

# A Sermon

DELIVERED BY

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## FAITH AMONG MOCKERS.

“He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.”—Psalm xxii. 8.

DAVID experienced what Paul afterwards so aptly described as “cruel mockings.” Note the adjective *cruel*: it is well chosen. Mockings may not cut the flesh, but they tear the heart; they may shed no blood, but they cause the mind to bleed internally. Fetters gall the wrists, but the iron of scorn entereth into the soul. Ridicule is a poisoned bullet which goes deeper than the flesh, and strikes the centre of the heart. David in the wilderness hunted by Saul, and on the throne abused by Shimei, knew what it was to be the butt of scorn, the football of contempt. Many a time and oft was he the song of the drunkard, and the byword of the scoffer.

But what have I to do with the son of Jesse? my heart remembers the Son of man. What if David suffered despising and scorn? He knew it but in small measure compared with our blessed Lord. Well is it said, “The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.” It is not wonderful that such a one as David should have to cry, “My soul is among lions,” when the Lord of all, the perfectly pure and Holy One, was driven to utter the same cry, saying, “All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.” My brethren and sisters in Christ, if you have to pass through a like painful experience, count it no strange thing, for a strange thing it is not. Reproach is the common heritage of the godly. Do not think that this fire which you suffer is the first that ever burned a saint. Others have had to bear the enmity of the world long before you. Remember that, of old, from the first moment when sin came into the world, there were two seeds, the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent; and between these two seeds there is an enmity of the most deadly kind, which will never cease. It may assume different forms, and it may be held in check by many forces, but it will always continue for ever the same while men are men, and sin is sin, and God and the devil are opposed. It was so,

you know, in the house of Abraham: he was a man that walked before God, and was perfect in his generation, and yet in his family there were the two opposing powers: Ishmael, born after the flesh, mocked him that was born after the Spirit. When Rebekah had brought forth twin sons, yet the fact of their being twin sons of holy Isaac did not prevent the enmity that arose between Jacob and Esau. Nothing will prevent the seed of the serpent from exhibiting its spite towards the seed of the woman; even kinship and brotherhood go for little in this strife; in fact, a man's foes full often are they of his own household. Count it no marvel, then, if you are derided! It seems to be a necessity of the holy nature of God that it should incur the enmity of the evil nature of fallen man, and that this evil nature should show itself by direct and bitter attack. Remember "him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." Henceforth, bow your shoulders to the yoke; expect that if you follow the Crucified you will have to bear the cross, for so it will be. I trust that our present meditation may be useful to any of God's servants who are feeling the sharp lash of envious tongues, that they may not be driven from their steadfastness thereby. If any in their hearts are bowed down because they are conscious that possibly they have given the scoffers some opportunity to mock at them, may they even in this take heart, for David had done so, and yet he was not crushed by the blasphemies of the wicked.

The first thing to which I shall call your attention at this time is, that a truly gracious man is like David and like the Lord Jesus, in that HIS TRUST IN GOD IS KNOWN. Even the enemies of this holy man who is mentioned in the text, and, as I interpret it, even the enemies of our divine Lord and Master, never denied that he trusted in God. This, indeed, is the commencement of their scoff: "He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him." From which I gather that every gracious man should have an apparent, manifest, public trust in God. He should not merely trust him in his heart alone, but that trust should so enter into his entire nature that he does not conceal it nor think of concealing it. He should be so open in the avowal of his confidence that his enemies, before whom he is naturally restrained and on his guard, nevertheless are able to spy out this precious thing within him, and are forced to bear their witness, though it be mockingly and jestingly, that "He trusted on the Lord." Such a testimony is all the more valuable as coming from an enemy. You know our character is not likely to be drawn too prettily by those who hate us; the utmost will be sure to be said against us; but if even our enemies say of us, "He trusted on the Lord," we may be very thankful that we have so lived as to extort this testimony from their lips.

