

The Poor Doubting Christian Drawn to Christ

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- I. Impediments, which hinder souls from coming to Christ, removed.
 - A. Some hindrances for taking hold of Christ at all
 1. Blind, careless, or presumptuous security
 2. Outward reformation to save themselves
 3. Thrusts himself on Christ and thinking all the work is done
 4. Confesses he cannot come to Christ lest He give him His hand. Will cling to the ark as the flood waters finally wash him away
 - B. Hindrances that make the way tedious and difficult to come to Christ
 1. ***[Ezekiel 43.8]- In their setting of their threshold by my thresholds, and their post by my posts, and the wall between me and them, they have even defiled my holy name by their abominations that they have committed: wherefore I have consumed them in mine anger.***
 2. The distressed soul, being haply, truly humbled, takes notice of the beauty of holiness, and the image of God stamped on the hearts of his children, and of all those precious promises which God has made to all that are his. Thus they dare not come to the promise, and they will not venture upon it, because they have not that enlargement to duties, and that power against corruption which sometimes the saints of God have.
 - a. ***[Psalm 107.9]- For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.***
 - b. ***[Isaiah 55.1]- Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.***
 - c. ***[John 1.12]- But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:***
 3. He views the number of his sins so many and vile, and the continuance of them so long, and durable, and he sees the floods of abominations coming in so amain (forcefully) upon his soul, and Satan to boot (who helps him forward in all this), therefore he dares not make out unto Christ.
 - a. But this does not hinder our title to Christ, neither ought it to discourage us from laying hold on salvation.
 - b. Observations.
 - 1.) For whom did Christ come into the world, and for whom did he die when he was come? Was it for the righteous? Such needed him not: it was for the poor sinner that judges himself, that condemns himself, and that finds he cannot save himself.
 - a.) ***[2 Timothy 1.15]- This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.***
 - b.) ***[Zechariah 13.1]- In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.***
 - c.) ***[Numbers 21.8-9]- And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.***
 - 2.) The folly of this plea: what Scripture ever said, that the greatness of man's sin could hinder the greatness of God's mercy? No, Scripture says so; we see David praying to the contrary.

- a.) *[Psalm 25.11]- For thy name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.*
 - b.) *[Isaiah 43.24-25]- Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices: but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities. I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.*
- 3.) That sins fit you to go to Christ, though they be ever so heinous of themselves, yet if the soul can see them, and the heart be burdened with them.
- a.) *[Isaiah 57.17-18]- For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart. I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners.*
 - b.) *[Jeremiah 3.1]- They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the LORD.*
 - c.) *[Revelation 3.20]- Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*
- c. Objection 1: "Oh, all that is true, " says the poor soul, "had I but a heart to mourn for my baseness. See my sins I do, but this is my misery, I cannot be burdened with them, I have a heart that cannot break and mourn for dishonoring God, and offending him so many ways."
- 1.) Answer 1: This hurts not either, provided that your heart be weary of itself, because it cannot be weary of sin.
- a.) *[Micah 7.18]- Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.*
 - b.) *[Acts 9.4]- And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?*
- d. Objection 2: "But woe to me, " says the poor soul, "you are now come to the quick, this very word is like a millstone about my neck, and I in the sea, ready to be sunk for ever."
- 1.) Answer: This is the last plea whereby the devil keeps in, and possesses the heart of a poor heartless (discouraged) sinner. But let me answer you, and I say: this hurts not either: for here at least you may have hope of mercy!
- a.) The word and means of grace do work good, if they make you more sensible of your hardness and deadness.
 - b.) Mark this, I beseech you, you are the cause why your heart is not softened, and why the word works not upon your soul. The distemper of your own heart, hinders the working of the word, and dispensation of God's providence, and the tenor of the covenant of grace.
 - c.) Know and consider, that you have rested upon your own duties and endeavors, and so do not go to rely upon God, that blesses both the means, and all the endeavors of this way. The fault therefore is your own (I say), your own, because you rest in your own performances, and in the power of the means that you apprehend, and do not go to God, that would have wrought more than all they can.
- 1.) Do not content yourselves in this, that you see a need of a Saviour, because your minds are enlightened therein, and your reason persuaded thereof, when in the mean time you place a kind of confidence in the duty performed and service discharged, and think thereby to bring Christ at your beck, and you in the mean while do what you please.

