

73 Psalm 24

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Let his minions fawn around him, his servants anticipate his every wish, and his equals pay him respect and court his attention. Such an individual has gained all that this world can afford to render him happy, and thousands would envy his condition, because of the pleasure which it seems to promise. But enquire into the experience of such a man more fully ^xxxx and you will find him restless and dissatisfied-his mind constantly on the stretch for something which he has never yet realized, and with Solomon he is ready to exclaim "all is vanity and vexation of spirit" He meets with hopes and perplexities, and becomes disgusted with the deceitfulness of mankind. If he ^retires from society & lives in idleness, his ~~time drags along the tedious hours~~, existence is frequently a burden to him, and he is ready to wish that he had never been born. The poor old man begs his way from door to door with trembling limbs clothed in tattered rags, frequently enjoys more internal peace than the man of wealth from whose hand he solicits ^but a single copper or a morsel of bread to relieve his hunger.

Take the young lady of fashionable manners and occupations. Let her be a perfect model of beauty-her eye beaming with the luster of the diamond, and her cheek flushed with the vermilion of the rose\_ and ^xxx let her be the object of a thousand admirers. Trace this young lady thro' every changed and circumstance of life and you will find the evidences of sadness and disappointment. She is ~~made to excel and in the language of the Poet~~ will quietly discover that earthly xxx pleasures are like poppies spread

You seize the flower its bloom is shed

Psalm 73.24

"Thou shall guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory"

The favor of God is ^doubtless the highest privilege that can be enjoyed ^ in the present life ~~this would~~; this however ~~but even this~~ would avail us ^but little without a consciousness of our acceptance of in his sight. It is true, the irreligious are the & daily recipients of innumerable blessings from the Author of ~~every good and beneficial~~ I him they live; and move, and have their being\_ their tables are furnished by the bounties of his providence, and their bodies are clothed from the wardrobe of heaven\_ But without an acquaintance with God, the benefits which he confers upon the wicked will avail them nothing beyond he present world ^nor will they ~~and will not~~ afford them happiness (in the next life?) This truth is abundantly confirmed by the sacred (?) ~~word of God~~ and ^it(-quadlates?) with the experience of every unconvinced man

Look if you please, among every class of the unregenerate, whether in the kitchen or in the parlor, in the cottage or in the palace, and wherever the law of God is violated wherever his service is neglected, there you will find the evidences of dissatisfaction, and the marks of divine chastisement. Take for example the man of wealth ^without religion and let his stately mansion be adorned ^ decorated with furniture and trappings of the most costly kind\_ Let his table ^be crowded with smoking vial & sparkling wines\_ Let his splendid hall , resound with melody\_ his pleasure grounds excite the admiration of every beholder, and his travelling equipage the silent gaze of the multitude. Let his library be filled with books, his coffer with gold, and his barns with plenty

Or like the snow-flakes on the river

A moment white-and is gone forever

Or like the rains-bow lovely form

Evanescent amid the storm

When she reflects that her charms will presently ^fade disappear\_ that the voice of adulation will cease to flatter-that the sound of the violin will cease to delight that the cold grave will be her ^ last retreat from ^ a vain & delusive world- It ^is this that throws a melancholly gloom over the brightest pictures of earth, and embitters the cup of every worldly pleasure. "There is no peace to the wicked saith my god."

But take the character which we have described, in either case, and compare it with the experience of the Christian, and you will find that it furnishes a striking and pleasing contrast. The disciple of Christ feels contented under every dispensation of divine providence \_ in poverty's vale or abounding in wealth\_ when he reviews his life he discovers that he has endeavored to do and suffer the will of his heavenly father, when he examines his heart his hope is full of immortality, the clamors of conscience are hushed to silence, and he hears the sound of its approaching voice\_ his fellowship is with the Father and with his son Jesus Christ\_ when he is call to pass thro' the furnace of trial and affliction, the grace of God will be sufficient for him, and when he contemplates the future, he can exclaim in the language of our text, "thou shalt guide me with thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory"

