

SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

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INFIRMITY AND REMEDY.

JAN, 1966
A Sermon ✓

BY MR. JAMES WELLS.

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“And I said, This is my infirmity; but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.”—Psalm lxxvii. 10.

WHAT a complete contrast there is between the man that is taught of God and brought into real soul-trouble, and the man not taught of God. The one not taught of God is always more or less full of hope and of confidence, and sees no reason why he should be lost. Therefore, when such happen to drop under a ministry wherein they are told that they must never doubt, that they must never fear, must have no suspicion, but go believing on without the least doubt whatever, thus they are deluded, having no conviction of their condition, and no real soul-trouble; they know not what this doubting and fearing are. Cain had no doubts or fears; and I do not suppose that Ishmael, until Isaac came, had any doubts or fears; I do not suppose that Esau had any doubts or fears; and the false prophets of old, and those that followed them, were all full of confidence. So the Pharisees in the Saviour's day, while the disciples were doubting, trembling, suspecting, and fearing, and the Saviour had to say to them, “O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?” at the same time the Pharisees were full of confidence, full of assurance, “We have one Father, even God;” we never did doubt it, and never shall doubt it. If we do not go to heaven, who will? Oh, what a tremendous negative did the Saviour put upon their confidence when he said, “Ye are of your father the devil;”—he from the beginning was a liar, and you are carrying out his lies; he from the beginning was a murderer of the prophets and of the people of God, and you are carrying out his deadly malice. Oh, my hearer, it is a solemn exhortation given by the apostle, when he saith, “Examine your-

selves, whether ye be in the faith ;” for there are, as we are told, a great many that be deceived ; “ many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” Hence we have in our day some ministers that chide, reprove, and correct the prophets themselves because of their doubtings and fearings. There is no doubt but those who are tried are sometimes very unbelieving. We must all confess that, could we have seen the end of many of the things that made us tremble and fear, and think our hope, our strength were perished from the Lord,—if we could have seen the end the Lord would bring about, we certainly should not have doubted and feared so much as we did. I am not going to say a word to encourage anything like despair, or doubting and fearing ; but I do say this,—that the reason people do not doubt and fear is because they are not tried, and the reason the people of God doubt and fear is because they are tried. So that our text this morning comes right down to the heart and soul, and is descriptive of the work of the Eternal Spirit of God ; and we have simply two things to attend to. First, *the Christian’s infirmity* ; in other words, soul-trouble ; and secondly, *the remedy* :—“ I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.”

First, *the Christian’s infirmity* ; or soul-trouble. And is it any wonder that soul-trouble is essential to our having a right knowledge of the truth ? Why when we look, for instance, at only one thing, that none but the Lord Jesus Christ, who certainly is God and man, in one person, that none but such a person as that could so obey God’s law as to make a sinner righteous before God, that none but such a person as that, taking our sins, bearing them in his own body on the tree, and pouring out his soul unto death, embodying, in a word, all the penalties due to sin, that none but such a person as this could work salvation for the soul,—all of us by nature are blind to our need of what he has done, and are blind therefore to our need of the blessings which are by Jesus Christ. Let us, then, look a little at this soul-trouble, and see what the Psalmist’s troubles arose from ; for it will apply to the one just called by grace as well as to the Christian who has dwelt many years in the Lord’s ways, and has often enjoyed the Lord’s presence. Now David’s trouble arose here from there being hid from him everything that made up his salvation. He could not see that the Lord was with him, he could not see his salvation. He could see his sinfulness, but he could not see his sanctification ; he could see and know his guiltiness, but he did not see the pardon ; he felt his lost and ruined condition, but he did not see that the breach on his behalf was made up ; therefore he was in trouble about it, and he felt, as it were, after the Lord ; for “ they shall feel after him, if haply they may find him ; though he be not far from every one of us.” The first thing, then, that the Psalmist