What, then, ought a child of God to do in order to show that he really does trust in the Lord? How did Jesus do this? Well, I think that in our Lord's case it was *his wonderful calmness* which compelled everybody to see that

“he trusted on the Lord.” You never find him in a flurry; he is never worried nor confused. He is beset behind and before with men who try to catch him, but he is as self-possessed as if he spoke among friends. He does not appear to be the least upon his guard, and yet instead of their catching him, before long he either catches them, or else they retire saying, “Never man spake like this Man.” He was always cool, peaceful, ready, self-composed. You notice his inward quietude not only when enemies are round about him, but when he is surrounded by a great mob of people all hungry, starving, famishing: he breaks the bread and multiplies it; but not before he has made them all sit down on the green grass by hundreds and by fifties. He will have them in companies, arranged in ranks, for convenient distribution; and when they are all placed in order, as if it had been a well-marshalled royal entertainment, then it is that he takes the bread, and, looking up to heaven, with all deliberation asks a blessing, and breaks and gives the food to the disciples. The disciples make no scramble of it: it is an orderly festival, and the thousands are all fed in order due, in majestic decorum; for Christ was calm, and therefore master of the situation. He never looks as if he had fallen into difficulties, and then adopted expedients to get out of them; but his whole life is pre-arranged and ordered in the most prudent and peaceful manner. Nothing upon this earth, although he was so reduced that he had nowhere to lay his head, although he was sometimes so weary that he sat down upon a well to rest, could put him out of the way, or disarrange his perfect collectedness. He was always ready for every emergency; in fact, nothing was an emergency to him. What a beautiful picture that is of Christ on board ship in a storm! While they that are with him are afraid that they will go down, that the wind will blow them into the water, or blow the water over them, so that they will certainly be drowned, what is he doing? Why, he is asleep; not because he forgot them—no; but because he knew that the vessel was in the great Father’s hands. It was his time for sleep; he was weary and needed it, and so he carried out that which was the nearest duty, and in all peacefulness laid his head on a pillow, and slumbered. His sleep ought to have made them feel at ease. Whenever the captain can afford to go to sleep, the passengers may go to sleep too. Depend upon it, he that manages everything would not have gone to bed if he had not felt that it was all right in the hands of the Highest, who at any moment could stay the raging storm. I wish we could be similarly restful; for then even our enemies would say of us, “He trusted on the Lord.” I wish we could have that steadfast, imperturbable frame of mind, in which our Lord untied the knots wherewith his foes would have bound him; for then our assailants would marvel at our quiet confidence. Jesus knew no hurry, but calmly and deliberately he met each matter as it came, and grandly kept himself free from all entanglement. Oh, for the holy quiet which would prevent our going about our business in haste! “He that believeth shall not make

haste,” but do everything as in the infinite leisure of the Eternal, who never is before his time, and never is behind. If we could do that, and did not get so flurried and worried, and tossed about and driven to our wit’s end, then our enemies would say with astonishment, “He trusted on the Lord.”

Brethren, this ought also to come out not merely in our calm and quiet manner, but also *by our distinct avowal*. I do not think that any man has a right to be a secret believer in the Lord Jesus Christ at this time. You will tell me that Nicodemus was so; that Joseph of Arimathea was so, and I answer “Yes”; but therein they are not our exemplars. These weak brethren were forgiven and strengthened; but we may not therefore presume. Times, however, are different now: by the death of Christ the thoughts of many hearts were revealed, and from that day those secret disciples were among the foremost to avow their faith. Nicodemus brought the spices, and Joseph of Arimathea went in boldly and begged the body of Jesus. Since that day when the Christ was openly revealed upon the cross, the thoughts of other men’s hearts are revealed too; and it is not now permissible for us to play hide-and-seek with Christ. No; “He that believeth *and is baptized* shall be saved;” “He that with his heart believeth and *with his mouth maketh confession of him*, shall be saved.” The open confession is constantly, in Scripture, joined with the secret faith. The Lord Jesus Christ puts it, “He that denieth me before men, him will I deny”; and if you read it, the text sets denying in opposition to confession, so that it really means, “He that does not confess me before men, him will I not confess when I come in the glory of the Father.” Our Lord does not reckon upon leading a body of followers who will always keep behind the hedge, hiding themselves in holes and corners whenever there is anything to be done for his glory, and only running out at meal-times when there is something to be got for themselves. I know some professors of that sort, but I have very little to say to their credit: they are a cowardly crew. No, no. We ought distinctly to declare that we believe in God, and we should take opportunities, as prudence dictates, of telling to our friends and neighbours what our experience has been about trusting in God; telling them of deliverances we have received, of prayers which have been answered, and of many other tokens for good which have come to us as the result of our faith in God. To trust in man is a thing of which we may be ashamed, for we find man to be as a broken reed, or as a spear that pierces us to our heart when we lean thereon; but blessed are they that trust in the Lord, for they shall be as trees planted by the rivers of water, they shall bring forth their fruit in their season, and even their leaf shall not wither. God, in whom they trust, will honour their faith, and bless them yet more and more; let them therefore honour their God, and never hesitate to speak well of his name. So, then, I say first a calm belief, and, secondly, an open avowal should cause even our adversaries to know that we have trusted in the Lord.