- 2.) Watch how your heart is in the performance of duty. Does your prayer, and hearings, and performing of services, make you venturous and fool-hardy to meddle with corruptions?
 - 3.) Many a man makes his services his saviours (he trusts in his works to save him and give him assurance) for, he makes them the bottom to bear up his conscience.
- e. Objection 3: "But oh!" says a poor sinner, fain would I go out of myself. I see too well now, that I have rested, and do rest upon duties done, but I cannot deny myself as I would."
- 1.) Answer 1: It is Satan's subtlety to keep us in ourselves, by endeavoring thus to make us go out of ourselves.
 - a.) ***[Isaiah 50.10]- Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.***
4. The distressed soul says, "Alas! I never knew what it was to have the assurance of God's love, I never received any evidence of God's favour, and can I then think that I have faith? They that believe, have their hearts filled with joy unspeakable and glorious, the word says as much: but I am a stranger to this joy, how then can I think that I have any work of faith wrought in me?"
- a. Answer 1: You must not think to have this joy and refreshing before you go to the promise.
 - b. Answer 2: Know that these joys, and this sense and feeling may be absent from faith.
 - c. Question 1: But how comes this desire after Christ?
 - 1.) Answer 1: There are no more but two affections in the soul to absent good, God infinitely wise having so framed it, and these two are hope and desire.
 - d. Question 2: How does God stir up the heart to hope?
 - 1.) Answer 1: The Lord sweetly calms the heart, and persuades it that his sins are pardonable, and that the good he wants may be supplied, this is a great support to the soul.
 - a.) ***[Psalm 130.7]- Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.***
 - b.) ***[Psalm 78.19]- Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?***
 - 2.) Answer 2: As this sin is injurious to God, so it is dangerous to your own soul.
 - a.) ***[Luke 3.5-6]- Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.***
 - b.) ***[Psalm 77.7]- Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more?***
 - 3.) Answer 3: This marvelously condemns that great sin of presumption, a sin more frequent, and if it be possible, more dangerous, the presumption of carnal hypocrites that bolster themselves up with marvelous boldness in their course.
 - a.) ***[1 Peter 3.15]- But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:***
 - 4.) Answer 4: The saints of God many times are deprived of comfort, not because God withholds it, but because they put it from themselves, and will not have it, though he offered it,
 - a.) ***[Psalm 77.2]- In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted.***

