 'altogetherness' of the saints all through the Epistles -- "till we all attain unto the unity of the faith... unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." None of us individually can reach the "fulness of Christ"; we reach that standard all together. "I have called you friends," said Jesus• The idea is that the presence of Jesus is the arena in which we live. A friend is one who makes me do my best.

Goings Of A Community

"Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem." (v. 2.)
The gifts of our ascended Lord -- "apostles, prophets, evangelists" -- are "for the perfecting of the saints." If you should be in advance of the rest of the community, God will take you into 'the ministry of the interior.' Spiritual insight is not for the purpose of making us realize we are better than other people, but in order that our responsibility might be added to. If we neglect to go to God about our communities, our ministers, we become criticizing centers instead of ministers of the interior. God expects us to be intercessors, not dogmatic fault-finders, but vicarious intercessors, until other lives come up to the same standard. Locusts in their flight over a stream may drown by the million, but others keep coming until there is a way for the live ones to go over their bodies. God uses His saints in the same way. "The blood of the martyrs is the Seed of the Church." There are prominent names in works of faith, such as Muller and Quarrier, but there are thousands of others whose names are not known. It is the same truth our Lord uttered regarding Himself, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." The work in a community to begin with may be a wondrous delight, then it seems to die out, and if you do not know the teaching of our Lord you will say it is dead; it is not, it has fallen into the ground and died in its old form, but by and by it will bring forth fruit which will alter the whole landscape.

God's Own City

"Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together:" (v. 3.)

"For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (Hebrews xi. 10.)

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." (Revelation xxi. 2.)

What a curious anomaly -- a city of God! We could have understood if it had been the country of God, but a holy city is inconceivable to us. The city of Jerusalem, like the Temple, was ordained of God., that is why the Children of Israel were so certain the prophets were wrong in saying that God would ever leave Jerusalem; but God did leave it, He left it desolate on account of the sins of the people.

There is a time coming when we shall live in God's own city: Abraham looked for it; John saw it, coming flown out of heaven. Our present-day communities are man's attempt at building up the city of God; man is confident that if only God will give him time enough he will build not only a holy city, but a holy community and establish peace on earth, and God is allowing him ample opportunity to try, until he is satisfied that God's way is the only way.

Gathering Of The Clans
"whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord." (v. 4.)

The prophets look forward to the time when all the tribes will meet together in harmony. It is a symbol of what happens in this dispensation of grace; there is absolute harmony in Christ Jesus, no matter what the difference of nationality may be. The Bible is the Charter of the city of God, and all sorts and conditions of people have communion with one another through it. There is a gathering of the clans of all who belong to the race of the twice-born -- "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."
The saints find their closest unity in communion with God, but we have to be put through a great deal of discipline before the oneness for which Jesus prayed in John xvii. is realized. You will find that God introduces you to teachers and friends who are just beyond you in attainment in order to keep you from stagnation.

Christ's Own Crown

"For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David." (v. 5.)

When our Lord stood before Pilate and he asked Him, "Art Thou a King then?" Jesus answered, 'I am a King, but My Kingdom is not of this world, else would My servants fight.' The Kingship of Jesus consists in the entire sanctification of individuals. "For Christ's Crown and Covenant" was the motto of the Scottish Covenanters. Am I eager to be saved and sanctified so that Jesus Christ is crowned King in my life? "Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am" -- but is He? Is He Lord and Master of our sentiments with regard to this war? of our passions and patriotic pride? We may think He is until we are brought into a crisis, and then we realize that there are whole domains over which He is not Lord and Master. This is true in individual life and in national life.

Generosity Of Community

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee." (v. 6.)

"Pray for the peace of the city" because it will be better for us as saints if the city is in peace. It is true that in times of war people are driven to God, but the distraction of war upsets the harmony and peace which are essential conditions for the worship of God. Are we set on praying for the peace of Jerusalem only because it will bring prosperity with God to souls?

Goodwill In Concentration

"Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions’ sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee." (vv. 7 and 8.)
In times of prosperity we are apt to forget God, we imagine it does not matter whether we recognize Him or not. As long as we are comfortably clothed and fed and looked after, our civilization becomes an elaborate means of ignoring God.

'God bless Jerusalem' -- for Jerusalem's sake? No, for my companions' sake. 'God bless the world with peace' -- because it is deserving of peace? No, because of the Christians in it. Because God's House is here, we pray 'God bless Askrigg.' Because of the saints in Britain, we pray 'God bless Britain.'

But remember God's blessing may mean God's blasting. If God is going to bless me, He must condemn and blast out of my being what He cannot bless. "Our God is a consuming fire." When we ask God to bless, we sometimes pray terrible havoc upon the things that are not of God. God will shake all that can be shaken, and He is doing it just now.