And, then, I will add to that, that *our general conduct should reveal our faith*. The whole of our life should show that we are men who rejoice in the Lord; for trusting the Lord, as I understand it, is not a thing for Sundays and for places of worship alone: we are to trust in the Lord about everything. If I trust the Lord about my soul I must trust him about my body, about my wife, about my children, and all my domestic and business affairs. It would have been a terrible thing if the Lord had drawn a black line around our religious life, and had said, "You may trust me about that, but with household matters I will have nothing to do." We need the whole of life to be within the ring-fence of divine care. The perfect bond of divine love must tie up the whole bundle of our affairs, or the whole will slip away. Faith is a thing for the closet, and the parlour, and the counting-house, and the farmhouse; it is a light for dark days, and a shade for bright days; you may carry it with you everywhere, and everywhere it shall be your help. Oh, that we did so trust in the Lord that people noticed it as much as they notice our temper, our dress, or our tone. The pity is that too often we go forward helter-skelter, following our own wisdom, whereas we ought to say, "No, I must wait a little while, till I ask counsel of the Lord." It should be seen and known that we are distinctly waiting upon God for guidance. What a stir this would make in some quarters! I wish that without any desire to be Pharisaical, or to display our piety, we nevertheless did unconsciously show the great principle which governs us. Just as one man will say, "Excuse me, I must consult a friend," or, "I must submit the case to my solicitor," so it ought to be habitual with a Christian before he replies to an important matter, to demand a moment wherein he may wait upon God and obtain direction.. In any case I wish that it may be so usual with us to ask guidance from above that it may be noticed as our habit to trust on the Lord.

Once more, I think this ought to come out most distinctly *in our behaviour during times of trouble*; for then it is that our adversaries are most likely to notice it. You, dear sister, have lost a child. Well now, remember that you are a Christian woman, and sorrow not as those that are without hope. Do let the difference be real and true, and do not be ashamed that others should observe it. When your neighbour lost her child it occasioned a quarrel between her and God, but it is not so with you, is it? Will you quarrel with God about your baby? Oh, no; you love him too well. And you, brother, you are perplexed in business, and you know what a worldling does: if he has nothing more than outward religion, he complains bitterly that God deals hardly with him, and he quarrels with God; or, perhaps, to make things better, he does what he ought not to do in business, and makes them a great deal worse. Many a man has plunged into rash speculations until he has destroyed himself commercially; but you, as a Christian man, must take matters calmly and

quietly: it is not yours to speculate, but to confide. Your strength lies in saying—"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." You must not be so eager to be rich that you would put forth your hand to do iniquity in order to seize the golden apples: that is the reverse of faith. You are now to play the man, and in the power of the Holy Ghost you are now with resignation—with more than that—with a sweet acquiescence in the Divine will—to show men how a Christian can behave himself. I have never admired Addison's words as some have done, who, when he came to die, sent for a lord of his acquaintance, and said, "See how a Christian can *die*." There is a little parade about *that*; but I do desire that every Christian should say in his soul, "I will show men how a Christian can *live*. I will let them see what it is to live by faith in the Son of God who loved me, and gave himself for me. Those who do not believe there is a God shall yet be led to feel there must be a God, because my faith in him doth speed so well, and I obtain such unnumbered blessings as the result of it." I say, most earnestly, that especially in the time of sorrow and bereavement, when other people are sore put to it because they have lost their joy, and the light of their house is quenched, it is the believer's duty and privilege by his holy calm of heart to show his trust in God. If religion cannot help you in trouble, it is not worth having; if the Spirit of God does not sustain you when you lose your dearest friend, you ought to question whether it is the Spirit of God; you ought to ask, "Can this be the Spirit which bore up the martyrs at the stake?" if now that you are passing through these waters you are carried away by them? If our faith shines out in dark times, even as the stars are seen by night, then is it well with us.

