

# The Poor Man's Friend (1907)

by C.H. Spurgeon

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*C.H. Spurgeon teaches that God is the ultimate friend and advocate for the spiritually poor, who must fully commit their helpless souls and sins to Christ for salvation and healing.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 10:14, John 3:17, Isaiah 53:6, 1 John 2:1, Matthew 9:12, Luke 15:7

**Topics:** "Spiritual Poverty", "Divine Justice"

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## Description

In this powerful 1907 sermon, C.H. Spurgeon explores the theme of God's special care for the poor and oppressed, both physically and spiritually. He defines the spiritually poor as those who recognize their sinfulness and inability to save themselves, and he urges them to fully commit their lives and sins to Jesus Christ, who acts as surety, advocate, and healer. Spurgeon emphasizes God's justice against oppression and the believer's need to trust Christ completely for salvation and protection. This sermon is a compelling call to faith and reliance on God's grace.

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## Transcript

"The poor commits himself unto You." Psalm 10:14.

GOD is the poor man's Friend. The poor man, in his helplessness and despair, leaves his case in the hands of God and God undertakes to care for him. In the days of David—and I suppose, in this respect, the world has but little improved—the poor man was the victim of almost everybody's cruelty and sometimes he was very shamefully oppressed. If he sought redress for his wrongs, he generally only increased them, for he was regarded as a rebel against the existing order of things. And when he asked for even a part of what was his by right, the very magistrates and rulers of the land became the instruments of his oppressors and made the yoke of his bondage to be yet heavier than it was before. Tens of thousands of eyes, full of tears, have been turned to Jehovah and He has been invoked to interpose between the oppressor and the oppressed, for God is the ultimate resort of the helpless. The Lord executes righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed—He undertakes the cause of all those that are downtrodden.

If the history of the world is rightly read, it will be found that no case of oppression has been allowed to go long unpunished. The Assyrian empire was a very cruel one, but what is now left of Nineveh and Babylon? Go to the heaps of ruins by the banks of the Tigris and the Euphrates and see what will become of an empire which is made to be only an instrument of oppression in the hands of an emperor and the great men under him. It has ceased to be more than a name—its power has vanished and its palaces have

been destroyed. In later times there sprang up the mighty empire of Rome and even now, wherever we wander, we see traces of its greatness and splendor. How came it to fall? Many reasons have been assigned, but you may rest assured that at the bottom of them all was the cruelty practiced towards the slaves and other poor people who were absolutely in the power of the aristocracy and oligarchy who formed the dominant party in the empire. There is a fatal flaw in the foundations of any throne that does not execute justice—and it matters not though the empire seems to stand high as Heaven and to raise its pinnacles to the skies—down it must come if it is not founded upon right. When ten thousand slaves have cried to God, apparently in vain, it has not really been in vain, for He has registered their cries and in due season has avenged their wrongs! And when the poor toilers who have reaped the rich man's fields have been deprived of their harshly-earned wages and have cast their complaints into the court of Heaven, they have been registered there and God has, at the right time, taken up their cause and punished their oppressors!

For many years the Negro slaves cried to God to deliver them and, at last, deliverance came to the joy of the emancipated multitudes, yet not without suffering to all the nations that had been concerned in that great wrong. And here, too, if the employers of labor refuse to give to the agricultural laborer his just wage, God will surely visit them in His wrath. At this very day we have serfs in England who, with sternest toil, cannot earn enough to keep body and soul together and to maintain their families as they ought to be maintained. And where masters are thus refusing to their laborers a fair remuneration for their work, let them know that whoever may excuse them and whatever may be said of the laws of political economy, God does not judge the world by political economy! He judges the world by this rule, that men are bound to do that which is just and right to their fellow men—and it can never be right that a man should work like a slave, be housed worse than a horse and have food scarcely fit for a dog! But if the poor commit their case to God, He will undertake it and I, as one of God's ministers, will never cease to speak on behalf of the rights of the poor. The whole question has two sides—the rights of the employers and the rights of the men. Let not the men do as some

workmen do, ask more than they ought—yet, on the other hand, let not the employers domineer over their men, but remember that God is the Master of us all and He will see that right is done to all. Let us all act rightly towards one another, or we shall feel the weight of His hand and the force of His anger.