missed was the presence of the Lord. "Will the Lord cast off for ever?" It seemed to him as though he was cast off. Is not this the feeling of the Christian? I am speaking in this first part of my discourse only of that part in which you have soul-trouble under the hidings of the Lord's face. "Will the Lord cast off for ever?" Does it not seem sometimes as though the gospel had cast you off? It seems to have nothing to say to you, and it seems to have nothing for you. And does it not seem sometimes as though the ministry, the gospel ministry, had cast you off? It does not seem to come to you with any force or power, it does not seem to have anything for you; and yet in your better judgment you know well that what the minister speaks is, as it were, pure gold, that it is experimental, precious, scriptural truth; but somehow or another you cannot get at any of it. This made David say, "Will the Lord cast off for ever?" He therefore felt the time was long under the hidings of the Lord's face. And so it is with us;—when the Lord hides his face, and the heavens seem as brass, and the earth as iron, and everything seems against us, and the Lord at a distance, such an one will say, If I should feel like this when I come to die, what will my feelings be? Oh, what horror, what terror, what trembling, what fearing! Whereas the natural man, not awakened up to see his need of what the Lord is, there are no bands in his death, his strength is firm, he is neither plagued nor troubled like other men; he lives easy and dies easy; like a sheep he is laid in the grave, with a promise (of man) that he shall rise again to a sure and certain resurrection unto eternal life. But the sinner that knows unless his soul is regenerated, unless it is one with Christ, unless there is set to his account the substitutional perfection of Christ, there is no hope for him,—that is, the man that is troubled, that is the man that is plagued, that is the man that has bands in his life, and if the Lord does not take them off before he dies he will have bands in his death too; hence you read of some that all their lifetime were subject to bondage, through fear of death. This was one thing, then, that made the Psalmist fear,—that the Lord was not with him. He was led to see, as our text saith, that it was his infirmity. Oh, how his heart rejoiced when he discovered that his doubting and fearing were only an infirmity. Ah, as though he should say, if it had been the truth that God had cast me off for ever, that his almighty and eternal power was against me, I were a wretch undone; ten thousand worlds if I had never been born. But oh, when he came to see that it was only an infirmity, and when the Lord healed him of that infirmity;—he could in no wise raise himself up before; but when the Lord stepped in, and raised him up, what a blessed change was this; the Lord's presence was what

he longed for ; and just so the soul born of God. And then the Psalmist adds, " Will he be favourable no more ?" If I ever get any more comfort, it will be by his favour ; not by my merit, not by my goodness, not by anything I can entitle myself to ; but if I get any comfort, it will be by his free, sovereign favour. Hence the prayer of such is, " Remember me with the favour thou bearest to thy people." Ah, says such an one, what a happy man was Naphtali when it is written of him, " O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the Lord." But the Psalmist could not see that the Lord was favourable to him, nor that he would be favourable to him. Then he steps on a little further, and says, " Is his mercy clean gone for ever ?" His mercy ? Ah then, you cannot be satisfied without the presence of the Lord, without the favour of the Lord,—why, you are getting worse ; and worse now you are crying out for the mercy of the Lord. Just now it was simply the presence of the Lord, and then the favour of the Lord, but now it is the mercy of the Lord. Is it not just so ? The more we are tried, the longer we live, the more deep is our consciousness of what poor, sinful creatures we are, and instead of our needing less of that grace that is in Christ, we shall learn as we go on we need more and more of it. " Is his mercy clean gone for ever ? doth his promise fail for evermore ?" What, can you not do without the yea and amen promise,—" In blessing I will bless thee" ? Now all these things, and some more I have to name presently, were absent ; he could realize the presence of none of them. Where is the Lord ? where can I find him ? I look on the right hand and on the left, backwards and forwards, but I cannot find him ; I can get no access to him. Where is the favour of the Lord ? I cannot see that he favours me. I fear, says such an one, that as I am a monstrous sinner in and of myself, he intends two hells for me—one here, and one hereafter. And where is the mercy of the Lord ? I cannot see that his mercy is towards me, that his mercy is round about me. And where is the promise of the Lord ? I see the promises, and I know they are exceeding great and precious promises, but they yield me no supply. There seems to be a stone upon the well's mouth of every promise. If I attempt to look into the promise, and drink, and get a little comfort from it, there is something seems to thrust me away. Oh, what a sacred, what a deep thing this Christian experience is ! This is the path which the vulture's eye hath not seen, and which the lion's whelps have not trodden ; yet nothing short of such a path as this can educate your soul for heaven, nothing short of such a path as this can enable you to sing the song that none can sing but them that are redeemed from among men ; nothing short of such a path as this will make you renounce all confidence in the flesh, and place