Graciousness In Compensation

"Because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek thy good." (v. 9.)

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." This is not the judgment of Christians, but of the nations who have never heard of Jesus. They are amazed at the magnanimity of His words - - "Lord, when saw we Thee an hungred, and fed Thee?" If that is God's attitude to the nations who do not know Him, what is His attitude toward us? We are never told to walk in the light of conscience, but to walk in the light of the Lord. If Jesus Christ has taught me to be 'as He is in this world.' then in every particular in which I am not like Him, I shall be condemned. God engineers circumstances to see what we will do. Will we be the children of our Father in heaven, or will we go back again to the meaner, common-sense attitude? Will we stake all and stand true to Him? "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." The crown of life means I shall see that my Lord has got the victory after all, even in me.

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03 -- PSALM 123

This Psalm represents the inner biography of faith. It is not easy to have faith in God, and it is not meant to be easy because we have to make character. God will shield us from no requirements of His sons and daughters any more than He shielded His own Son. It is an easy business to sit in an armchair and say, 'Oh yes, I believe God will do this and that'; that is credulity, not faith. But let me say, 'I believe God will supply all my needs.' and then let me 'run dry.' no money, no outlook, and see whether I will go through the trial of my faith, or sink back and put my trust in something else. It is the trial of our faith that is precious. If we go through the trial, there is so much wealth laid up in our heavenly banking account to draw upon when the next test comes.
Direction Of Aspiration

"Unto Thee lift I up mine eyes, O Thou that dwellest in the heavens." (v. 1.)

"Unto Thee lift I up mine eyes" -- we have to make the effort to look up. The things that make it difficult to look up are suffering, or difficulty, or murmuring. If you are suffering, it is intensely difficult to look up. The command to the Children of Israel when they were bitten by the fiery serpent was, 'Look to the brazen serpent.' We cannot look up if we are murmuring; we are like the child who does not want to do what he is told, and the father comes and says, 'Now look up.' but the child won't. We behave like that with God; our circumstances are hard, we are not making progress in life, and the Spirit of God says, 'Look up.' but we refuse and say, 'I'm not going to play this game of faith any more.' The counsel given by the writer to the Hebrews is based on the effort of the saint -- "let us lay aside every weight..."; "let us run with patience the race that is set before us"; "looking unto Jesus..."; "consider Him." (ch. xii. 1-3.)

Description Of The Attention

"Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that He have mercy upon us." (v. 2.)

God intends our attention to be arrested, He does not arrest it for us. The things Jesus tells us to consider are not things that compel our attention"- "Consider the lilies of the field," "Behold the fouls of the air." The Spirit of God instructs us to be attentive. Are our eyes so fixed upon God that we have spiritual discernment and can see His countenance in the dreadful cloud of war? Most of us are at our wits' end, we have no inkling of what God is doing because our eyes have not been waiting upon Him. We are apt to pay more attention to our newspaper than to God's Book, and spiritual leakage begins because we do not make the effort to lift up our eyes to God. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory." (2 Corinthians iii. 18.) That is a description of entire reliance on God. Be careful of anything that is going to deflect your attention from God. It is easier to rely on God in big things than in little things. There is an enormous power in little things to distract our attention from God; that is why our Lord said that "the cares of this world," "the lusts of other things," would choke the word and make it unfruitful.

Distraction Of Annoyance

"Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us; for we are exceedingly filled with contempt. Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud." (vv. 3, 4.)
The thing to heed is not so much damage to our faith in God as damage to our temper of mind. "Therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously." (Malachi ii. 16.) The temper of mind if it is not right with God is tremendous in its effects, it is the enemy that penetrates right into the soul and distracts us from God. There are certain tempers of mind we never dare indulge in; if we do, we find that they distract us from God, and until we get back into the quiet mood before God our faith in Him is nil, and our confidence in human ingenuity the thing that rules.

Spiritual leakage comes not so much through trouble on the outside as through imagining you have 'screwed yourself a bit too high.' For instance, you came to a particular crisis and made a conscientious stand for God and had the witness of the Spirit that everything was all right; but the weeks have gone by, and the months, and you are slowly beginning to come to the conclusion that you had been taking a stand a bit too high. Your friends come and say, 'Now don't be a fool, you are only an ordinary human being; when you talked about this spiritual awakening we knew it was only a passing phase; you can't keep up the strain, God does not expect you to'; and you say, 'Well, I suppose I was a bit too pretentious.' It sounds wise and sensible, but the danger is that you do not rely on God any longer; reliance on worldly opinion has taken the place of reliance on God. We have to realize that no effort can be too high, because Jesus says we are to be the children of our Father in heaven. It must be my utmost for His highest all the time and every time.