II. Helps to come to Christ.

- A. The first cure and help is this, we must not look too long, nor pore (dwell) too much, or unwarrantably upon our own corruptions within, so far as to be disheartened by them from coming to the riches of God's grace.
1. We stop the stream of God's promise, and let down the sluice against it, so that the promise cannot enter into us.
 2. We set open the stream and flood-gate of corruption, and make it to run most violently down, and to flood in upon us; and in the end to overwhelm us.
 - a. ***[Matthew 15.17]- Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?***
 - b. ***[Luke 22.61]- And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.***
 - c. Labor therefore to see your sins.
 - 1.) See your sins in the royal law, as in the right glass, a glass that will present them such as they be, and look not off until you have seen them so.
 - 2.) So see them, as that by such a holy gaze at them, you may see an utter insufficiency in yourself to satisfy for them.
 - 3.) So see them, that you may by that sight behold an absolute necessity of Christ to succor you (to give you relief), and then away speedily to him who alone can help you, and dwell no longer on your sins, but go to the throne of grace, where is plentiful redemption, from where pardons are issued in abundance to remove that guilt that sin has brought upon your soul, and where is power enough to enable you to be more than conqueror over your corruption.
 - a.) ***[Isaiah 66.2]- For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.***
 - b.) ***[Jeremiah 31.18-20]- I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the LORD my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth. Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the LORD.***
- B. Take heed of judging your estate by carnal reason without the rule (do not assess your condition by your emotions or reason, but by the Scriptures), which is commonly the fashion and fault of poor distressed spirits, who pass fearful sentence against themselves upon groundless arguments, and say, "I never found it, I feel no such thing, and I fear it is not so."
1. Ways in which one sins when one doubt your salvation due to looking at your own weakness and absence of feelings.
 - a. By denying that which God has done for you.
 - b. By speaking irreverently against him.
 - c. By murdering, for that you wound your own soul.
 - d. By robbing yourself of much comfort, and so are a thief.
 - e. By baring false witness against yourself, yea, against Christ, and the spirit of Christ, and the work of grace already wrought in you.
 - f. By joining with the devil against the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - g. ***[Ps. 119.37]- Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way.***
 - h. ***[Isaiah 50.11]- Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.***

- C. Let us be marvelously wary and watchful that we enter not into the lists of, and dispute with Satan, upon points which are beyond the reach of man,
1. "I am not elected, therefore God will not look upon me to do me any good. "
 2. To use the means of mercy, my time of mercy being out.
 3. "Oh! The days of grace that I have seen, when the Lord knocked sweetly at my heart, and was pleased to reveal my sins unto me at such a time: but then, hard-hearted wretch that I was, I shut the door upon him, and now he is gone and past, and now there is no hope for the visit of grace, or that Christ should return again to show me any mercy."
 4. To avoid which straits, observe these three rules
 - a. Let the soul in this case bear upon the Almightyness of the power of God, who said to Abraham, "I am God all-sufficient".
 - 1.) ***[Genesis 17.1]- And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.***
 - b. It bids check your own heart for meddling with God's secrets, and for prying so into his closet of hidden counsels.
 - 1.) ***[Deuteronomy 29.29]- The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.***
 - 2.) ***[1 Corinthians 2.16]- For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? but we have the mind of Christ.***
 - 3.) ***[Jonah 3.9]- Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?***
 - c. Measure not the riches of God's love, and the sweetness of his saving grace according to your own conceits, nor do you think that because you cannot conceive it, therefore God will not do it.
 - 1.) ***[Isaiah 55.7-9]- Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.***
 - 2.) ***[Job 9.10]- Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number.***
 - 3.) ***[Psalm 42.8]- Yet the LORD will command his lovingkindness in the day time, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.***
 - 4.) ***[Romans 5.8]- But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.***
- D. Pass no heavy sentence against yourself but according to the evidence of the Word.
1. ***[Ephesians 4.13]- ill we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:***
 2. ***[Matthew 11.29]- Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.***

- III. Rules to direct a Christian how to use the Word of God for his evidence, or assurance with peace.
- A. As you must in all things that concern your soul repair to the word, so you must consider your own uprightness by it, and see what work is in your soul that is able to answer the word, and to testify that the work of grace is there.
1. ***[Romans 4.22]- And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.***