Whether he considers the present or the future, he can adopt the language of the 28rd psalm, "The Lord is my Shepherd; and I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, and he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul, and leadeth me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil,: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preapest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil, and my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Here then we perceive that there is a great difference between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God, and those who serve him not between the children of this world and the children of light. And what is the ground of this difference between the two parties? It is simply this:- the man

of the world has sought happiness alone in the earthly objects, which are in congenial with the nature, the wants, and the large desires of the human soul, while the Christian has taken God for his portion the present world the house of his pilgrimage\_ the Lord Jesus Christ his polar star, the Bible the man of his counsel, the Holy Spirit his guide, and the glories of heaven his the recompense of his reward. ~~Well might the Psalmist exclaim in compare~~

In the Psalm from which our text is taken, (Asaph?) contrasts the prosperity of the wicked, with the seeming adversity of the righteous; and when he saw the inequality of their condition in the present life, he tells us that his feet were almost gone, and his steps had well nigh slipped; but when he went into the sanctuary of the Lord, and considered the end of the wicked, he arrives at this conclusion:-  
“Nevertheless I am continually with thee\_\_\_\_\_ thou shall guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. For whom have I in heaven but thou? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of heart and my portion forever.

- I. Let us then consider more ~~at large~~ fully the ground of the good man’s confidence ^as expressed in our (work?) in reference to this world, and that which is to come.
  1. In the first place, he is assured of this guidance from the Veracity of God. His confidence is not founded upon cunningly devised fables, or doubtful passages of scripture, but upon the immutability of Jehovah, for all his promises are yea and amen in Christ Jesus- Heaven and earth may pass away, but the word of our God shall stand forever  
Could it be told in heaven that one of the promises of God had failed, this ^fearful statement ~~would then~~ would ~~throw~~ produce an awful ^sensation throughout the realms of light every tuneful harp would be struck dumb, and the shining rank above would wonder about in gloomy despair and the very pillars of heaven ^nod their final fall. If it were possible for one of the promises of the Bible ^to fail, of all ^creatures ~~man~~ we should be the most miserable. We might weep our lives away, we might wash out a grave with our tears, and yet never excite the compassion of God\_ We should spend our days in fighting against contingencies of the present life, and finally retire to the shades of eternal night to bewail our hapless condition without hope and without end.

But we are spared from the character of God, the nature of his religion, and the evidences of Christianity that, his word will stand forever. And what hath he promised in regard to the guidance of the Christian? \_\_\_\_\_

Blessed is the man then whose hope the Lord in

2. \_The good man is inspired with the confidence expressed in our text from the consideration of the fact, that the special providence of god is constantly exercised over all his people.  
There is a general providence exercised over all the works of God, by which he regulates the heavenly bodies and governs the laws of nature, by which he turns the seasons round, and produces the successive change of day and night, by which he exhibits the earth with green, and clothes the forest with foliage, by which he sends rain upon the just and the unjust, and in a word by which this tender mercies are over all his works”.

This however will avail us nothing beyond the present life. But there is a special providence exercised over the church of God, and over his people, by which he restrains the wrath of man, by which he provides for their returning wants and by which all things work together for their good. Hence said the Saviour to his disciples\_ “Take no anxious thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink: nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on . Is not the life more than meat and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sew not, neither do they reap, or gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? And why take ye thought for raiment? For consider the lilies of the field how they grow, they toil not, neither do they spin, and yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if god so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith. How simple and yet convincing is the argument.