"Have mercy upon us, O Lord, for we are exceedingly filled with contempt." As God's children we have to see that we keep looking in the face of God, otherwise we shall find our souls in the condition of being filled with contempt and annoyance, with the result that we are spiritually distracted instead of spiritually self-possessed. This is true in individual circumstances as well as national crises. It is not always the cross mood that leads to the cross speech, but the cross word that makes the cross mood. If in the morning you begin to talk crossly, before long you will feel desperately cross. Take to God the things that perturb your spirit. You notice that certain people are not going on spiritually and you begin to feel perturbed; if the discernment turns you to intercession, it is good; but if it turns to criticism it blocks you in your way to God. God never gives us discernment of what is wrong for us to criticize it, but that we might intercede.

"Unto Thee lift I up mine eyes." The terrible thing is that we are likely to get to the place where we do not miss the consciousness of God's presence; we have gone on so long ignoring the lifting up of our eyes to Him that it has become the habit of our mind and it never bothers us. We go on depending on our own wits and ingenuity until suddenly God brings us to a halt and we realize how we have been losing out. Whenever there is spiritual leakage, remedy it immediately. It does not matter what you are doing, stop instantly when there is the realization that you are losing out before God; lift up your eyes to Him and tell Him you recognize it -- 'Lord, this thing has been coming in between my spirit and Thee, I am not resting in faith.'
Get it readjusted at once. There is always a suitable place to pray, to lift up your eyes to God; there is no need to get to a place of prayer, pray wherever you are. Confess before God that you have been distracted away from faith in Him; don't vindicate yourself. The lust of vindication is a state of mind that destroys the soul's faith in God -- 'I must explain myself'; 'I must get people to understand.' The remarkable thing about our Lord is that He never explained anything to anybody. Nothing ever distracted Him out of His oneness with God, and He prays "that they may be one, even as we are one."

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04 -- PSALM 124

Alternative Danger

"If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, now may Israel say;.' (v. 1.)

Facing an alternative is not to deal in supposition, but part of wisdom and understanding; supposition is wisdom gone to hysteria. In estimating the dangers which beset us we have to remember that they are not haphazard, but things that will happen. Our Lord told His disciples to lay their account with peril, with hatred, in fact He tells them to leap for joy "when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake." (Luke vi. 22-3.) We are apt to look at this alternative as a supposition, but Jesus says it will happen and must be estimated. It is never wise to under-estimate an enemy. We look upon the enemy of our souls as a conquered foe, so he is, but only to God, not to us.

(a) Estimate of Antagonism. "if it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us: then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us:" (vv. 2-3.)

We have to lay our account with the antagonism of men, it is a danger that is always with us...".. when men rose up against us" -- not tendencies, not the moods of men, but men themselves. All that makes life either honorable or terrible is summed up in the word 'men'. In estimating the forces against us we are slow to believe in this antagonistic element, we look at them too haphazardly, not realizing that they are dead set against us. "But beware of men" -- it is the last thing we do. The reason our Lord tells us to beware of men is that the human heart is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," and if we put our trust in men we shall go under, because men are just like ourselves, and none of us in our wits before God would ever think of trusting ourselves; if we do it is a sign that we are ignorant of ourselves.

At heart men are antagonistic to the lordship of Jesus Christ. It is not antagonism to creeds or points of view, but antagonism encountered for My sake.
Many of us awaken antagonism by our way of stating things; we have to distinguish between being persecuted for some notion of our own and being persecuted 'for My sake.' We are apt to think only of the bad things as being against Jesus, but it is the refined things, the cultured things, the religious things which are dead against Jesus Christ unless they are loyal to Him. It was the religious people of our Lord's time who withstood Him, not the worldly. "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you." (John xv. 18.) These are the deliberate words of our Lord to His disciples. In the measure in which we are loyal to Jesus Christ! the same thing happens to us; we are at a loss to understand why people should have the most apparently absurd antipathy to us. Their anger is strangely unaccountable; it is not irritation, but an inspired working against.

(b) Estimate of Agony. "then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul:"

One element in the alternative danger that attends the saints of God is the agony it produces. It is strange that God should make it that "through the shadow of an agony cometh Redemption"; strange that God's Son should be made perfect through suffering; strange that suffering should be one of the golden pathways for God's children. There are times in personal life when we are brought into an understanding of what Abraham experienced. "Get thee out of thy country..." It is not so much that we are misunderstood, but that suffering is brought on others through our being loyal to God, and it produces agony for which there is no relief on the human side, only on God's side. When we pray "Thy Kingdom come" we have to share in the pain of the world being born again; it is a desperate pain. God's servants are, as it were, the birth-throes of the new age. "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." (Galatians iv. 19.) Many of us receive the Holy Ghost, but immediately the throes begin we misunderstand God's purpose. We have to enter into the travail with Him until the world is born again. The world must be born again just as individuals are.