Oh, that you and I might in all these ways so live that all who see us should know that we are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ! It would be ridiculous if a man went into society with a label on his breast, "*man trusts in God*," and it would be a pretty clear sign that he needed to be thus ticketed. I would have you shun all distinctive phylacteries in matters of religion as too much flavoured with the leaven of the Pharisees; but when the possession of godliness proclaims its own self, even as a box of precious spikenard tells its own tale, you need not be ashamed of it. Display and ostentation are vicious, but the unrestrained use of influence and example is commendable. In these days when men glory in their unbelief, let us not be bashful with our faith. If, in a free country, men should not persecute an infidel, they certainly ought not to silence a believer. We do not intend to smuggle our religion through the land. It is not contraband, and therefore we shall bear it with us openly in the sight of all men, and let them say if they please, "He trusted on the Lord."

II. Secondly, THIS TRUST ON THE PART OF BELIEVING MEN IS NOT UNDERSTOOD BY THE WORLD. "He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him."

Observe that they restricted the Saviour's trust to that point—"He trusted on the Lord *that he would deliver him.*" But now, in the first place, *our faith is not confined to merely receiving from God.* No, brethren; if the Lord does not deliver us we will trust him. See how firmly Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego stood to it that they would not bow before the image which Nebuchadnezzar had set up: "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But *if not*, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." There was great faith in that "if not." We must not live and wait upon God with a kind of cupboard love, just as a stray dog might follow a man for bones; but we must speak well of our God even if he scourge us, for therein lies both the truth and the strength of faith. Job has put it—"Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Whatever happens to us, if our faith is the work of the Holy Spirit we shall hold on to our trust in God.

*Neither is our faith limited to what men call deliverance.* It is a misrepresentation when his enemies say, "He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him;" because though it is the truth, it is not the whole truth. Our blessed Lord continued to trust in the Father though the cup did not pass from him, and though no legions of angels were sent to deliver him from Pilate. Though the enemy was permitted to exercise all his malice upon him until his blessed body was nailed to the accursed tree, yet the faith of our divine Lord and Master was not moved from its steadfastness. He trusted in God for something higher than deliverance from death, for he looked beyond the grave, and said, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." In all his pains his heart said, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." The blind world cannot understand this. They say, like their father, "Doth Job fear God for nought?" They insinuate that Christian people trust God for what they get out of him. Now I have often thought that if the devil could have put it the other way he would have been very rejoiced to do so. Suppose he could have said, "Job serves God for nought," then the ungodly world would have shouted, "We told you so. God is a bad Paymaster: his servants may serve him as perfectly as Job, but he never gives them any reward." Happily the accuser's grumble is of quite the opposite kind. Neither one way nor another is there any pleasing the devil, and it is not a thing we desire to do. Let him put it as he likes. We serve God and we have our reward; but if the Lord does not choose to give us exactly what we look for, still will we trust in him, for it is our delight. It is a misrepresentation to say of a believer that "he trusted on the Lord *that he would deliver him,*" if he is supposed to trust for no other reason.

And, dear friends, *our faith is not tied to time.* That is the mistake of the

statement in the text. They said, “He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him”—as much as to say, “If God does not deliver him *now* his trust will have been a folly, and God will not have answered to his confidence.” But it is not so. Brethren, if we are in the fire tonight, and we are trusting in God, our faith does not mean that we expect to come forth from the furnace at this very hour. Nay, we may not come out tonight, nor tomorrow, nor next month, it may be not for years. We do not tie God down to conditions, and expect him to do this and that, and then if he does not in his wisdom see fit to do it, threaten that we will trust him no more. The very worst we could do would be to make the Eternal God a slave to time, as though he must do everything at our bidding, and measure his divine movements by the ticking of a clock. The Lord did deliver his Son Jesus Christ, but he suffered him to die first; he was put into the grave before he was uplifted from the power of death; and if it had not been that he died and lay in the tomb he could not have had that splendid deliverance which his Father did vouchsafe him when he raised him again from the dead; had he not yielded to death there could have been no resurrection for him or for us. So, beloved, it may be God has not effected his purpose with you yet, nor has he quite prepared you for the height of blessing to which he has ordained you. Receive what he is going to give you, and take gratefully the painful preliminaries. High palaces must have deep foundations, and it takes a long time to excavate a human soul so deep that God can build a gorgeous palace of grace therein. If it be a mere cottage that the Lord is to build in you, you may escape with small troubles; but if he is going to make you a palace to glorify himself withal, then you may expect to have long trials. Coarse pottery needs not the laborious processes which must be endured by superior vessels. Iron which is to become a sword for a hero must know more of the fire than the metal which lies upon the road as a rail. Your eminence in grace can only come by affliction. Will you not have trust in God if severe trials are ordained for you? Yes, of course you will. The Holy Spirit will be the all-sufficient helper of your infirmities. I say it is misrepresentation if we limit the Holy One of Israel to any form for our deliverance, or to any time for our deliverance. Let not the Lord of love be treated like a child at school, as if he could be taught anything by us!