your hope in the Lord only. But again,—“Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?” Come, you are gaining a little confidence, I see. Is he not a Father? and hath he not a father’s heart? doth he not love poor sinners with all his heart? “As a father pitieth his children, so doth the Lord pity them that fear him.” My sins are numerous, but his mercies are more numerous; my sins are great, but his mercies are greater. He hath said, “For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee.” Is this the case? Hath he done all this? Ah, if he meant to destroy me, he would not have taught me my need of his presence by Christ Jesus; he would not have taught me my need, or rather, I never should have known my need of his favour, that favour that is by Christ Jesus; I should not have known my need of that mercy that is by Christ Jesus, of that promise that is in Christ Jesus, of that superabounding grace that is by Christ Jesus, I should not have felt my need of the innumerable tender mercies of the blessed God. Now these are the things that the man born of God is taught to feel his need of, and to seek after them. “For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee at a time when thou mayest be found.”

But let us look at this infirmity. Men tell us that we ought not to doubt and fear; and as I just now observed, I am quite aware that we are poor, unbelieving creatures; but I must just say in this part, that every soul taught of God is very jealous lest he should have an unauthorised confidence in God, lest he should have anything but a divinely authorized confidence in God. “Give a reason,” saith one, “with meekness of the hope that is in you;” and every one that is saved can give some scriptural, experimental reason why he hopes in God. Now you just ask the Christian the value or the estimate he puts upon a divinely authorized confidence in God. Why, say you, should we not all have confidence in God? You should not have confidence in him that he has loved you unless you have scriptural reason to believe it; you should not have confidence in Jesus Christ that he died for you unless you have reason to believe it; and that reason I have in some measure already anticipated,—namely, a deep and solemn consciousness of your need of those mercies that are by Jesus Christ. But coming again to the Christian,—if the Christian were asked, when he is reminded of a divinely authorized confidence in God, that the Holy Spirit brings home the word with power, endears the Saviour, sheds abroad God’s everlasting love, gives a sense of pardoning mercy, and makes that man feel that he may have full confidence in God, that this God is his God; if that Christian were asked, what, of all things that you can think of beneath the sun, of

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all things you can desire, of all things you ever heard of, or of all things you could ever dream of, what above all others would you like to have? I know what the answer would be; the answer would be, that faith, or if I keep for a moment or two to the word "confidence," that confidence in God of which God himself is the author. Ah, what are silver and gold to this confidence in God; and what is health, what are friends, what is life itself, what are all earthly possessions, compared with this full confidence in God? I am sure in my own mind that if any one had gone to Lazarus, and proposed an exchange both of place and of state with the rich man arrayed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day, that Lazarus, though full of sores, would have disdained the thought. Why, he would have said, that man's glory is only a butterfly glory; the autumn is coming on, the winter of death will presently overtake him; he will be stripped of the whole, and he will have nothing to do then but lift up a hopeless prayer in hell; he will be sunk to the lowest degree of degradation; whereas I, though now repulsive in the eyes of the world, and very few would care to take my position, yet I know the Lord, and have full confidence in him, sweet assurance of interest in him, in his love, in his mercy, in his salvation. And though the dogs lick my sores, and I lie at the rich man's gate, a poor, repulsive object, so that people run on the other side of the way lest I should infect them, and pass me full of pity; yet I am happier with the presence and love of God than all the gold, and silver, and possessions of this world could make me. For a wounded spirit who can bear? but when the spirit is healed, and the breach made up between the soul and God, when God dwells in the soul, and the soul dwells in God, and God becomes its strength, such an one then looks at his troubles, his difficulties, and doubts, and asks the defiant question,—“Is there anything too hard for the Lord?” We cannot have too much confidence in him providing we are authorized to do so; I mean confidence of interest in his everlasting love and mercy. What an encouragement is it, then, to the tried to think that your doubtings, and fearings, and tremblings will turn out at last to be only infirmities. Men-made divines may turn these infirmities into crimes, and may chide us for doubting and for fearing; but the Lord will hold it as an infirmity. And they scold us sometimes and storm at us because of our doubts and fears; and yet my experience teaches me that we are in this matter spiritually just as the woman was literally that Satan had bound, and she could in no wise lift up herself. So you see she had tried, and I dare say many others had tried too to lift her up; but she could not lift herself up and others could not. I dare say there were some doctors in that day who said to her, If you will adopt our plan you will soon be