Now, having thus given the literal meaning of my text, I am going to spiritualize it, which I should have no right to do if I had not first explained the primary reference of David's words, "The poor commits himself unto You."

I. THERE ARE SPIRITUALLY POOR MEN and these do what other poor men have done in temporal things—

they commit their case into the hands of God.

Let me try to define the spiritually poor. They are, first, those who have no merits of their own. There are some people in the world who are, according to their own estimate, very rich in good works. They think that they began well and that they have gone on well—they hope to continue to do well right to the end of their lives. They do confess, sometimes, that they are miserable sinners, but that is merely because that expression is in the Prayer Book. They are half sorry it is there, but they suppose that it must have been meant for other people, not for themselves. So far as they know, they have kept all the Commandments from their youth up. They have been just in their dealings with their fellow men and they do not feel that

they are under any very serious obligations even to God, Himself. I have nothing to say to such people except to remind them that the Lord Jesus Christ said, "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Christ came to bring healing to those who are spiritually sick—you say that you are perfectly well, so you must go your own way and Christ will go in another direction—towards sinners.

Further, the poor people of whom I am speaking are not only totally without anything like merit, absolutely bankrupt of any goodness and devoid of anything of which they could boast, but they are also without strength to perform any such good works in the future. They are so poor, spiritually, that they cannot even pray as they would—and they do not even feel their poverty as they would like to feel it. After having read this Bible, they wish they could re-read it with greater profit. And when they weep over sin, they feel their sin in their very tears and need to weep in penitence over their tears. They are such poor people that they can do absolutely nothing without Christ and so poor that in them, that is, in their flesh, there dwells no good thing. They did once think that there might be something good in them, but they have searched their nature through most painfully and they have discovered that unless Divine Grace shall do everything for them, where God is they can never come.

Perhaps some of you say, "These must be very bad people." Well, they are no better than they should be, yet I may tell you another thing concerning them—they are no worse than many of those who think themselves a great deal better. They have this lowly opinion of themselves because the Grace of God has taught them to think rightly and truthfully about themselves in relation to God. They are, in outward appearance, and as far as we can judge, quite as good as others and better than some. In certain respects, they might be held up as examples to others. This is what we say of them, but they have not a good word to say of themselves. Rather, they put their finger upon their lips and blush at the remembrance of what they feel themselves to be. Or if they must speak of themselves at all, they say, "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned, every one, to his own way."

II. That brings me to notice, secondly, WHAT THESE POOR PEOPLE DO. They commit themselves unto God. This is a very blessed description of what true faith does. The poor in spirit feel that their case is so desperate that they cannot keep it in their own charge and, therefore, they commit it to God. I will try to show you how they do that.

First, they commit their case to God as a debtor commits his case to a surety. The man is so deeply in debt that he cannot pay his creditors even a farthing in the pound. But here is someone who can pay everything that the debtor owes and he says to him, "I will stand as security for you. I will be bondsman for you. I will give full satisfaction to all your creditors and discharge all your debts." There is no person who is deeply in debt who would not be glad to know of such a surety, both able and willing to stand in his place and to discharge all his responsibilities! If the surety said to this poor debtor, "Will you turn over all your liabilities to me? Will you sign this document, empowering me to take all your debts upon myself and to be responsible for you? Will you let me be your bondsman and surety?" "Ah," the poor man would reply, "that I will, most gladly!" That is just what spiritually poor men have done to the Lord Jesus Christ—committed their case with all their debts and liabilities into the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ—and He has undertaken all the responsibility for them!