So, also, *our faith must not judge at all by present circumstances*. The ungodly world judges that God has not delivered us because we are now in trouble, and are at present distressed by it. Oh, how wrongly the world judged of Christ when it judged of him by his condition! Covered with a bloody sweat and groaning out his soul to God beneath the olives at midnight—why, they that passed by who did not know him must have judged him to be a man accursed of God. “See,” they would have said, “we never heard of a man that sweat blood before— sweat blood in prayer; and yet listen to his groaning; he is not heard by God, for evidently the cup does not pass from him.” If any

man had looked at our Lord Jesus when he was on the cross and had heard him cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" they would have certainly concluded that he was the most ungracious and undeserving of men; for had he been a saint, surely, they say, God would not have forsaken him. Yes, but you see they only saw a little of our blessed Master's career; they only looked upon a span of his existence; what a grievous error it was to have estimated his life by his brief passion, knowing nothing of its grand intent! See him now while harps unnumbered sound his praises and all heaven rejoices to behold his glory, and the Father looks upon him with ineffable delight! This is the same Jesus who was crucified! What think you of him now? You must not measure a man by a little bit of his life, nor even by the whole of his earthly career; for it is nothing compared with the hidden future of his life in eternity. These men measured David's faith, and measure our faith by what they see of us on one day: we are sick, we are sorry, we are poor, we are troubled, and then they say, "We told you so! This faith of theirs is not worth having, or else they would not fare so roughly or be found in so much heaviness." Faith and feeling are in contrast. Outward circumstances must never be made the tests of the value of pious trust in our God. We must not judge God by his dealings with us nor judge ourselves thereby; but let us still hold on to this pure, simple faith that the Lord is good to Israel. Let us love the Lord for a whole eternity of his love, and then for everything, for every turn of his hand, for every frown and stroke and rebuke; for he is good in everything, unalterably good. If with this faith of ours we are praying and pleading and God does not answer us, does not help us, but leaves us in the dark, yet still let not our trust waver. If any man walk in darkness and see no light, let him trust and trust on until the light shall come.

So, then, we have just touched upon two points—that a true man's faith is soon made known, but that, though it be known, it is usually misunderstood. We live among blind men; let us not be angry because they cannot see.

III. Thirdly, THIS TRUE FAITH WILL, IN ALL PROBABILITY, BE MOCKED AT SOME TIME OR OTHER. It is a great honour to a man to trust in God, and so to have his name written upon the Arch of Triumph which Paul has erected in the eleventh chapter of the Hebrews, where you see name after name of the heroes who served God by faith. It is a glorious thing to mingle our bones with those who are buried in that mausoleum which bears this epitaph, "These all died in faith." It is an honourable thing to be a believer in God, but there are some who think the very reverse, and these begin to scoff at the believer. Sometimes *they scoff at faith, itself*: they count faith itself to be a folly of weak minds. Or else they insult over one particular Christian's faith. "Oh," they say, "*he* professes to trust in God. This man talks after this mad fashion! Why, he is a working man like other people—works in a shop along

