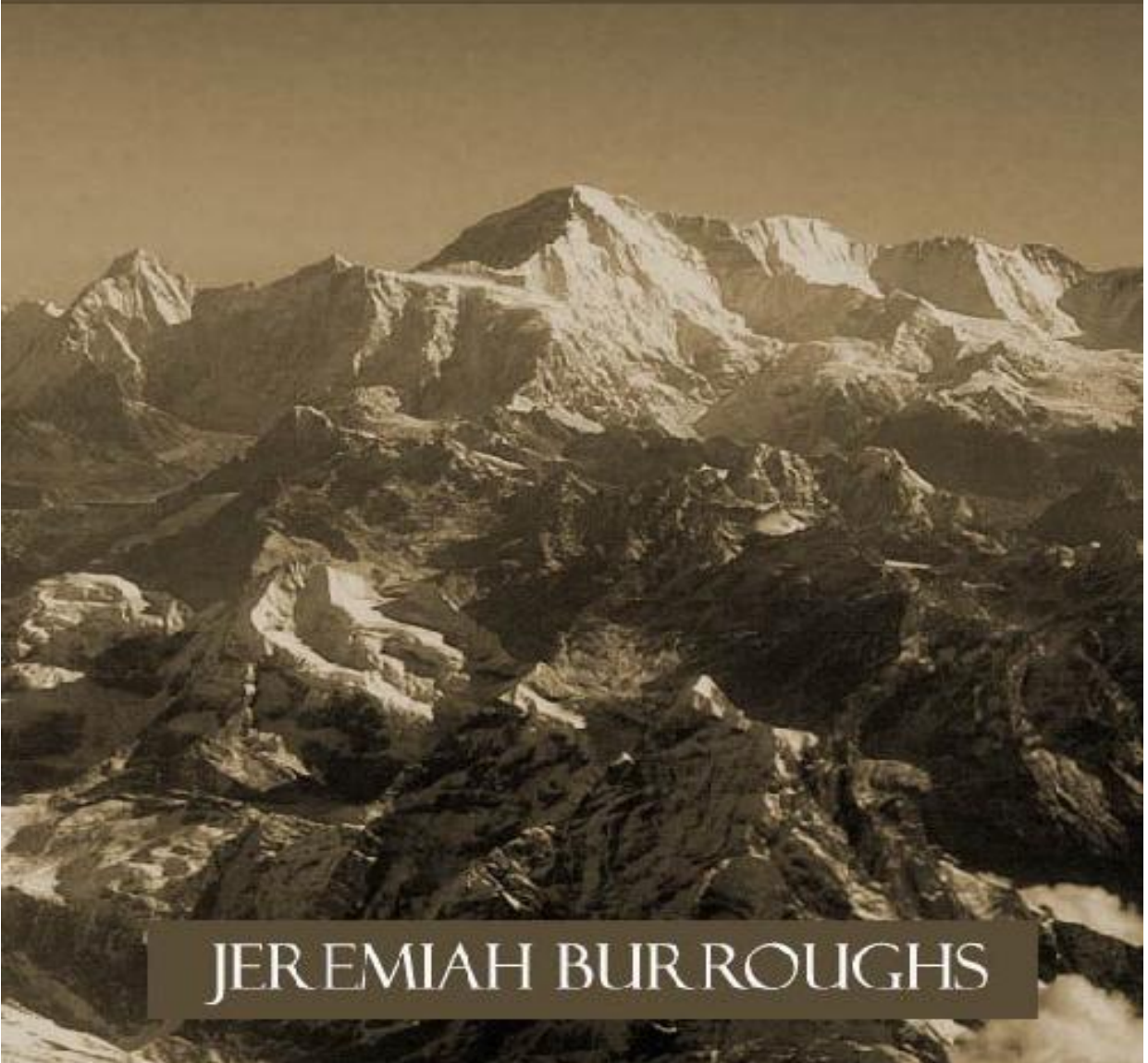


# THE SAINTS DUTY IN TIMES OF EXTREMITY

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*Hand-typed, formatted, modernized, and annotated by*

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*Occasioned upon the news of extraordinary loss*

*to the Parliament's forces in the west, Aug. 21, 1644.* <sup>1</sup>

EXO 14.13

*Stand still, and see the Salvation of the Lord.*

What the certainty is of the cause of those fears that are upon the hearts of people, is not yet apparent; but that there *are* many disquieting fears in their hearts, *that* is apparent to the full. And therefore, though I prepared for that ordinary course as formerly; yet for this time, I desire that you turn to that Scripture, so that I might speak a word in season.