I think I hear someone say, "But will Christ really stand in the sinner's place in such a way as that?" Oh, yes, for He did stand, in anticipation, in the sinner's place before the foundation of the world and He actually stood there when He died upon the accursed tree. By His death He obtained a full discharge of

the debts of all those whose Surety He had

become. [See Sermons #694, Volume 12—SIN LAID ON JESUS and #925, Volume 16—INDIVIDUAL SIN LAID ON JESUS.] Dear Soul, will you not commit all your affairs into His hands? Are you not willing to let Him stand as your Surety, to clear you of all your liabilities? "Willing?" you say! "Ah, that I am and not only willing, but right glad shall I be for Him to take my place and relieve me of the burden that is crushing me to the dust." Then it is done for you and so done that it can never be undone! Suppose that one of you had taken all my debts upon you and that you were quite able and willing to pay them? I would not go home and fret about my debts. I would rejoice to think that you had taken them upon yourself and that, therefore, they would no longer be mine! If Christ has taken your sins upon Himself—and He has done so if you have truly trusted Him—your sins have ceased to be! They are blotted out forever! Christ nailed to His Cross the record of everything that was against us and now every poor sinner who is indebted to God's Law and who trusts in Christ, may know that his debt is cancelled and that he is clear of all liability for it forever! Next, we commit our case to Christ as a client does to a solicitor and advocate. [See Sermon #515, Volume 9—the sinners

ADVOCATE.] You know that when a man has a suit at law, (I hope

that none of you may ever have such a suit), if he has an advocate to plead his cause, he does not plead for himself. He will probably get into trouble if he does. It is said that when Erskine was pleading for a man who was being tried for murder, his client, being dissatisfied with the way in which his defense was being conducted, wrote on a slip of paper, "I'll be hanged if I don't plead for myself." Erskine wrote in reply, "You'll be hanged if you do!" It is very much like that with us—if we attempt to plead for ourselves, we shall be sure to go wrong. We must have the Divine Advocate who alone can defend us against the suits of Satan and speak with authority on our behalf even before the bar of God. We must commit our case to Him, that He may plead for us—and then it will go rightly enough.

Remember also that any man who has committed his case to an advocate, must not interfere with it himself. If anybody from the other side should wait upon him and say, "I wish to speak to you about that suit," he must reply, "I cannot go into the matter with you. I must refer you to my solicitor." "But I want to reason about it. I need to ask you a few questions about the case." "No," he says, "I cannot listen to what you have to say—you must go to my solicitor." How much trouble Christians would save themselves if when they have committed their case into the hands of Jesus, they would leave it there and not attempt to deal with it on their own account! I say to the devil, when he comes to tempt me to doubt and fear, "I have committed my soul to Jesus Christ and He will keep it in safety. You must bring your accusations to Him, not to me. I am His client and He is my Counselor. Why should I have such an Advocate as He is, and then plead for myself?" John does not say, "If any man sins, let him be his own advocate"—he says, "If any man sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous." Dear Brothers and Sisters, leave your case with Christ—He can handle it wisely—you cannot! Remember that if the devil and you get into an argument, he is much older than you are and far more clever than you are—and he knows a great many points of Law that you do not know. You should always refer him to the Savior, who is older than he is and knows much more about Law and everything else than he does—and who will answer him so effectually as to silence him forever! So, poor tried and tempted Soul, commit your case to the Great Advocate and He will plead for you before the Court of King's Bench in Heaven—and your suit will be sure to succeed through His advocacy!

Further, sinners commit their case to Christ as a patient commits his case to the physician. We, poor sin-sick Sinners, put our case into the hands of Jesus that He may heal us of all our depravities, evil tendencies and infirmities. If anyone asks, "Will He undertake my case if I come to Him?" I answer—Yes, He came to be the Physician of souls, to heal all who trust Him. There never was a case in which He could not heal, for He has a wonderful remedy, a catholicon, a cure for all diseases. If you put your case into His hands, the Holy Spirit will shed abroad His love in your heart—and there is no spiritual disease that can withstand that wondrous remedy! Are you predisposed to quickness of temper? He can cure that! Are you inclined to be indolent? Is there a sluggish spirit within you? He can cure that! Are you proud, or are your tendencies towards covetousness, worldliness, lust or ambition? Christ can cure all those evils! When He was on this earth, He had all manner of patients brought to Him, yet He never was baffled by one case. And your case, whatever it may be, will be quite an easy one to Him if you only go and commit it into His hands! This building seems to me like a great hospital [See Sermon #2260, Volume 38—CHRIST'S HOSPITAL.] full of

sin-sick souls and I pray the Great Physician to come here and heal them all! No, I must correct myself, for He is here and as He walks through these aisles, and around these galleries, I beseech you to say to Him, "Good Master, I commit myself to You. I take You to be my Savior. O save me from my constitutional temperament, my besetting sins and everything else that is contrary to Your holy will!" He will hear you, for He has never yet refused to heed the cry of a poor sin-sick soul. Do not let Him go by you without praying to Him, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Come, Lord, and lay Your hands upon each one of us and we shall be made perfectly whole!