made straight. But she was not made straight; and the devil laughed at all these plans and at the woman's attempts, and there she was, bowed down for eighteen years. But the dear Saviour passed by, and he said, "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity." She might have said, How can that be, Lord? for he told her she was healed before she was. Well then, where was the truth of it? It was done in the high court of heaven, it was done in the eternal and unalterable purpose of the blessed God. Therefore Jesus touched her, she was made straight, and glorified God; and of course the Pharisees found fault because he did it on the Sabbath-day. So you may be as religious now as you like if you don't show it on the spiritual Sabbath-day, on pure free grace, gospel grounds; that new and eternal Sabbath that Christ has brought in. The Pharisees were offended, but the woman cared nought for that; she knew she was crooked, and that she could not make herself straight; and when she was made straight she knew who did it. So that she had those three things, and I know what would follow. Just so the poor sinner feels he is a poor crooked thing, and he cannot make himself straight; but when the Lord comes in, he makes the crooked things straight; he raises us up above our infirmities, our faith overcomes our unbelief, and we stand straight by the perfection of Christ; and I know what follows. Why, what will follow, say you? Several things will follow. The first will be very great love to the Lord. Ah, what a covenant God! what a Jesus Christ! what a blessed Spirit! what a blessed gospel. And the next thing that will follow will be a determination to be all your days devoted to and decided for such a God as this. And the next thing that will follow will be safety in death, and then resurrection to eternal glory.

Let me, after these few remarks, look at *the remedy*;—"I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High. It is very encouraging and pleasing to see scattered through the Scriptures the remedy for the infirmities of the people of God. Time will not allow me to name one-half of the scriptures I should name as the remedy for their infirmities. Now the Psalmist says, "I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High." You will see that the right hand of the Most High refers to Christ; and the Psalmist shows in the after-part of the Psalm that by the word "years" he means the ancient and special interpositions of the Most High in a long succession of years on behalf of his people. And these things are put upon record that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope, and be encouraged to expect a repetition, which there will be in substance and spirit, though not in form, down to the end of time. The first thing the Psalmist names is the greatness of God. "Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary," meaning

Christ, of course ;—"who is so great a God as our God?" Here, then, is God's great love. "Who is so great a God as our God?" What love is there so great as the love of God ; what love is there like the love of God ? "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." And so of all the blessings that are in Christ Jesus. Then again, wisdom ;—who is so great in wisdom as our God ? His understanding is infinite. Why, those of you that may be blessed with a very wide range, not confined to a narrow circle as I am in these things,—those of you that are blessed with a very wide range of acquaintance with the eternal plans and settlement of the Most High, why, you know only a small part, and, knowing only a small part, you look at that part without comprehending the other, and that part by itself looks very detrimental to your welfare ; but if you could go far enough to see the whole of Jehovah's plan concerning you, you would say,—that will tell in well, and that will tell in well, and it will all tell in well ; for "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." The Lord enable us to reject our own wisdom, and to feel as did the Psalmist when he said, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me into glory."

Then again, power. What a wonderful thing that is ! What is there under which he cannot sustain us ? Why, one of old was so acquainted with God's power, that he made a paradoxical declaration concerning it. He saith, "When I am weak, then am I strong ;" when I feel that the Lord must do everything, that he must be everything, that I have no might to come against his great host of trials and difficulties. "Neither know we," said Jehoshaphat, "what to do, but our eyes are up unto thee." And Jehovah stepped in in the majesty of his power, scattered the foe, gave them the victory ; and there was the remedy for the infirmity ; he could no longer doubt or fear. "Who is so great a God as our God ?" And then his faithfulness ; his faithfulness is wonderful. The Lord brought home the latter part of the 8th verse of the 54th of Isaiah with power to my soul about forty-three years ago,—going on, you see, for half a hundred years,—"With everlasting kindness will I have mercy upon thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." Well, I have doubted it a great many times since, and, when things go adversely, I say, Is this kindness ? is this mercy ? is this my Redeemer ? But when I look at the effect of these things, that they keep me in my place,—for I am rather conceited, or soon should be, and rather self-righteous, and very soon should show it ; if the Lord had not not kept me down, I should have turned round and beaten the handmaidens and the servants long ago :—Doubting and fearing ! you poor, decrepit, helpless creatures ! Why don't you march along as