(c) Estimate of Annihilation. "then the proud waters had gone over our soul." (v. 5.)

The ultimate result of the danger is annihilation, our Lord leaves us in no doubt about that; He always estimated things in the final analysis. Our Lord teaches that the forces against us work for our annihilation, "And ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake." Nowadays we do not catch the drift of these words. It is not the question of a law of nature at work, but a law of antagonism, everything that is not loyal to Jesus Christ is against us. "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord..." Saul of Tarsus was spending all his educated manhood to annihilate those who were "of the Way." It is that spirit we have to estimate in the danger that besets us if we are true to God.

Appreciated Deliverance
"Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth." (v. 6.)

The reason some of us are so tepid spiritually is that we do not realize that God has done anything for us. Many people are at work for God, not because they appreciate His salvation, but because they think they should be doing something for other people. Our Lord never called anyone to work for Him because they realize a need, but only on the basis that He has done something for them. The only basis on which to work for God is an esteemed appreciation of His deliverance, that is, our personal history with God is so poignant that it constitutes our devotion to Him. God's deliverance makes us His absolute debtors. Have we taken into account what God has done for us? Estimate the alternative danger, and then begin to call on your soul to bless God for His deliverance...". to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."

(a) Entire Escape. "Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped." (v. 7.)

God does not deliver us gradually, but suddenly, it is a perfect deliverance, a complete emancipation. When the deliverance is realized, it is realized altogether, from the crown of your head to the sole of your foot, and your devotion to God is on account of that deliverance. It is a good thing to begin prayer with praising God for His attributes, and for the way those attributes have been brought to bear on our personal salvation. Let your mind soak in the deliverance of God, and then praise Him for them.

(b) Eternal Element. "Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth." (v. 8.)

Our help is not in what God has done, but in God Himself. There is a danger of banking our faith and our testimony on our experience, whereas our experience is the gateway to a closer intimacy with God. Our help is in the Name of the One who delivers. The dangers that beset us are real dangers, and if we estimate them we shall appreciate God's deliverance. Why our Lord said that self-pity was of the devil is that self-pity will prevent us appreciating God's deliverance. When we begin to say 'Why has this happened to me?' 'Why does poverty begin to come to me?' 'Why should this difficulty come, this upset?' it means that we are more concerned about getting our own way than in esteeming the marvellous deliverance God has wrought. We read of God's people of old that "They soon forgot His works....," and we are in danger of doing the same unless we continually lift up our eyes to God and bless Him for His deliverances.

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05 -- PSALM 125

The Fastnesses Of The Godly
"They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever." (v. 1.)

The security of the eternal God is what we are to have confidence in, and the Psalmist likens that security to the mountains, because a mountain is the most stable thing we know. There is nothing so secure as the salvation of God; it is as eternal as the mountains, and it is our trust in God that brings us the conscious realization of this. The one thing Satan tries to shake is our confidence in God. It is not difficult for our confidence to be shaken if we build on our experience; but if we realize that all we experience is but the doorway leading to the knowledge of God, Satan may shake that as much as he likes, but he cannot shake the fact that God remains faithful (see Timothy ii. 13), and we must not cast away our confidence in Him. It is not our trust that keeps us, but the God in whom we trust who keeps us. We are always in danger of trusting in our trust, believing our belief, having faith in our faith. All these things can be shaken; we have to base our faith on those things which cannot be shaken. (Hebrews xii. 27.)

Our consciousness of God is meant to introduce us to God, not to our experience of Him. Jesus said...".. no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand." (John x. 29.) No power, however mighty, is able to pluck us out of the hand of God, so long as that power is outside us. Our Lord did not say, however, that His sheep had not power to take themselves out. The devil cannot take us out, neither can man; we are absolutely secure from every kind of enemy, saving our own wilfulness. God does not destroy our personal power to disobey Him; if He did, we would become mechanical and useless. No power outside, from the devil downward, can take us out of God's hand; so long as we remain faithful, we are as eternally secure as God Himself.

The Frontiers Of God

"As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from henceforth even for ever." (v. 2.)