As to the future, the spiritually poor commit themselves to Christ in the same way in which the pilgrims described in The Pilgrim's Progress commit themselves to the charge of Mr. Greatheart, that He might fight all their battles for them and conduct them safely to the Celestial City. In the old war times, when the captains of merchant vessels wanted to go to foreign countries and they were afraid of being captured by the privateers of other nations, they generally went in company under the convoy of a man-of-war to protect them. And that is the way you and I must go to Heaven. Satan's privateers will try to capture us, but we commit ourselves to the protection of Jesus, the Lord High Admiral of all the seas! And we poor little vessels, by His Grace, sail safely under His convoy! When any enemy seeks to attack us, we need not be afraid. He can blow them all out of the water if He pleases, but He will never suffer one of them to injure a solitary vessel that is entrusted to His charge. Sinner, give yourself up to the charge of Jesus to be convoyed to Heaven! And you over-anxious children of God, lay down all your anxieties at the feet of Jesus and rest in His Infinite Power and Love which will never let you be lost!

I might thus multiply figures and illustrations of how we commit ourselves to Christ. We do it very much in the way in which our blind friends, sitting under the pulpit, got here this evening—they came by committing themselves to the care of guides. Some of them can walk a good long way without a guide, but others could not have found their way here tonight without some friend upon whose arm they could lean. That is the way to get to Heaven, by leaning upon Jesus! Do not expect to see Him, but trust yourself to Him and lean hard upon Him. He loves to be trusted and faith has a wonderful charm for Him. I was once near the Mansion House and as I stood there, a poor blind man, who wished to cross over to the bank, said to me, "Please, Sir, lead me across. I know you will, for I am blind." I was not sure that I could do so, for it is not an easy task to lead a blind man across that part where so many cabs and omnibuses are constantly passing, but I managed it as best I could. I do not think I could have done it if the poor man had not said to me, "I know you will," for then I thought that I must. And if you come to Christ and say, "Lord Jesus, will

You lead me to Heaven?" and tell Him that you are sure that He will never let a poor blind soul miss its way, that you are sure you can trust Him, that He is such a kind-hearted Savior that He will never thrust away a guilty sinner who thus commits himself into His hands—I am sure that He will be glad to save you and that He will rejoice over you as He leads you safely home to Heaven! If any of you can see with your natural eyes and yet are spiritually blind, be glad that there is a blessed Guide to whom you can commit yourself! Christ leads the blind by a way that they know not and He will continue to lead them until He brings them to the land where they will open their eyes and see with rapture and surprise the splendors of Paradise and rejoice that they are all their own forever!

Is not this work of the poor committing themselves to Christ a very easy task? It is a very easy thing for a debtor to commit his debts to his surety, for anyone to commit his case to his advocate, for a patient to trust himself to his physician, for a pilgrim to feel safe under a powerful convoy and for a blind man to trust in his guide—all this is very simple and easy. It does not need much explanation—and faith in Jesus is just as simple and just as easy as that! Why is it that we sometimes find that faith is difficult? It is because we are too proud to believe in Jesus. If we did but see ourselves as we really are, we would be willing enough to trust the Savior—but we do not like going to Heaven like blind people who need a guide, or like debtors who cannot pay a farthing in the pound. We want to have a finger in the pie. We want to do something towards our own salvation. We want to have some of the praise and glory of it. God save us from this evil spirit!

While it is a very simple thing for the spiritually poor to commit themselves to Christ, let me also say that it is an act which greatly glorifies God. Christ is honored when any soul trusts in Him—it is a joy to His heart to be trusted. When the feeble cling to Him, He feels such joy as mothers feel when their little ones cling to them. Christ is glad when poor

sin-sick souls come and trust Him. It was for this very purpose that He came into the world—to meet the needs of guilty sinners. So this plan, while it is easy for us, is glorifying to Him.