2. *[Genesis 12.4]- So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.*
 3. *[Genesis 18.12] Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?*
- B. Labor to have your conscience settled and established in that truth, which now out of the word you have gotten to bear witness of the work of grace in you.
1. *[1 John 3.20-21]- For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.*
- C. Strive and that mightily to have our hearts overpowered with the evidence that reason and conscience make good unto us, that so we may quietly receive, and calmly welcome it, yea, and yield and subject our hearts to the truth of it.
1. Three things in the soul of a man that abet all these quarrels and oppositions against the evidences of the word in that man.
 - a. Reason objects.
 - b. Conscience accuses.
 - c. The will of man will not submit.
 2. It is intolerable pride against the majesty of heaven.
 - a. For a man to follow his own conceits and self-willedness against the truth, the force of reason, and the witness of the servants of God, and his own conscience cannot but be pride.
 - b. And for a man, because he has not what he would, to be therefore off the hinges so as to throw away all God's kindness, and to deny the grace that is given him, and this because he cannot be conqueror, as he desires, is not this pride?
- D. Labor to bring your hearts more down in a holy subjection to God's measure and time.
1. *[John 13. 8-9]- Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.*
- E. Maintain the good work which your heart has submitted unto, and keep it as the best thing in your house, and of treasure the best under heaven. And then, when you have by it obtained certain evidence that your estate is good, hear nothing against it, but stick fast to it, as to your life.
- F. How the soul being tempted, may answer Satan's accusations when a man has received some comfort, then the devil begins to play the lawyer, in this or the like manner:
1. Satan: "Do you not see. how weak and poor you are? how destitute of all saving grace, and how contrary you walk to God? "
 - a. Answer: "It is true, says the soul, whosoever confesses and forsakes his sin shall have mercy?"
 - 1.) *[Proverbs 28.13]- He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*
 2. Satan: "But do you not see that you are full of pride and weakness, and secretly unwilling to come to duties?"
 - a. Answer: "It is true I am so, yet I hate, and desire to forsake this way, and therefore shall find mercy.
 - 1.) *[Isaiah 55.7]- Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*
 3. Satan: "But are you of God's counsel? Secret things belong to God."

- a. Answer: "Indeed I know not what God's secret will is, yet that I know, that the word says, which is, he has no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but invites such daily to come unto him."
 - 1.) ***[Ezekiel 33.11]- Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?***
4. Satan: "But many cozen (deceive) themselves; mercy is as a black swan, a rare bird, and few obtain it. And why then may not you be cozened (deceived) as well as others?"
 - a. Answer: "But the Lord will not cozen me, and the Lord knows my heart, and the word knows what the Lord knows."
5. Satan: "But may not you be deceived in the letter of the word? The word is true indeed but how know you that you rightly apply it, and that the word and your heart suit together? "
 - a. Answer: "Why I desire as earnestly to have my sin purged, as I do to have it pardoned. I know my heart by the word, and to the word I repair (come), and the Lord knows that I hate all sin inwardly, and reform it outwardly, to my weak power, and therefore I know I shall find mercy. Show me a place of Scripture that says I do not rightly apply the word, and I believe it, but I will not believe you, for you are, as you wast from the beginning, a liar."
6. Thus hold to the word, and the devil will be tired, weary, and leave you.
 - a. ***[Psalm 119.98]- Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me.***
 - b. ***[Joshua 8.19]- And the ambush arose quickly out of their place, and they ran as soon as he had stretched out his hand: and they entered into the city, and took it, and hasted and set the city on fire.***
 - c. ***[1 John 2.1-3]- My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.***

IV. Means to obtain an interest in the promises and improve them for our benefit.

A. Proof texts.

1. ***[Philippians 1.29]- For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;***
2. ***[Ephesians 2.8]- For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:***
3. ***[Ephesians 1.20]- Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,***

B. Labor to pull away all those carnal outward stays (human reasonings) that the soul leans upon, and all other like succors and whatsoever contentment it is, which a poor sinner does betake himself to, as to his refuge for relief and help, that when all these are taken from us, we may be forced to go for succor thither, where right succor is to be had.

1. The way to make the soul to lean upon Christ is, to pluck away all those deceiving props.
2. Fly unto is the promise, which if we could find good anywhere else than in Christ, we would never go to him for it.
 - a. ***[Matthew 5.26]- Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.***

C. Labor to have your heart possessed thoroughly, and persuaded effectually of the fullness of that good which is in the promise, and of that satisfactory mercy and freeness of the grace that is in

Christ, so that the soul may be established with that full content which is to be had in the riches of the promise.