There are margins beyond which the Spirit of God does not work. Nightingales will not sing outside certain geographical areas, and that is an exact illustration of the frontiers of God. There is a place where God reveals His face, and that place has moral frontiers, not physical. We can blind our minds by perverse thinking; blind our moral life by crooked dealing in business, or by sin. We can never get away from God geographically, but we can get away from Him morally. The writer to the Hebrews mentions the moral frontier, "Let thy conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have." (ch. xiii. 5.) Outside that moral frontier, God does not reveal His face. Let me become impatient, let me fix my heart on gain, and I do not see God. If I enthrone anything other than God in my life, God retires and lets the other god do what it can. The majority of us do not enthrone God, we enthrone common-sense. We make our decisions and
then ask the real God to bless our god's decision. We say, 'It is common-sense to
do this thing.' and God leaves us, because we are outside the frontier where" He
works. "Keep yourself from the love of money, and be content." Think of the
imperative haste in our spirit to wish we were somewhere else! That danger is
always there, and we have to watch it. When I wish I was somewhere else I am not
doing my duty to God where I am. I am wool-gathering, fooling with my own soul; if
I am God's child I have no business to be distracted. If I keep myself from
covetousness, content with the things I have, I remain within the frontiers of God. If
I have the spirit of covetousness in my heart I have no right to say, 'The Lord is my
helper' -- He is not, He is my destroyer. I have no right to say I am content and yet
have a mood that is not contented. If I am ill-tempered, set on some change of
circumstances, I find God is not supporting me at all; I have worried myself outside
the moral frontier where He works and my soul won't sing; there is no joy in God,
no peace in believing. We have to watch that we are not enticed outside the frontier
of our own control, just as soldiers have to watch. If they get outside the frontier of
their strategy they will probably be killed, and so we have to watch that we are not
enticed outside God's frontier. Remember, no man can take us outside, it is our
own stupidity that takes us out. When we realize that we have got outside the moral
frontier, the only thing to do is to get back again and realize what the Apostle Paul
says in Philippians iv. 11-13.

The Faithfulness Of Godliness

"For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous; lest the
righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity." (v. 3.)

The rod means two things -- it is used in counting in the sheep, and it is used
to destroy the wild beast that suddenly springs out on the sheep (see Psalm xxiii.
4). The man of sin will have his rod, he will do clever tricks, he will put the mark of
the beast on every business system that he sanctions, and those who do not have
that mark on them can never do business under the regime of the man of sin.
Suppose you find that the people who are 'counted in' under the mark of the beast
succeed, and you do not succeed, you may be tempted to negotiate the thing and
say, 'Well, I don't know, if I did this thing it would save me; I had better just
compromise a bit.' We must never do that. "The rod of the wicked shall not rest on
the righteous," God says. There is no need to fear, if we keep within the moral
frontiers of God we can say boldly, "The Lord is my helper." We do not need to
mind how the wicked bluster and say, 'If you don't do this and that, you will starve.'
Be faithful, make holiness your aim, holiness in every relationship -- money, food,
clothes, friendship -- then you will see the Lord in all these domains.

The Fitness Of Goodness

"Do good, O Lord, unto those that be good, and to them that are upright in
their hearts." (v. 4.)
Our Lord warned the disciples that they would be put out of the synagogue, and be killed (see John xvi. 2), but He says, 'Don't mind about that, beware only of not doing your duty according to My commandments, because that will destroy both soul and body in hell.' (See Matthew x. 28, Revelation ii. 10.) We are apt to make salvation mean the saving of our skin. The death of our body, the sudden breaking-up of the house of life, may be the salvation of our soul. In times of peace 'honesty may be the best policy.' but if we work on the idea that it is better physically and prosperously to be good, that is the wrong motive; the right motive is devotion to God, remaining absolutely true to God, no matter what it costs.

The Futility Of Godlessness

"But as for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity." (v. 5.)

There is no reference in the Bible to natural law. We talk of certain things as the inevitable result of what a man does: the Bible says, God. The Psalmist says, "the Lord shall lead them forth." God is active in every relationship; it is not natural law or mathematical logic, but God working all through. No man has a fate portioned out to him; a man's disposition makes what people call his fate. The course of deliberately remaining independent of God ends in damnation, by God's direct decree, not as an inevitable happening; and the course of dependence upon God ends in heaven, by God's decree, not by chance. Either course has God behind it. It is the glorious risk of the Christian life. The Apostle Peter gives the warning, "Beware lest, being carried away with the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own stedfastness." (2 Peter iii. 17.) God does not save us from facing the music, or shelter us from any of the requirements of sons and daughters (see I John iv. 4). As long as we remain within the moral frontiers of God, watching our hearts lest we give way to ill-content, to covetousness, or self-pity, the things which take us outside God's frontier, then God says, "I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee."

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06 -- PSALM 126

The Emotion Of Deliverance

"When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream." (v. 1.)