While the Christian is the subject of such a providence he is perfectly secure for time and for eternity. The hairs of his head are all numbers, the arm of omnipotence is stretched out for his defense, and his wants will be supplied by the bounties of Providence, and if he were placed upon a sterile rock amid the wide waste of waters, he could still exclaim “thou shalt guide me with thy counsel and afterwards receive me to glory”. Such a man can pray without ceasing, rejoice evermore, and in all things give thanks\_ ~~And when he feels disposed to praise the Lord for all his goodness Addison has prepared a most beautiful and appropriate hymn for such an individual~~

The condition of such an individual is beautiful described by Addison in his hymn on the providence of God\_

The Lord my pasture shall prepare  
And feed me with a shepherd’s care,  
His presence shall my wants supply  
And guard me with a watchful eye  
My noon day walk, he shall attend  
And all my midnight hours defend

2. When in the sultry gibe I faint

Or on the thirsty mountains pant

To fertile vales and dewy meadows

My weary wandering steps he leads

Where peaceful rivers soft & slow

Amid the verdant landscape flow

3. Tho’ in the paths of death I tread

With gloomy horrors overspread

My steadfast heart shall fear not ill  
For thou Lord art with me still  
Thy friendly crook shall give me aid  
And guide me thro' the dreadful shade

4. Tho' in a bare and rugged way  
Thro devious lonely wilds I stray  
My bounty shall my pains beguile  
The barrenness of wilderness shall smile  
With sudden greens & herbage crowned  
And streams shall murmur all around

II. We shall consider in the second place, the means by which the good man will be guided thru' life. By the "council" of God. The word counsel in its present connection signifies direction or instruction given by request or otherwise, in regard to the way of salvation. This will be afforded the Christian

1. By the word of God. For all scripture is given by inspiration, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works. ^After this topic ~~that~~ may seem to be ~~this topic is so~~ trite, and generally understood ~~that we deem it unnecessary~~ ^it is nevertheless a matter of the highest importance to every Christian believer. For the word of God is a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path. Take from Christendom the Bible, and you have taken the moral chart by which alone its population can be guided. It wd. Leave the inhabitants of earth like ten thousand mariners, tossed upon a wide ocean without a polar star and without a compass-it wd^ ~~and~~ leave this world mantled with more than an Egyptian darkness. Of all the boon which god has bestowed upon this apostate world. We are bound to say that the Bible is the noblest and most precious. The Bible is the development of man's immortality, the guide which informs ^ living xxxx^xxx how ^he we may move off triumphantly from a contracted and temporary scene, and ^ realize ~~grasp~~ the destinies of unbounded splendor , eternity his life-time and infinity his home. It tells of god and of Christ\_ instructs us in duty and woos to glory\_ It points to the haven of eternal repose and guides to the New Jerusalem . Let us then prize it more highly, and (use?) it more frequently. The entrance of they words givith light, it givith understanding to the simple.

How firm a foundation ye saints of the Lord

Is laid up for you in his excellent word

What more could he say, then to you he hath said

You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled.

2. He will guide us by his spirit. This was the agent that fluttered over the chaotic mass of ~~nature~~ of this earth when it was without form and void, and reduced the whole to perfect order. It was the Holy Spirit that descended upon the blessed Saviour in the form of dove, and testified ^ to the truth of his Messiahship and it was to the third person in the Holy Trinity that the destinies of the church were committed after our Lord ascension to heave, and the Holy Spirit is the great agent in that spiritual preparation which alone can give us admission into the kingdom of ~~heaven~~ ^glory. When the comforter is come, said the Saviour, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and a judgment to come \_ If we ever realize a change of heart it must be wrought by the Holy spirit\_ If ever we know that our sins are forgiven it must be testified by the Holy Spirit; and if ever we reach the kingdom of heaven we must be aided and guided by the Holy Spirit. And we rejoice to know, that our case if full met in these respects
3. We have reason also to believe that the inhabitants of heaven will be employed in the guidance of gods people to their final home with respect to the angels we are told by St. Paul that they are all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of

salvation. Hence we learn that they delivered Peter from the fury of Herod and the Jewish Rulers, Daniel from the ravenous lions, Lot from the destruction of Sodom, and Jacob from the hands of Esau. They refreshed Elijah in the wilderness, directed Joseph & Mary in their journey to Egypt, communicated glad tidings to the shepherds in the plains of Bethlehem, and proclaimed the resurrection of our Lord, and we have reason to conclude that such ministrations will be continued throughout all the periods of time.