The beginning of the verse is thus, *And Moses said to the people, fear not, stand still and see the Salvation of the Lord.* In the previous chapter, we have Pharaoh dismissing Israel out of Egypt. In this chapter, we have him pursuing Israel with a newly heated fury, against all common sense and reason. His malice and rage besotted him, because God intended to destroy him. Though God's hand appeared gloriously for His people before, yet Pharaoh would not see the majesty of the Lord; but he *will* see it. He gathers all the strength he possibly can, and seems too rash in his way. He overtakes; and he overtakes them in a place of the greatest advantage that could possibly be. For the text says that they were before Pi-hahiroth, in the first verse, between Migdol and the Sea, against Baal-zephon — and that was by God's appointment too.

*Migdol* signifies a tower; so that, in that place the Egyptians had likewise built a tower. Besides the advantage of the rocks, and of the hills, there was a tower built for their further strengthening. And there the people of Israel were an unarmed people. Not only were they by the Tower, but they were against Baal-zephon.

I remember in the last sermon, I showed you what *Baal* was, and what several *Baals* there were that the heathens worshipped for their gods. It is a general name that is sometimes used for any other idol. This *Baal-zephon* was a god they worshipped on this ground; they had an idol set in that place, upon going out of Egypt, that was to watch those who were going out. For so *zephon* comes from *zuri*

*speculatus est* — the god who was to watch, who was to stand and watch for any runaway servant, or any people who left Egypt without leave. They were trusting in the Baal, that he would stop them, and keep them; and he was set in that place for that very purpose. Thereupon, his name was Baal-zephon. By their magic arts, conjurers would have their spells and spirits stop men in such a place, so they won't go out of an orchard, or a yard they enter. So the Egyptians, by their magical arts, had (as it were) a spell there, a Baal-zephon, a god to stop people in that place where they would have them stopped. That is the meaning of this name of the idol *Baal-zephon*.

So that, you see what a strait Israel was in upon going out of Egypt. The sea was before them, the Egyptians had all their strength behind — in a hole of rocks, and a tower, and their god to stop them altogether — so that they themselves made sure of them, and said they were entangled in the land of the wilderness. Being in those great straits, their hearts began to fail them; they began to be extremely troubled, and in a most grievous distemper of spirit. They were coming and chiding with Moses, and said to him in the 11th verse, *Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us to die in the wilderness? Why therefore have you dealt this way with us, to carry us out of Egypt? We would rather have continued in Egypt still. What! Brought to these straits! These extremities! Such a perplexity as we are now in! We would to God that we had been in Egypt. This was the baseness of their spirits; they would rather be under vile bondage, than endure any hazard, than to be put to any straits and difficulties. It is the baseness of the spirits of many today among us, because they see that those ways that have been taken by the Parliament bring some trouble from difficulties, some straits. They cry out about the times. I would to God that we were as before; we were well enough before; we were quiet enough before; we never knew what such stirs as these meant before; but now we are brought into these perplexities. They have brought us into this; and thus they are ready to murmur and repine. Oh unthankful, unworthy generation — men and women of vile spirits who will do so.*

It was a speech of Cyrus, speaking to his soldiers. The historian has this expression of his. *It is the part of a true valiant man, either to live honorably, or die honorably, as one of them. But that is the part*

*of a base coward — to be under any base servitude, rather than to be in any hazard of their lives, though perhaps their lives may be saved too.* I remember Philo tells us, even of women (for in our times, the public cause of the Kingdom suffers exceedingly by the timorousness <sup>2</sup> of the spirits of women), that being in danger of being brought into bondage by their enemies, they took their children and threw them into the rivers, with these words, *You shall not serve; we would rather see you die than be slaves.* I don't commend the fact that it was done well, but to show what a spirit the heathen women had to see their children die, rather than have them bond-slaves.

Indeed, what were our lives worth? Were they worth having, if we return to our bondage again? The utmost of the danger is our lives, the killing of our bodies; and yet we hope God will preserve them too. But suppose the worst, it is but death. But if our lives should not be hazarded now, and if through base cowardice we should decline the cause of God, surely our lives would not be worth taking up. Living in that manner, is to live in bondage to these Cavaliers,<sup>3</sup> notorious wretches, blasphemers of God himself, which would make our lives worth very little — no, it is your children perhaps to be brought up in popery, and to hold a candle to a mass priest at the altar. That may be the employment of your children if so be that they live.