And I will add that it is a plan that never fails any who trust to it. There never was a single soul that committed its case to Christ and then found Him fail—and there never shall be such a soul so long as the earth endures! He that believes in Christ shall not be ashamed or confounded, world without end! "He that believes on the Son has everlasting life," and everlasting life can never be taken away from one who has received it!

I close by asking a question—If the spiritually poor commit themselves unto God, what comes of it? Why, it makes them very happy! But are they not sinful? Oh, yes, but they commit themselves to God's Grace and His Grace blots out all their sins forever! Are they not feeble? Oh, yes, but their feebleness leads them to commit themselves to His Omnipotence—and His strength is made perfect in their weakness. Are they not needy? Oh, yes, but then they bring their needs to Him and they receive out of His fullness, "Grace for Grace." But are they not often in danger? Oh, yes, in a thousand dangers! But they come and hide beneath the shadow of God's wings and He covers them with His feathers and there they rest in perfect security! His Truth becomes their shield and buckler so that they need not fear any foe. But are they not apt to slip? Oh, yes, but they commit themselves to Him who gives His angels charge over them—to keep them in all their ways and to bear them up in their hands, lest they should dash their feet against a stone. But are they not very fickle and changeable? Oh, yes, but they commit themselves to Him who says, "I am Jehovah, I change not." But are they not unworthy? Oh, yes, in themselves they are utterly unworthy! But they commit themselves to Him who is called The Lord Their Righteousness—and when they are clothed

in His Righteousness, they are looked upon by God as being "without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." But have they no sickness? Yes, but they commit themselves to Jehovah-Rophi, the Lord the Healer—and He either heals their sickness, or gives them the Grace to endure it. Are they not poor? Yes, many of them are extremely so! But they commit themselves to the faithful Promiser and so bread is given them and their water is sure. But don't they expect to die? Oh, yes, unless the Lord should first come, but they are not afraid to die! This is the point, above all others, in which the spiritually poor commit themselves unto God. They have learned that sweet prayer of David so well that it is often on their tongues, "Into Your hands I commit my spirit: You have redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth." They committed their spirit into God's hands years ago and He has kept them until now— and they know that He will not fail them in their dying hour.

In conclusion, I pray every spiritually poor heart to commit itself to God. I like to do this every morning. Satan often comes and says, "You are no Christian! All your supposed Christian experience is false." Very well, suppose it has been false? Then I will start afresh—saint or no saint! I will begin over again by trusting Christ to be my Savior. When you, dear Friend, wake tomorrow morning, let this be the first thing that you do—commit yourself to Jesus Christ for the whole of the day. Say, "My Lord, here is my heart which I commit to You. While I am away from home, may my heart be full of the fragrance of Your blessed Presence. And when I return at night, may I still find my heart in Your kind keeping!" And every night, before we go to sleep, let us pray—

"Should swift death this night overtake us, And our couch become our tomb, May the morn in Heaven awake us, Clad in light and deathless bloom!"

Are you going to a foreign land? Then renew the committal of your life to God. Are you going to change your state, and enter upon the joys and responsibilities of married life? Then commit yourself to God. Are you going to a new situation, or opening a new business? Is any change coming over you? Then make a new committal, or a re-committal of your soul to the Lord Jesus—only take care that you do it heartily and thoroughly—and make no reserve. I rejoice to feel that I have committed myself to Christ as the slave of old committed himself to his master. When the time came for him to be set free under the Jewish Law, he said to his master, "No, I do not want to go. I love you, I love your children, I love your household, I love your service. I do not want to be free." Then you know that the master was to take an awl and fasten him by the ear to the doorpost. I suppose this was done to see whether the man really wanted to remain with his master or not. Ah, Beloved, some of us have had our ears bored long ago! We have given ourselves up to Christ and we have a mark upon us which we can never lose. Were we not buried with Him by Baptism unto death—a symbol that we are dead to the world and buried to the world for His dear sake? Well, in that same way, give yourself wholly up to

Jesus! Commit yourself to Him. As that young bride commits all her life's joys and hopes to that dear bridegroom into whose face she looks so lovingly, so, O Souls, commit yourselves to that dearest Bridegroom in earth or Heaven—the Lord Jesus Christ! Commit yourselves to Him, to love and to be loved—His to obey, His to serve and His to be kept— His in life—and you need not add "till death us do part," but you may say, "till death shall wed us more completely and we shall sit together at the marriage banquet above and be forever and forever one before the Throne of God."