with me. What has he to do with trusting God any more than I have? He is conceited and fanatical." Or in other circles they cry, "This is a man of business; he keeps a shop, and I dare say he knows as much of the tricks of the trade as we do, and yet he talks about trusting in God. No doubt he pretends to this faith to win religious customers." Sometimes the mockery comes from one of your own family, for faith's foes live in the same house with her. The husband has been known to say to his wife, "Ridiculous nonsense, your trusting in God!" Ay, and parents have said the like to holy children; and, alas! children have grown up to speak in like fashion to their parents to the wounding of their hearts. As if faith in God were a thing that could be scoffed at, instead of being the most wise, and proper, and rational thing under heaven. Faith in God is a thing to be revered rather than reviled. True religion is sanctified common-sense. It is the most common-sense thing in the world to put your trust in One that cannot lie. If I trust myself, or trust my fellow-man, I am thought to be in the first case self-reliant, and in the second case I am judged to have a charitable disposition; yet in either case I shall, sooner or later, prove my folly; but if I trust God, who can bring a reason against my confidence? What is there to be ridiculed in a man's trusting his Maker? Can HE fail that created the blue heavens, that settled the foundations of the earth and poured out the waters of the great sea? Can the Almighty retract his promise because he is unable to fulfil it? Can he break his word because circumstances master him and prevent his performance of it? "Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." The day shall come when it will be known by all intelligent beings that unbelief of God is folly, but that faith in the Eternal is essential wisdom. God give us more faith in himself. No doubt we may expect to have all the more of the laughter of the ungodly, who will make a spectacle of us for our faith: but what of that? We can bear mockery and much more for his sake who died for us.

And then *men scoff at the very idea of divine interposition*. They judge the Lord's deliverance to be the main point of our faith. "He trusted God that he would deliver him." "Look," they say, "he fancies that God will deliver *him*, as if the Creator had not something else to do besides looking after *him*, poor miserable creature that he is! He is nothing to God—a mere speck—the insect of an hour, and yet he trusts in God to interfere on his behalf." The philosophers laugh whenever you speak of divine interposition, and count that we must be in the last stage of lunacy to expect anything of the kind. They believe in laws, they say—irreversible, immutable laws, that grind on, like the great cogs of a machine which, when once they are set in motion, tear everything to pieces that comes in their way. They do not believe that God fulfils promises, or answers prayers, or delivers his people. Their God is a dead force, without mind, or thought, or love, or care. He who in nature acts according to law is yet believed to have no power to carry out his own

word, which must always be law to a truthful being. Why, some of us are as sure that God has interposed for us as if he had rent the heavens and thrust forth his right hand visibly before the eyes of all beholders. The wise ones laugh at us for this, but we are not abashed; rather do we reply, "Laugh if you like, and as long as you like; but we daily receive unnumbered blessings from God in answer to our cries, and your laughter no more affects us than the noise of the dogs by the Nile disturbs the flow of the river. We shall believe for all your merriment, and if it please you to go on with your laughter we also will go on with our faith." The object of the ungodly man's scorn is the idea that God should ever interfere to help his people in human affairs; but do you stand to it, O true believers; for he does still show himself strong on the behalf of them that trust in him. Let them say, and laugh at you as they say it, "He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him;" but let none of these things move you.

Further, we have known this mockery to extend to *all kinds of faith in the divine love*. "Let him deliver him," they say, "seeing that he delighted in him." Perhaps you have unwisely told out the tale of God's special love to those who are now making merriment of you; you have cast your pearls before swine, and they turn again to rend you. They say, "This man says God loves him above others; that he chose him before the world began; that he redeemed him from among men with the blood of Christ; that he has called him by his Holy Spirit; that he has admitted him into his secrets and made him his child;" and then they laugh again right lustily, as if it were a rare jest. How the world rages against electing love! It cannot endure any speciality in grace. The idea that one man should be more beloved of heaven than another it scouts as horrible. The heathen could not make out a certain brave saint because he called himself Theophorus, or "God-bearer; "but he stuck to it that he was so, and this made his foes the more wrathful. God dwelt in him, he said, and he would not give up his happy belief, therefore they ceased not to mock. It was a carrying out of our text, "Let him deliver him, seeing he delighteth in him." Well, well; we can afford to bear these mockings; for if we are beloved by a king it will not much matter if we are sneered at by his subjects; if we are beloved by God it is a small concern though all men should make us the subject of their jest.

Ungodly men are exceedingly apt to find *amusement in the trials involved in the life and walk of faith*. Their cry of "Let him deliver him" implies that their victim was in serious difficulty from which he could not extricate himself. This is no novelty to the believer, but it makes rare fun for the ungodly. What is the good of faith if the believer suffers like others, and endures the same pains, and losses, and diseases as others? So the men of the world argue. They would be believers too if it would bring them in a fortune, or a handsome salary, or at least a loaded table and a full cup. But when they see

a saint on the dunghill with Job, or in the pit with Joseph, or in the dungeon with Jeremiah, or among the dogs with Lazarus, they sneer and cry, Is this the reward of piety? Is this the recompense of godliness? They like to spy us out in our time of trouble and taunt us with our confidence in God; and, alas, there is so much unbelief in us that we are all too prone in such seasons to question the justice and faithfulness of the Lord, and to say with David, “Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.” It seems hard for us to be mocked by the base ones of the earth, to become the song and the byword of the ungodly; yet this has happened to the excellent of the earth and will happen yet again. Set your account that this is a part of the covenanted heritage, and accept it with joy for Christ’s sake.