1. ***[Psalm 9.10]- And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.***
 2. ***[Psalm 119.92]- Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction.***
 3. ***[Psalm 73.26]- My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.***
 4. Three rules for improving the promises for our benefit.
 - a. Labor daily to present your soul a greater good in the promise, than you can see anywhere else.
 - 1.) Should not only work a longing after Christ and the promise, but fill our faces with shame and confusion, that ever we should set so light by sure riches of mercy, and walk unworthy of so great salvation.
 - b. Labor to bring your heart to this: that all the things in the world without the promise, are nothing: and that if you had all that the earth can afford, and not the promise, you have gotten but the wind, or that which will rather be a curse to you than a blessing.
 - 1.) ***[Hebrews 11.1]- Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.***
 - c. Labor to acquaint your heart with that good which the promise promises, and do so before carnal reason comes and possesses your heart.
 - 1.) ***[Hebrews 4.16]- Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.***
 - 2.) ***[Habakkuk 3.17]- Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:***
- D. Look for all the good which you need and can desire from that sufficiency which is in the promise, and do not think of yourself to add any good unto it, but go to it for all your good.
1. ***[Psalm 119.49]- Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.***
 2. ***[John 5.25]- Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.***
- E. Labor to submit to the most equal condition of the promise, not making more conditions there than God has made.
1. ***[Isaiah 55.1-2]- Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.***
 2. ***[Ezekiel 16.6-10]- And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live. I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou hast increased and waxen great, and thou art come to excellent ornaments: thy breasts are fashioned, and thine hair is grown, whereas thou wast naked and bare. Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine. Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil. I clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk.***

3. *[Philippians 4.4]- Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.*
4. *[Hebrews 6.18]- That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:*
5. *[Matthew 17.20]- And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.*

V. How a man is trained that he may get the skill of living by faith.

A. Labor to get matter for our faith to work upon.

1. That they provide and lay in, in season, timely, as soon as they can (build your faith now, while you are able, before trials and troubles strike which will render increasing your faith more difficult).
 - a. *[Luke 19.42]- Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.*
 - b. *[Psalm 48.9]- We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple.*
 - c. *[Psalm 48.14]- For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.*
2. Labor to treasure up your own experiences, he has delivered us, and he does and will deliver us,
 - a. *[2 Corinthians 1.10]- Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;*
 - b. *[2 Timothy 4.18]- And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*
 - c. *[Psalm 119.52]- I remembered thy judgments of old, O LORD; and have comforted myself.*
 - d. *[Psalm 89.49]- Lord, where are thy former lovingkindnesses, which thou swarest unto David in thy truth?*
 - e. *[Isaiah 42.23]- Who among you will give ear to this? who will hearken and hear for the time to come?*
 - f. *[Psalm 37.19]- They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.*
 - g. *[Colossians 3.16]- Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

B. Labor to fit faith for the work.

1. Maintain the evidence of faith once gotten.
 - a. *[Matthew 14.28-31]- And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?*
2. Labor to bring your heart to marvelous stillness and calmness from time to time.
 - a. *[Luke 24.41]- And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?*
 - b. *[Psalm 42.5,11]- Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.*