Thus the poor soul commits itself unto Christ, is married unto Christ, gets the portion which Christ possesses, becomes Christ's own and then lives with Christ forever! Oh that this might be the time in which many a man and many a woman would commit themselves to Christ! I do not merely mean you who

are poor in pocket, but you who are poor in spirit—I am asking you to commit yourselves to Christ. Do not put it off, but may this be the very hour in which you shall be committed to Christ and He shall take possession of you to be His forever and forever! Amen and Amen.

#### EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: PSALM31.

Verse 1. In You, O LORD, do I put my trust This is a good beginning. This is the fulcrum which will give us the necessary leverage for lifting any weight of sorrow or trouble that may be burdening us—"In You, O Jehovah, do I put my trust." Can each of us truthfully say that to begin with? If so, we may go on with David to the petitions that follow.

1. Let me never be ashamed: deliver me in Your righteousness. It would be to us the shame of shames if God, in whom we put our trust, could fail us. Then, indeed, might the scoffers say, "Where, now, is their God?" And what should we then be able to say of the righteousness of God? He has pledged Himself that He will never fail nor forsake any of His people. So, if He ever did fail them, what would become of His honor?

2. Bow down Your ear to me. "Listen to me, O Lord! Stoop down out of Your Glory to catch the faint accents of my sorrowing, almost expiring spirit."

2. Deliver me speedily."My case is urgent, Lord, for I am in deep distress. Delay will be dangerous and may be even fatal—"Deliver me speedily."

2. Be You my strong rock, for a house of defense to save me. David was so accustomed to hide in the rocks of Engedi and similar fastnesses, that we do not wonder that he found such a comparison as this come naturally to his mind—"Be You my strong rock, for a house of defense to save me."

3. For You are my rock and my fortress. Why did David just now pray God to be to him what he here says that God is? Surely it was in order that he might know experimentally what he already knew doctrinally—he wanted the Truth of God, in which he already believed, to be proven in his own experience, so he prayed to the Lord, "Be You my strong rock...for You are my rock and my fortress."

3. Therefore for Your name's sake. "For Your glory's sake, for Your honor's sake."

3. Lead me and guide me. "Lead me as a child needs to be led. Guide me as a traveler in a foreign land needs to be guided. I need You to both lead and to guide me."

4. Pull me out of the net that they have laid privately for me: for You are my strength Sometimes the Believer gets so entangled that he sees no way of escape. He is caught like a bird in the fowler's net and he is so surrounded by it that he cries to the Lord, "Pull me out of the net." He feels that he can only be delivered by the putting forth of God's power— and that is the reason why he adds, "O Lord, use Your strength on my behalf! Give a desperate tug and pull me out of the net that they have laid privately for me; for You are my strength."

5. Into Your hands I commit my spirit The dying words of Jesus may well be the living words of each one of His redeemed people. We ought continually to commit our spirit into our great Father's hands, for there is no other place that can be so safe and blessed as between the strong, almighty, never-failing hands of the eternal God!

5. You have redeemed me, O LORD God of Truth Redemption is such a blessed ground for confidence in God. Even the ordinary redemptions, such as David had experienced when the Lord had redeemed him out of the hand of his enemies and redeemed him out of troubles of many kinds, were great sources of consolation to David. But what shall we say of that rich, full, free redemption which Christ accomplished for His people upon Calvary's Cross? Think you that God will not keep those whom He has purchased with the blood of His own dear Son? Will He suffer those to perish who have cost

Him so dearly? Oh, no! None shall pluck them from His hands. This is a sound argument that David uses—"Into Your hands I commit my spirit: You have redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth."

6. I have hated them that regard lying vanities. That is, those that trusted in their idol gods which he calls by this contemptuous name, "lying vanities." David was not very respectful to false religions. He called them vanities and lies, and said, "I have hated them that regard them."