Religion is never intellectual, it is always passionate and emotional; but the curious thing is that it is religion that leads to emotion, not emotion to religion. If religion does not make for passion and emotion, it is not the true king. When you realize that you are saved, that God has forgiven your sins, given you the Holy Spirit, I defy you not to be carried away with emotion. Religion which makes for
logic and reason is not religion, but to try to make religion out of emotion is to take a false step. Our Lord bases everything on life as it is, and life is implicit. For instance, you cannot explicitly state what love is, but love is the implicit thing that makes life worth living. You cannot explicitly state what sin is, but sin is the implicit thing that curses life. You cannot explicitly state what death is, all the scientific jargon in the world cannot define death; death is the implicit thing which destroys life as we know it. A child is a good illustration of the implicit, you cannot imagine a child without emotion, always logical, reasonable and well balanced, he would not be a child but a prig.

Emotion is not simply an overplus of feeling, it is life lived at white-heat, a state of wonder. To lose wonder is to lose the true element of religion. Has the sense of wonder been dying down in your religious life? If so, you need to get back to the Source. If you have lost the fervor of delight in God, tell Him so. The old Divines used to ask God for the grace of trembling, i.e., the sense of wonder. When wonder goes out of natural love, something or someone is to be severely blamed; wonder ought never to go. With a child the element of wonder is always there, a freshness and spontaneity, and the same is true of those who follow Jesus Christ's teaching and become as little children.

People have the idea that Christianity and Stoicism are alike; the writings of the stoics sound so like the teaching of Jesus Christ, but just at the point where they seem most alike, they are most divergent. A stoic overcomes the world by making himself indifferent, by passionlessness; the saint overcomes the world by passionateness, by the passion of his love for Jesus Christ.

The Excitement Of Delight

"Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them." (v. 2.)

They were carried completely off their feet with amazement and delight over what God had done (cf. Genesis xvii. 17; Isaiah lx. 5). A man will say, 'I do not doubt that God can forgive sin, that He can give the Holy Spirit and make men holy, but it cannot possibly mean me! When I come before God I remember all my blunders and sins.' When he realizes that it does mean him, then comes this moral hysteria -- 'It is too good to be true!' With God a thing is never too good to be true; it is too good not to be true.

Ruskin says that early in life he could never see a hedge-row without emotion, then later on when problems of heart and life were busy with him he saw nothing in Nature; but as soon as the inner turmoil was settled, not only did he get the old joy back, but a redoubled joy. If we have no delight in God it is because we are too far away from the childlike relationship to Him. If there is an internal struggle on, get it put right and you will experience delight in Him.
The Ecstasy Of His Doings

"The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad. Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the south" (vv. 3-4.)

Whenever God brings His deliverances they are so supernatural that we are staggered with amazement. It is one of the most helpful spiritual exercises to reckon what God has done for us already. When God wanted to make His ancient people realize what manner of God He was, He said; 'Remember the crossing of the Red Sea.' and in the New Testament Paul says, 'Remember, it is the God Who raised Jesus from the dead:)...'. These two things are the unit of measurement of God's power. If I want to know what God can do, He is the God Who made a way through the sea; if it is a question of power for my life, the measurement of that is the Resurrection of Jesus.

"Turn again our captivity, O Lord..." I call upon my soul to remember what God has done and it makes me bold to entreat Him to do it again. It is a crime to give way to self-pity, to be weak in God's strength when all this God is ours. We have to "build ourselves up on our most holy faith." Robert Louis Stevenson asked God to forgive him if he had "shown no morning face"; and Dante places in the lowest circles of Hell those who have been gloomy in the summer air.

The Enlightenment Of Drudgery

"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, beating precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." (vv. 5-6.)

We make the blunder of wanting to sow and plough and reap all at the same time. We forget what our Lord said, that "one soweth, and another reapeth." "They that sow in tears..." -- it looks as if the seed were drowned. You can see the seed when it is in the basket, but when it falls into the ground, it disappears (see John xii. 24). The same thing is true with regard to Sunday School work or meetings, it looks as if everything were flung away, you cannot see anything happening; but the seed is there. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days. The seed is the word of God, and no word of God is ever fruitless. If I know that the sowing is going to bring forth fruit, I am blessed in the drudgery. Drudgery is never blessed, but drudgery can be enlightened." The Psalmist says, "Thou hast enlarged me in distress"; the enlargement comes through knowing that God is looking after everything. Before, when I came to a difficult bit of the way I was staggered, but now through the affliction and suffering I can put my foot down more firmly (see Romans viii. 35-39).

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07 -- PSALM 127
Direction By Countenancing God

"Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." (v. 1.)

"For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, and that" (see James iv. 13-15).

Do I countenance God like that? not have my face towards Him, but my whole person directed by that dominating thought? One of the greatest evidences that we are born again of God is that we perceive the kingdom of God. When I am born from above I countenance God; the arm of the Lord is revealed and I see God as the Architect, as the One Who is doing all things. God is never away off somewhere else; He is always there. It is this fact that needs to be taken into consideration. Do I countenance the fact that God is engineering my bodily life and all that I come in contact with? I mention the body because that is the physical case in which our spirit works. If I do not countenance God in that, my faith is jargon. If I enthrone common sense as God, there are great regions of my life in which I do not countenance God.

