73 Psalm 24

Preach'd at R. M. College
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Jas. A Reddick

Leave Nashville [illegible] per [illegible]
15 Miles to Franklin — Turnpike
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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, ~~pain~~ 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, living 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 ~~who~~ ~~begs his way from door to door with tattering 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 lustre of the diamond, and her cheek flushed with the vermillion of the rose—and let her be the object of a thousand admirers. Trace this young lady thro' every change and circumstance of life and you will find the evidence of sadness and disappointment. She ~~is ready to exclaim in the language of the Poet~~

Will ~~by~~ gently discover that earthly
~~Our~~ pleasures are like poppies spread
You size the flower—its bloom is shed

Psalm 73. 24.

"Thou shalt 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 ~~this world~~ the present life; ~~but~~ however it 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 ~~[illegible]~~ author of all good ~~and benefactor~~. In 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 the present world, nor will they ~~and will not~~ afford them happiness ~~[illegible] life~~. ~~His truth~~ is abundantly confirmed by the ~~[illegible] of God~~ sacred oracles, and is quadrately with the experience of every unconverted 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. Let his stately mansion be adorned and crowded with furniture and trappings of the most costly kind — Let his table be crowded with smoking viands and sparkling wines — Let his splendid halls 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 coffers with gold, and his barns with plenty.

Or like the snow-flakes on the river
A moment white—and gone forever
Or like the rainbow's lovely form
Evanishing 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 ~~only~~ last retreat from a vain & delusive ~~the gay~~ world — It is then that 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 approving 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 23d. 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 preparest 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 earthly objects, which are incongenial 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 map of his counsel, the Holy Spirit his guide, and the glories of heaven ~~the~~ his recompense of ~~his~~ reward.

~~How might the Psalmist exclaim in compa~~

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 shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. For whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my 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 verse 24, 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 ~~awful~~ fearful statement ~~would throw~~ would produce an awful sensation ~~place~~ throughout the realms of light— every tuneful harp would be struck dumb, and the shining ranks above would wander about in gloomy despair, and the very bil-

laws of heaven w.d not ~~fitter~~ to their final fall.
If it were possible for one of the promises of the Bible to fail, of all creatures 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 the contingencies of the present life, and finally retire to the shades of eternal night to bewail our hopeless condition without hope and without end.
But we are assured 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 is.

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 carpets 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 "his 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 preserves his people from the evils of the present world, 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 sow not, neither do they reap, nor 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 numbered, the arm of Omnipotence is stretched out for his defence; 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 afterward 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 walks he shall attend
And all my midnight hours defend

2. When in the sultry glebe I faint
Or on the thirsty mountain pant
To fertile vales and dewy meads
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 no ill
For thou O 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
Thy bounty shall my pains beguile
The barren 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 thro' life. By the "counsel" 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. ~~Altho this will not be the case to so~~ Altho this may seem to be true, 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, ~~and~~ It wd. leave this world mantled with more than an Egyptian darkness. Of all the boons 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 him ~~of~~ how he may move off triumphantly from a contracted and temporary scene, and ~~grasp~~ receive the destinies of unbounded splendor. eternity his lifetime 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 read it more

frequently. The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple.

How firm a foundation ye saints of the Lord
Is laid for you in his excellent word
What more could he say, than 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 waters~~ 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 discipleship and it was to the third person in the Holy Trinity that the destinies of the church were committed after our Lord's ascension to heaven, 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 is fully met in these respects.

3. We have reason also to believe that the inhabitants of heaven will be employed in the guidance of God's 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 hand of Esau – They assisted 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 thro' out all the periods of time.

Such then are some of the agencies employed in the guidance of the good man thro 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 x on our side
We hope to die shouting the Lord will provide.

With such protection let troubles assail and dangers affright – let friends all fail and foes all unite yet the Christian will ~~sit calmly upon troubles wind~~, stand unmoved amid the storms of this lower world and feel that the glory of God is resting upon him.

"Like
~~As~~ Some tall cliff that lifts its awful form
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm
Tho' 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 prize a pearl of great price.

If you would see the triumphs ~~consolations~~ of religion exhibited in all their beauty ~~the triumph of death~~, go to the ~~chamber of the dying Christian~~ 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 wise - 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 pass? Shall it recall:
Each fainter trace that memory holds
So fondly of departed years,
In broad glance the soul beholds,
And all that was, at once appears
Before creation peopled earth
Its eye shall roll through chaos back
And when the furthest heaven had birth,
The spirit trace its rising track
Away, away, without a wing
O'er all, thro' all, its thoughts shall fly;
A ramless and eternal thing,
Forgetting what 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. ~~The thing~~ But 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 when 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? And it was said to them, that they should rest yet 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 ~~first~~ fifth seal will presently be opened — The trump of God will ~~shall~~ announce the Catastrophe of nature, and time shall ~~be~~ 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 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 men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth 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?"
Then shall the Lord Jesus Christ descend ~~from heaven~~ in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and there will be set the great white throne which St. John saw, and the books will be opened. and the dead small and great, will stand before God ~~the Judgment seat 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 seat of Christ ~~Judgment of heaven and earth~~. 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 tremendous volume which will be laid open in that great day.

The decissions 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 set the sheep on his right hand but the goats on the left, and after having stated the reasons ~~&~~ 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 shout, commence 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 ecstacy will 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 streets, and jasper 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 then he will hear the melody of the great multitude ~~singing~~ singing "Hallelujah the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."

By this time he will feel like singing ~~himself~~ and what will be his song: The words of one of our good old hymns will suit him very well — "O Jesus what hast thou wrought for me
Before my ravished eyes
Rivers of life divine I see and trees of paradise
I see a world of spirits bright who tune their pleasures
They all are clothed in spotless white" Then
"And conquering palms they bear"

Otherwise he can adopt the song of Moses & the Lamb, "Saying great and marvellous are thy works ~~thou King of Saints, just and true are thy~~ Lord God Almighty; just & true are 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 the most delightful society.

St. John said "a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, kindreds, people, and tongues, standing before the throne of God, and in the presence of the Lamb." The armies of Israel shall be gathered upon Mount Zion in that eternal world of joy; and O, my God shall I be there!

The Lord Jesus X will be present to the elect forever, and he will lead his people to living fountains of water, and all tears shall be wiped from their eyes.

There we shall ~~mingle~~ be associated with Moses and Elijah, and all the patriarchs and prophets of the old Testament with the twelve apostles and all the saints of the new Testament. There we shall become acquainted with such philosophers as Locke, Newton, & Boyle. There we shall mingle with such divines as Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Wesley, Clarke, 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. ~~There parting will be no more.~~

O blessed and glorious society! where no contentions ever arise, where no malignant spirit interrupts the universal harmony, where love glows in every bosom, and benignity beams from every countenance! O ye happy strangers long to join your blessed society! But alas! we are cumbered 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 so the entrance be abundantly ministered unto us into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord & Saviour Jesus Ch. To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen! —