- c. *[Psalm 43.5]- Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.*
 - d. Three things of use in the text.
 - 1.) That a tumultuous distemper of heart makes a man lie flat upon his back, as it were, and sink into a swoon.
 - 2.) It hinders the work of faith. Mark what follows: "hope you in God." As if he had said, "leave those distempers of heart, and rest upon the freeness of God's grace. "
 - 3.) David yet looks up to God for mercy: "for he is yet my God."
 - e. *[Exodus 14.13]- And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever.*
3. In the absence of any means, do not first seek for them, and in the presence of any means God affords, look not first to them for succour and supply, but first go to the promise, that it may supply what you need, and that the promise may bless what means you have.
- a. *[Psalm 1.3]- And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*
 - b. *[Genesis 32.9]- And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee:*
 - c. *[Hebrews 13.5]- Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*
- C. Labor to order our faith aright in the work.
- 1. How the soul should get to the promises.
 - a. Throw off all power and ability in yourself.
 - 1.) *[Galatians 2.20]- I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*
 - 2.) *[Jeremiah 10.23]- O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.*
 - 3.) *[Genesis 45.26-29]- And told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not. And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived: And Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.*
 - 4.) *[Luke 19.9]- And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.*
 - 5.) *[Matthew 25.34]- Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:*
 - 6.) *[1 John 3.1-2]- Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*
 - 7.) *[Hebrews 11.26]- Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.*

- 8.) God does not engage himself to bestow these. But that which God engages himself to bestow, both for temporal and spiritual blessings, may be discovered in these three particulars:
- a.) He will bestow them in his own order, not your order. First, God will make you fit for this estate, and then give it.
 - b.) The Lord will give us temporal blessings, and that measure of spiritual, in his own due time, not when you and I would, but when he sees most fit, as in **1.) [John 2.3-4]- And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.**
 - c.) The Lord does not promise in such a manner and measure, and such a peculiar thing, to give that temporal blessing, and that spiritual assistance we desire, but the Lord will do that which he knows most fit.
 - 1.) **[Proverbs 30.8]- Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me:**
2. How to take, and how to enjoy the sap and sweet of the promise, and to live by it.
- a. Eye that particular good in the promise which you stand in need of, eye that good in Christ and in the promise, and then set God's power and faithfulness to work to bring that good, and his wisdom to continue it.
 - 1.) **[Psalm 37.5]- Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.**
 - 2.) **[1 Peter 5.7]- Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.**
 - 3.) **[Romans 4.16-21]- Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.**
 - 4.) **[Esther 4.14]- For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?**
 - b. By faith go to the promise again for help and power to wait on God in that way, and to look towards God in the use of those means he has appointed for the attaining of that good which his power will work for you.
 - 1.) **[Luke 24.49]- And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.**
 - 2.) **[Ezekiel 36.24-27]- For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.**
 - 3.) **[Proverbs 20.7]- The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him.**

- 4.) *[Psalm 10.17]- LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear:*
- c. We must set it down, and conclude it, that God will do it, so shall we receive in the ways of his providence whatsoever he has promised to give.
 - 1.) *[John 3.33]- He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.*
 - 2.) *[Genesis 22.5]- And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.*
 - 3.) *[1 Samuel 1.18]- And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad.*
 - d. Then faith is to take up its stand and wait until it comes; as you resolve, so it will be. Stay until it be so, and wait it out.
 - 1.) *[Habakkuk 2.3]- For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.*
 - 2.) *[Psalm 123.2]- Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the LORD our God, until that he have mercy upon us.*
 - 3.) *[1 Samuel 13.13]- And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever.*
 - 4.) *[Acts 27.31]- Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.*
 - e. Lay hold on God in Christ, and wrestle with him, and never let him go.
 - 1.) *[Genesis 32.28]- And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.*
 - 2.) *[James 2.13]- For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.*
 - 3.) *[Matthew 15.28]- Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.*

VI. Conclusion

- A. When we have plucked away all carnal props, then there is way made for the promise to come in to us.
- B. When our hearts are possessed thoroughly of the sufficiency of God's promise and grace, then the promise that draws near, begins its work.
- C. When we expect all from the promise, even power to come to it, then it lays fast hold upon us.
- D. When we are content to yield to the just conditions of the promise, then the promise carries us, and all in us.
- E. There are many graces necessary in this work, as meekness, patience, humility, and wisdom; now faith will fetch all these, and possess the soul of them. Brethren, therefore if you set any price upon these graces, buy the field, labor for faith, get that, and you get all.
 1. *[2 Corinthians 3.18]- But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*