"Except the Lord build the house..." the house of the mind or heart. God is building us for Himself, not for ourselves. Do I realize that my body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, or am I educating myself for myself? If I have an ambition, just where that ambition rules I do not countenance God, I cannot, because my ambition rules and I won't allow God to thwart it. If I do not countenance God in every relationship of my life I shall end in disaster. We get the life of God all at once, but we do not learn to obey all at once; we only learn to obey by the discipline of life.

Distracted Man

"It is vain for you that ye rise up early and so late take rest, and eat the bread of toil: for so He giveth unto His beloved sleep." (v. 2.)

This verse describes an amateur providence. We are all amateur providences, until we learn better; we are most impertinent toward God, we tell Him there are certain things we will never allow to happen in other lives, and God comes and says, 'Don't interfere with that life any more.' Are you 'rising up early' and 'sitting up late' to try and unravel difficulties? You cannot do it. It is a great thing to get to the place where you countenance God and know He rules. It is not done by impulse, but by a settled and abiding conviction based on God's truth and the discipline of life. I know that God rules; and He gives me power to perceive His rule. There is no use sitting up late or rising up early, I must do the work that lies before me, and avoid worry as I would the devil. "It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late..." If I take time from sleep, God's punishment rests on me; or if I take time in sleep when I
should be working, He punishes me. Sloth is as bad as being a fussy workman in God's sight. We have no business to be distracted.

I wonder if we have ever considered the Bible implications about sleep? It is not true to say that sleep is simply meant for physical recuperation; surely much less time than God has ordered would have served that purpose. The Revised Version suggests a deeper, profounder ministry for sleep than mere physical recuperation. "For so He giveth unto His beloved in sleep" (marg.). The deepest concerns of our souls, whether they be good or bad, are furthered during sleep. It is not merely a physical fact that you go to bed perplexed and wake clear-minded; God has been ministering to you during sleep. Sometimes God cannot get at us until we are asleep. In the Bible there are times when in the deep slumber of the body God has taken the souls of His servants into deeper communion with Himself (e.g. Genesis ii. 21, xv. 12). Often when a problem or perplexity harasses the mind and there seems no solution, after a night's rest you find the solution easy, and the problem has no further perplexity. Think of the security of the saint in sleeping or in waking, "Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day." Sleep is God's celestial nurse who croons away our consciousness, and God deals with the unconscious life of the soul in places where only He and His angels have charge. As you retire to rest, give your soul and God a time together, and commit your life to God with a conscious peace for the hours of sleep, and deep and profound developments will go on in spirit, soul and body by the kind creating hand of our God.

Disregarded Munificence

"Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows in the hand of a mighty man, so are the children of youth." (vv. 3-4.)

Things go by threes in the Bible: Father, Son and Holy Ghost; God, Church, converts; husband, wife, children. It is God's order, not man's. Whenever one of the three is missing, there is something wrong. If you have a house, the next thing the Bible counsels is hospitality -- "given to hospitality" (Romans xii. 13); "pursuing hospitality" (R.V., marg.); give your whole mind to it. "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." (Hebrews xiii. 2.) That is the way the blessing comes. When we begin to try to economize, God puts dry rot in us instantly. I don't care what line the economy takes, it produces dry rot. When we have the lavish hand, there is munificence at once. "There is that scattereth, and increaseth yet more; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth only to want." (Proverbs xi. 24.) It is the 'third' element being recognized. Have I got three factors in my thinking, or only two? Is it God and myself? then I am wrong. It is God and myself for God's purposes. Do I want to be saved that I may be right with God, or that God may get His purpose through me?

Delivering Maneuvers
"Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, when they speak with their enemies in the gate." (v. 5.)

It is the element of the 'third' that makes a man wealthy...".. trained men, born in his house" (Genesis xiv. 14). Have I been able to reproduce my own kind spiritually? If so, in a time of difficulty I will be brought through magnificently victorious; but woe be to the spiritual man who has never produced his own kind, when the difficulties come there is none to assist, he is isolated and lonely. It is the production of the 'third' that returns to you in victory. When we are right with God, Jesus says, "out of you will flow rivers of living water." Immediately you are in difficulties a thousand and one come to assist in prayer; they face the enemy in the gates. That is the great basal truth of the League of Prayer, the clustering together of the children of God. It is those you have been the means of blessing who keep you from the onslaughts of the enemy. We shall be amazed to find how much we are indebted to people we never think about, simply because they were introduced to God through us, and in our difficulties they come to our aid. There is the wire of communication when the maneuvers take place, and we are happily delivered. The kingdoms of this world are founded on strong men, consequently they go. Jesus Christ founds His Kingdom on the weakest link, a Baby. God made His own Son a Babe. We must base our thinking on the rugged facts of life according to God's Book, and not according to the finesse of modern civilization. Let us not be so careful as to how we offend or please human ears, but let us never offend God's ears.