I do ! But, instead of this, as Newton saith,

“He made me feel the hidden evils of my heart,
Let the angry powers of hell assault my soul in every part.”

and he has made me in my own eyes the vilest of them all. So the apostle Paul, lest he should be exalted above measure, there was given to him a thorn in the flesh to keep him in his place, and keep him down. And I do believe, whatever trouble the Lord has ever visited me with has been nothing but mercy, love, and compassion. As I said just now, we see now only one part of his plan ; but when he afterwards comes, and we see the happy end thereof, then we can bless God for the trial, and say,—

“From all their afflictions his glory shall spring,
The deeper their sorrows, the louder they'll sing.”

So then, great love, great wisdom, great power, and great faithfulness. “Great is thy faithfulness.” The changes I undergo do not make any difference ; his promise, love, power, and wisdom are still the same—a faithful and unchanging God. But another part of the remedy is eternal redemption. “Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph ;”—the eternal redemption that is by Jesus Christ. Redemption carries the idea, as you are aware, of debtor and creditor. We are in captivity ; we are represented as debtors ; our sins of omission and commission are represented as debts, and we are lawful captives, held by the law of God. Jesus Christ came and paid the price that was owed, and we sing,—

“Thou hast redeemed our souls with blood,
Hast set the prisoners free.”

Therefore whatever you owe, whether you are a ten thousand talent debtor, or a five hundred pence debtor, or a fifty pence debtor ;—I should be puzzled to find a fifty pence debtor I think among the people of God ; they generally take the largest sum, I think, most of them, I believe they do, and therefore know that if they are redeemed, they are redeemed at an infinite cost. Jesus Christ paid the debt ; and so, when this eternal redemption comes in, everything being thus settled on our behalf, there is nothing to hold us fast ; there is not anything can hold us fast unless it has a legal hold of us, and as the law by the redemption of Christ is dead to us, and we are dead to that, there is nothing can legally hold us. The grave itself will not be able to hold us, because it has nothing legal on its side. “O death, I will be thy plagues ; O grave I will be thy destruction ; repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.” This is a sweet remedy, is it not, for our infirmity. The Lord does not look to us for anything ; Jesus hath paid the mighty debt we owed. Those whose mighty debt is thus paid, and who are brought

to see how it was paid, to receive the testimony thereof, and to rejoice therein, understand what the holy scripture saith, that "the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be unto them, sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Then he goes on, in the third place, to special interpositions. "The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid; the depths also were troubled." Not, the waters saw *the people*, and were afraid; not, the depths were troubled at *the people*. Your troubles care nought for you, your afflictions care nought for you; when Satan comes in like a flood, he cares nought for you, laughs at all your attempts. But then there stands the testimony that "The Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him;" and so, these troubles, these waters, are personified;—The waters saw "*thee*." Why, as soon as ever your troubles see the Lord, they scamper off directly. Where do they go to? I don't know, and don't care, so that I get rid of them; off they go, and I see no more of them. The mountains flow down at his presence; the valleys are exalted. And then in the last verse the Psalmist says, "Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron." Now Moses was the mediator, as you find in Galatians; he stood between God and the people, and was a type of Christ. And so the Lord leads his people by the mediation of his dear Son. As he led his people by the manna, and the water that flowed from the rock, so he leads his people now by the mediation of his dear Son. As the Lord liveth, but for the mediation of Christ I could take not one more step towards heaven; but his mediation has opened the way, keeps the way open. "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." "Thou leddest thy people like a flock," with all the gentleness that the weakest lamb requires and needs; whatever care they need, thou wilt exercise it by the mediation of thy dear Son. "Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron." What does Aaron represent? The priesthood. What priesthood? Melchizedek's, the antitypical priesthood. And so they are led not only by the mediation of Christ, or Christ's work as the Mediator, but by the eternal perfection of Christ's priesthood. Oh, if I am to be favoured according to that perfection, accepted according to that perfection, and to have possession of heaven according to the perfection that is in Christ, I am happy for ever. My troubles, and doubts, and fears, will be all lost in the Jordan; they will all pass away;—"The Egyptians ye have seen to-day, ye shall see no more for ever;" but shout victory through the blood of the Lamb through all the plains of heaven.