6, 7. But I trust in the LORD. I will be glad and rejoice in Your mercy: for You have considered my trouble; You have known my soul in adversities." "You have considered my trouble." You have looked at it, weighed it, understood it." When a wise man gives his consideration to a thing, we respect his judgment, but what shall we say of the consideration of God? This is a wonderful expression—"You have considered my trouble; You have known my soul in adversities." "When I hardly knew myself, and could not make out what I was or where I was, You have known all about me. You have known me when I was in rags and tatters, when I was so down at the heel that nobody else would acknowledge me. You did not discard me—"You have known my soul in adversities."

8-10. And have not shut me up into the hand of the enemy: You have set my feet in a large room. Have mercy upon me, O LORD, for I am in trouble: my eyes are consumed with grief. Yes, my soul and my belly. For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing. That is better than spending our years in sinning! Yet it is a painful experience when every breath seems to be drawn with a pang and the effort to live is itself a struggle, as it is in certain trying diseases.

10. 11. My strength fails because of my iniquity, and my bones are consumed. I was a reproach among all my enemies, but especially among my neighbors. They were the nearest to him and, therefore, could smite him the most keenly.

11. And a fear to my acquaintance. They did not like to acknowledge him even as an acquaintance. They were afraid of him. Yet what a light this verse throws upon David's previous declaration, "You have known my soul in adversities"!

12. I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind. The very man in whose honor, in the former times, the women out of all the cities of Israel sang, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands," now had sorrowfully to say, 'I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind.'

12. I am like a broken vessel. "Men think me of no more value than a piece of broken crockery that is flung away on the dunghill as utterly useless."

13. For I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side. The very best of men have had to smart under the wounds caused by that cruel, accursed thing, slander! No quality of purity, no degree of piety can screen a man from the tongue of slander. In fact, as the birds peck most at the ripest fruit, it is often the best of men who are most slandered.

13, 14. While they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life. But I trusted in You, O LORD: I said, You are my God. That is a grand utterance of the Psalmist! Now he is coming back to the point where he began—the Psalm is now in harmony with its keynote.

15. My times are in Your hands. My times are not in the hands of my enemies—they cannot hurt me without God's permission.

15, 16. Deliver me from the hand of my enemies, and from them that persecute me. Make Your face to shine upon Your servant. Oh, for the shining of God's face! How blessed and glorious they are! It is Heaven on earth to dwell within the circle of that light—but if we get out of the range of those rays, what joy can we have?

16. Save me for Your mercies' sake. That is a prayer for a sinner and a prayer for a saint—a prayer for every day of the year. "Save me for Your mercies' sake."

17-19. Let me not be ashamed, O LORD; for I have called upon You: let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave. Let the lying lips be put to silence which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous. Oh, how great is Your goodness, which You have laid up for them that fear You. Then be of good courage, you tried ones! Think of all the good things that are laid up in store for you—the treasures that are put away for the present. Nor is this all—"How great is Your goodness."

19. Which You have worked for them that trust in You before the sons of men! So there is goodness in the present as well as goodness in the future—goodness worked out as well as goodness stored up!

20. You shall hide them in the secret of Your Presence from the pride of man: You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues. There is nothing much worse than the strife of tongues. A pack of wolves would not be half as bad as a pack of tongues let loose upon a man! Wolves do but tear the flesh, but tongues devour a man's character and eat up his very life. Oh, how blessed it is to be kept secretly in God's royal pavilion from the strife of tongues!

21. Blessed be thee LORD; for He has showed me His marvelous kindness in a strong city. He has kept me in safety, and preserved me from every foe. Blessed be His holy name!

22, 23. For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before Your eyes: nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications when I cried unto You. O love the LORD, all you His saints. It seems as if David felt that he could not love the Lord sufficiently by himself, so he calls upon all the saints to bring their hearts full of love and yield their treasure unto God.

23. For the LORD preserves the faithful, and plentifully rewards the proud doer. He gives him a sharp blow with the back of His hand, but He gives to the righteous a full-handed mercy!

24. Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all you that hope in the LORD. Your heart is faint, but the Lord will put strength where there now is weakness. Therefore "be of good courage." Cowardice weakens, fear saps a man's strength—so "be of good courage," for your strength shall be equal to your day—and you shall yet win the victory, "all you that hope in the Lord."

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307

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