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08 -- PSALM 128

Seemliness Of Sanctity

"Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in His ways." (v. 11)

The remarkable thing about fearing God is that when you fear God you fear nothing else, whereas if you do not fear God you fear everything else. "Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord"; the writer to the Hebrews tells us to fear lest haply there should be any promise of God's of which we come short. (iv. 1.) Are we alert enough along this line?...".. that walketh in His ways." The word walk breathes character, it is the symbol for seemly behavior. John "looked upon Jesus as He walked" -- not in a moment of ecstasy and transfiguration but "as He walked, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God!" "Walk worthily," says the Apostle Paul, worthily, that is, towards God, not towards man, because man's standards are not God's. When a man says he is sanctified the charge is often made, and there is no reply to it, 'Remember, you are not perfect.' A saint is required to be perfect towards God. "Walk before Me, and be thou perfect"; the standard of judgment is not man's standard, but God's. Our conduct before men will be judged by whether we walk in
the seemliness of sanctity before God. That means conduct according to the highest we know, and the striking thing is that the highest we know is God Himself.

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect."

There is something in human nature that enables it to go through a big crisis, but we do need help from God to walk worthily the sixty seconds of every minute. Am I behaving myself in God's sight in the seemliness of sanctity to those who are nearest to me? in my letter writing? in my study? Is the one great lodestar of my life "walking in His ways"? The thing we have to guard against is wanting to be somewhere else. Have I sufficient of the grace of God to behave myself as His child where I am? It is one thing to feel the sufficiency of God in a prayer meeting and in times of delight and excitement, but another thing to realize His sufficiency in whatever setting we may be -- in a thunderstorm or on a calm summer day, in a cottage or a College, in an antique shop or on a moor.

**Satisfaction In Strenuousness**

"For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee." (v. 2.) This verse reveals the connection between the natural creation and the regenerated creation. We have to be awake strenuously to the fact that our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, not only in the spiritual sense, but in the physical sense. When we are born from above we are apt to despise the clay of which we are made. The natural creation and the creation of grace work together, and what we are apt to call the sordid things, labouring with our hands, and eating and drinking, have to be turned into spiritual exercises by obedience, then we shall 'eat and drink, and do all to the glory of God.' There must be a uniting in personal experience of the two creations. It cannot be done all at once, there are whole tracts of life which have to be disciplined. "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost," it is the handiwork of God, and it is in these bodies we are to find satisfaction, and that means strenuousness. Every power of mind and heart should go into the strenuousness of turning the natural into the spiritual by obeying the word of God regarding it. If we do not make the natural spiritual, it will become sordid; but when we become spiritual the natural is shot through with the glory of God.

**Security Of The Saint**

"Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table. Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord." (vv. 3 and 4.)

Today people are altogether ignoring the fact that God has anything to do with human relationships. If we get out of any setting of natural life which God has decreed we shall not be blessed. Take the commandment to "honour thy father and mother," and apply it spiritually. I believe that many a life is hindered from entering into sanctification through not being properly related in disposition to father and
mother. It is one of the most practical tests. Am I allowing inordinate affection in any relationship? or envy, or jealousy? If so I am certainly not finding blessing, it is getting dried up. I must maintain the spirit and disposition of my Lord and Master in all the ordinary relationships of life, then I shall realize the marvellous security of the saint.

Supremacy Of Sincerity

"The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days Of thy life." (v. 5.)

Sincerity means in the straight. Am I straight in my relationship to God and to other people? If I am the Lord says He will bless me. "And thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life." It is righteous behavior that brings blessing on others, and the heart of faith sees that God is working things out well.

Surroundings Of Sanity

"Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel." (v. 6.)

It is in ordinary surroundings and among commonplace things that the blessing of God is to dwell and reveal itself. "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." (Revelation xxii. 14.) Have I entered in through the gates? There is a time when the exceptional has to rule and the 'right arm' has to go, but that is only a phase. Our Lord was brought up so much in ordinary surroundings that the religious people of His day said that He was "a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber." His life was unassuming in its naturalness. Read the records of the forty days after the Resurrection, they bear the mark of superb sanity. The test is not the success of a revival meeting, that may be questionable, but the success of living in the commonplace things that make life what it is, letting God carry out His purposes as He will.

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THE END