IV. Now, I must close with this point (though there is much more to be said): THE TIME SHALL COME WHEN THE FAITH OF THE MAN WHO HAS TRUSTED IN GOD SHALL BE ABUNDANTLY JUSTIFIED. I think it is no small thing to have *the ungodly bearing witness* that “He trusted in God that he would deliver him.” I have known what it is to be exceedingly grateful to ungodly men for helping me to believe that I am truly a child of God. Somebody, years ago, uttered an atrocious lie against me—an abominable slander. I was very low and heavy of spirit at the time; but when I read it I clapped my hands for joy, for I felt, “Now I have one of the marks and seals of a child of God, for it is written, ‘Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.’” The love of the Lord’s brethren and the hatred of the Lord’s enemies are two things to be desired. We may gather that we are not of the wicked when they will not endure us in their company, when our very presence irritates them, and they begin to rail and jeer. It has happened unto us even as Jesus said: “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” So that there is justification, as it were, of our faith even from the lips of adversaries, and we ought to be thankful for it instead of being downcast about it.

Another justification awaits us, and in due season it will come. Brethren, the day will come when *God will deliver his people*. You will be brought out of your trouble—it may not be immediately, but it will be seasonably. You may most wisely in the meantime learn to glory in your tribulation; your bitters shall turn into sweets, and your losses into gains; your sorrows shall be your joys, your struggles your triumphs—perhaps in this life this transformation may occur, even as the Lord gave to Job twice as much as he had before; but certainly in the life to come you will find the tables turned. Then, what will the ungodly say? They say now, “He trusted on God that he would deliver him;” but they will be compelled to say as they gnash their teeth, “God has delivered him.”

Whereas the ungodly ridicule the idea that God delights in his people, the day shall come when they shall be made to see that he does delight in them. When the Lord appears on behalf of his people, and gives them “beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning,” the wicked shall gnash their teeth, and be filled with confusion. When the Lord shall turn again our captivity, even our most desperate foes shall be made to say, “The Lord hath done great things for them.” They shall wonder and be sore vexed to see how the Lord hath a favour to his chosen. If they do not see it in this life, oh, what an exhibition ungodly men will see of his delight in his people in the world to come! Dives sees Lazarus in Abraham’s bosom: what a sight for him! They that scoff at God’s poor people here, shall see them exalted to be kings and priests, to reign with Christ for ever and ever, and what will they say then? What can they say but be compelled to bear witness that their faith was justified.

Brethren, at the last great day ungodly men will be witnesses on behalf of the saints. If any doubt whether the saints trusted in God, the wicked will be compelled to come forward and say, “They did trust, for we laughed at them for it.” Of this and that man they shall say, “He trusted on God that he would deliver him.” In that day the unbelieving will be swift witnesses against themselves; for as they ridiculed the children of God here, they will have it read out before them as evidence of their enmity against the Lord: and how will they answer it? A man is generally much grieved with any one who injures his children. I have known a man behave patiently to his neighbours, and put up with a great deal from them; but when one of them has struck his child I have seen him incensed to the last degree. He has said, “I cannot stand *that*, I will not look on and see my own children ill-used.” The Lord says, “He that touches you touches the apple of my eye.” Jesus rises from his throne in glory and stands up indignantly while his servant Stephen is being stoned. If I had no other amusement whatever, I would not for merriment sake mock the people of God; for it will go hard with those who make unhallowed mirth out of the saints of the Most High. If any of you have ever done so—if you have done so ignorantly—the Lord forgive you, and bring you to be numbered among his people, as was Saul of Tarsus; and if any of you have done so knowingly, be humble and penitent, and the Lord will forgive you and receive you amongst his people.

But whether ye revile or flatter, it is all one to us. We are at a pass with you: we do trust in God that he will deliver us, and we cannot be removed from this confidence. O ye mockers, we will not be fooled out of our hope, nor jested out of our peace. We cannot find any one like our God to trust to, and so we will not depart from him in life or death, but will rest in him, come what may, even till we see him face to face.