Such there are some of the agencies employed in the guidance of the good man through this life. The word of God, the Holy Spirit, the angels of light, and the spirits of just men made perfect. What then have we to fear with such protection and support?

Not fearing or doubting with God on our side. We hope to die shouting the Lord will provide. With such protection let troubles avail and dangers affright, let friends all fail and foes all unite yet the Christian will sit calm upon troubles wheel, stand unmoved amid the storms of this lower world and feel that the glory of God is resting upon him.

1. Like some tall cliff that lifts its awful form swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread eternal sunshine settles on its head."
4. In the last place we observe that this guidance will be afforded until death. "For this is our God forever and ever said the Psalmist and he will be our guide until death". The drama of human life will soon be concluded and the Christian will finish his course with joy. Many of our friends have gone to their reward, and we are still left in a world of trouble, but by and by, we hope to go and meet them, where parting tears will be seen no more. Oh! If we can die in peace with God, it will matter not what may have been our condition in the present world. Rob me of every earthly comfort, but let me feel the consolations of religion. When I come to die and I desire no more, I possess a pearl of great price.
5. If you would see the ~~consolations~~ triumphs of religion exhibited in all their beauty in ~~the hour of death~~, go to the chamber of the dying Christian pilgrim. When he has reached the Jordan of death, when the world is fading upon his sight, and the light of eternity is dawning upon him. He reviews the past examines his heart, and contemplates the future, and finds that all is well, he has fought a good fight finished his course, and kept the faith; and he can now exclaim, "Come Lord Jesus, and come quickly"- While the lamp of life begins to flicker, while he bids his friends a final adieu. While his cheeks are turning pale and his body growing cold like the marble slab moistened by the dews of night, he remains perfectly composed until he falls quietly asleep in the arms of death.

But

"When coldness wraps this suffering clay,  
Ah whither strays the immortal mind?

It cannot die it cannot stay

But leaves its mouldering dust behind

Eternal, boundless, undecayed,

A thought unseen, but seeing all

All in earth, or skies displayed

Shall it survey, shall it recall  
 Each fainter trace that memory holds  
     So fondly of departed years  
 In broad glances the soul beholds  
     And all that was, at once appears  
 Before creation peopled earth  
     Its eye shall roll through chaos back  
 And where the furthest heaven had birth,  
     The spirit trace its rising trunk  
 Away, away without a wing  
     O'er all, thro' all, its thoughts shall fly;  
 A nameless and eternal thing,  
     Forgetting that it was to die  
 Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it".

III. We shall notice in the third place, the final result, of the good man's confidence. He will be received up to glory. What will be the state or condition of disembodied saints until the day of judgment we are not prepared to say. The scriptures on this subject are not explicit. It is certain however that they will be at rest, and under the guardianship of a just and holy God who will dispose all things for the best

1. But ~~one thing~~ we are taught to believe, that the happiness of the Christian will not be complete until the consummation of all things\_ until the day of final retribution. Hence we are told by St. John, that where the Lamb had opened the fifth seal, which refers to the purpose of God", he saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they bore: And they cried with a loud voice, saying how long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge & avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? For a little season, until their fellow servants, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be ~~killed~~ fulfilled.
2. We may rest assured that the prayer of the martyrs will be heard, and the <sup>^</sup>final ~~last~~ seal will presently be opened. The trump of God <sup>^</sup>will ~~shall~~ announce the catastrophe of nature, and time shall xxx merge into the ocean of eternity. We choose to adopt the very language of inspiration on this subject: "And when the Lamb had opened the sixth seal there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as a sackcloth, and the moon became as blood: and the stars of heaven fell to the earth as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when it is shaken of a mighty wind, and the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places: And the kings of the earth, and the great man, and the rich man, and the chief captains, and the mighty man, and every bondman, and every freeman hid themselves in the dens, and in the rock of the mountains; and said to the mountains & rocks fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that setteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of his wrath is come and who shall be able to stand? When shall the Lord Jesus Christ descend from heaven in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and then will be such the great white throne

which St. John saw, and the books will be open? And the dead small and great, will stand before ^ God the judgment of seal of Christ and every man will be judged according to the deeds done in the body. O what a solemn time that will be! When the human family shall be paraded and marshalled before the ^ judgment seal of Christ xxxxxx Each pale delinquent, and every meek and lowly follower of X will approach the judge severe and read the sentence of his destiny from the ponderous volume which will be laid open in that great day. The decisions of that grand assize will be made out in the following manner;\_