I must just quote a scripture or two, and then close, expressive of the remedy for our infirmity; that is, our inability to believe, our inability to pray, and our inability to do a great many other things

as we would. We are easily hindered, but there is not anything can hinder the Lord our God. I go to the last chapter but one of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, and I find a remedy for infirmity there; and as sure as you exist, if the remedy suit you it will be applied some day, if it has not been applied already. What is the remedy? Why, the apostle's thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, he calls an infirmity, and prayed to the Lord. And what is the remedy? "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Well then, he says, "I will rather glory in my infirmities." I will glory that I am such a poor creature, that I have plenty for grace to do, plenty for the Holy Spirit, plenty for Christ, and plenty for God the Father to do, plenty for faith and prayer to do. If that is it, Lord, I will take pleasure in my necessities and infirmities, if it is that kind of experience that displays to my soul the magnificent sufficiency of thy grace, wraps me in the deeps of that eternity to which I am hastening, and shows me that I have no hope but that which grace gives me. One more word upon this infirmity, and the remedy. The apostle Paul saith, "We know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." There is something the matter with them, they hardly know what; "and he that searcheth the hearts," that is, Christ Jesus, "knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit," what the Holy Spirit intends for us, "because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Therefore here is the Holy Spirit helping you; here is Christ searching the heart, to see what necessities he finds there, in order that he may send the Holy Spirit to supply them, and that according to the will of God. How does the Holy Spirit help our infirmities? By the truth of God. As though the apostle should say, I will give you a sample of that by which the Holy Spirit helps our infirmity. Peradventure there may be some here this morning that have infirmities of the wrong sort; your infirmities not consisting of necessities, but consisting of your blindness to your state, and to God's truth; so that what I am going to name in conclusion as a remedy for infirmity you would rather despise than not. Let us hear what the apostle saith. "Whom he did foreknow,"—that is part of the remedy,—"he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." Oh, then, I am to look to God in his knowledge of me, and in his decree in my favour; I am conformed to the image of his Son, for what he says exactly accords with my feelings; my soul nicely responds to what the dear Saviour says, and what is that but conformity to his heavenly image?

“Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called ; and whom he called, them he also justified ; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” Here is no creature-doing in it, you see ; the creature gets all the advantage, but not a single thing does he do in this matter ; it is God’s knowledge, God’s decree, God’s power to call, God’s righteousness to justify, and God’s glory to glorify. Well then, “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things ?” So the conclusion is this, summing up the whole of the remedy,—“What shall we say, then, to these things ? If God be for us,” after this order of things, “who can be against us ?” And you know how the apostle runs on at the close of that chapter, defying any one to fasten anything before God to their charge, and defying any power to separate them from the love of Christ.

It matters not to our God whether gates of brass or bars of iron stand in his way, all must give way before him. Let us never forget that all his interpositions for us are by the substitutional work of the Mediator of the better covenant ; and though he in many respects slay us, yet should we hope in him. Hear what the Saviour saith upon this matter: “Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye *shall have them*. The remedy then is sure, and the application thereof in due time certain ; and as of old, so now they that looked unto him were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed. Well may it, therefore, be written, Have faith in God. What can he not, and what will he not do ? Why, exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think. We may, therefore, well remember “the years of the right hand of the Most High,” sublime and lowly eternity on our side ; and the more we can look to the eternal, the less we shall be moved by temporals, and shall think no prize good enough to seek but that of eternal glory. And this is the very essence of the spirit of the gospel,—for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, thought nothing of the shame. Grace enable us in our measure to do likewise.

Such, then, is soul-trouble ; such is the remedy. May we live in the consciousness of both, in the realization of both ; may the Lord try us to the utmost rather than allow us to be deceived, and still teach us by his good Spirit.