“And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth ^ his the sheep from the goats: and he shall let the sheep on his right ^ hand but the goats on the left and after having stated the reasons of for the sentence pronounced on each party, he will say to the wicked, “Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels- then shall he turn with smiles to the righteous^ and say come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Then will they stretch their golden wings, and with one universal shoul, command their upward flight to the New Jerusalem Fly wide ye everlasting gates and let the heirs of glory come in. (“thou shalt guide me with thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory”) O with what rapture! With what feelings of ecstasy! With ^the good man look abroad upon that bright world and its splendid furniture for the first time. There he will behold the Sea of glass, the golden shrubs, and ^ Jasper ~~sapphire~~ walls of the New Jerusalem\_ There he will behold a crystal fountain gushing from the throne of God, & the tree of life bending with ambrosial fruit. There he will see the twenty four elders clothed in robes of spotless white, with crowns of gold upon their heads, and palms of victory in their hands\_ There he will see the 144 thousand who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood in the Lamb; and there he will hear the melody of the great multitude ^ saying “Hallalujah the Lord god omnipotent reigneth”.

By this time he will feel like singing ~~his??~~ and what will be his song: the words of one of one good old hymn will suit him very well—

“O Jesus what hast thou brought for me

Before my ? eyes-

Rivers of life divine I see and trees of paradise

I see a world of spirits bright who ? these pleasures

They all are clothed in spotless white

And conquering palms they bear

Otherwise he can adopt the song of Moses & the Lamb “Saying great and marvelous are thy ~~thou king of Saints; just and true are they~~\_\_\_\_\_

Work, Lord god almighty, just & true and thy ways thou king of Saints”.

3. In regard to the ^ locality, employments & happiness of heaven there are many speculations in vogue at the present day. Mr. Dick ^ in his future state has descanted upon this subject most beautifully, and his book may be read with enthusiastic delight. But we shall advance but one idea at present, which will be sufficient for us until faith shall be lost in sight and hope in full fruition dies. That is to say, the kingdom of heaven will be a place of this most delightful society. St. John saw “ a great multitude which no more could number,

of all nations, kindred, people, and tempers, standing before the throne ^ of God and in the presence of the Lamb” The armies of Israel shall be paraded upon mount Zion in that eternal world of joy; and O, my god shall I be there! The Lord Jesus X will (be ? to the chosen of heaven?) and he will liked his people to living founts of water, and all tears shall be wiped from their eyes.

There we shall be associated with xxxx Moses and Elijah, and all the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testamnt with the twelve apostles and all the saints of the New Testament. These we shall become acquainted with such philosophers as Lock, Newton & Boyle. There we shall mingle with such divines as Luther, Melanchthon, Calvin, Wesley, Blake, Benson and the heavenly minded Summerfield. And there we shall meet with our dear friends who have died in the Lord, and remain with them forever ~~whose parting will be no ?~~

O blessed and glorious society! Where no contentions ever arise , when no malignant spirit interrupts the universal harmony, where love glows in every bosom, and benignity beams from every countenance? O ye happy throng we long to join your blessed society! But alas! We are combined with clay O that we had the wings of a Seraph that we might fly away and be at rest. We long to join the general assembly and church of the first born which are written in heaven\_ the spirits of just men made perfect the innumerable company of angels\_ Jesus the mediator of the New covenant, and God the Judge of all.

May the Father of our spirits help our infirmities and keep us faithful to the end, and ? ? entrance? ? ^abundant ?? us into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord & Saviour Jesus C. to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen!

Ps73.24