But these people [the Israelites], now being in this extremity, and manifesting so much passion, being in a distemper, Moses as the Captain of the Lord, comes to the people and speaks bravely to them, encouraging them. Says Moses, *Fear not, but stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord. Stand still;* the Hebrew word is *yatsab* — *state*; it signifies to settle and compose, to be in a settled condition. It is a reflect word upon ourselves; so the learned know that it is to work upon ourselves, to *form*; it signifies so. It is the same as if he said, *Work upon your own hearts, to get your hearts to stand still;* work upon your hearts to do that; work arguments upon your spirits, and never stop working until you have wrought your hearts into such a frame that you may *stand still*, and be quiet. At first, even the dearest servants of God will find their hearts shake in time of hazards and extremities. But once they come to work upon their spirits, to bring arguments to lay to their hearts, they get some advantage there, so that their hearts grow quiet quickly.



For that, we have a notable text in the example of David, in Psalm 62. David says there, in the 1st and 2nd verses, *Truly my soul waits upon God; from Him comes my salvation; He only is my Rock and my salvation; He is my defence, I shall not be greatly moved.* Mark that he begins to exercise faith; and he says he shall not be greatly moved, as if he had said, I confess, I cannot say but that my heart is somewhat stirred; I am somewhat afraid, and I feel some working in my spirit. But I hope I shall not be greatly moved. He falls to working more upon his heart, and considers his innocence, and the mischievous device of the ungodly. *How long will you imagine mischief against a man; you shall be slain, all of you* (v. 3). Then again, in the 5th verse, *My soul, wait only upon God, for my expectation is from Him; He only is my Rock.* And then he repeats the words again, after he had been rubbing upon his heart the same meditation. Then he fetches the words again that he had in the 2nd verse: *He only is my Rock and my salvation.*

But mark now, what advantage he gets of himself, in the 6th verse. *He only is my Rock and my salvation, and my defence; I shall not be moved.* After he had been working further on his own heart, he then gains and says now, *He is my Rock, and my salvation, and my defence; I shall not be moved.* I have overcome these distracting fears; I've gotten the advantage and the victory; blessed be God, I have overcome them! God is my salvation and my glory. Now he begins to glory and triumph after he had worked upon himself. So that, in this he did indeed stand still in this phrase, by working upon his own heart. Though he was little stirred at first, yet he got the victory. So indeed, not to be moved, the seventy <sup>4</sup> render this word stand still, *stete* only.<sup>5</sup> Yet in their notes on it, they say it is likewise read *stetite*; that is, *standing fast*, or stand fast. It is a word taken from soldiers in their ranks. Soldiers who are in their ranks, when they apprehend danger, know it would cost them their lives to step out of line; they must stand; they must *stand still*. However much danger there is, they must *stand still in their ranks*. That is the meaning of the word. I will open more what is meant by the Holy Ghost by and by, what kind of *stand still* this should be. But as for this word itself, it is such a *stand still* as the soldiers have in their ranks, not to go out of their ranks for fear.

The word is used in Scripture at various times for *standing fast*, as in Philippians 1.27, that you stand fast in one spirit. Now, the word *fast* is not in the Greek text, but only the other word. And so you have the same word in the other Scriptures. In 1Corinthians 16.13, *Watch, stand fast in the faith* — the word is *stetite*; it is only two words in the Greek, as it is in the English: stand fast. So that, this *stand* means not only standing, but standing fast; stand still in your ranks, *fast*. Don't be in a hurry up and down; and don't be in confusion. If upon danger, soldiers in the army were quickly put to confusion, what would become of them? And so the truth is, in a city, in any place where there is danger, if people grow into confusion, they are gone; they are lost. You must stand still in your ranks; *stand still*.

There are several *stand stills*; some very vile and naughty, and others very good. Here is the first.

1. *Stand still out of amazement*. This is when a man through fear is at a standstill, and dares not stir any further. Now, this cannot be meant in this text, for Moses says, *Fear not, but stand still*. Therefore it isn't standing still out of fear because we're astonished (shocked).

2. *There is standing still out of ignorance*. It is because we don't know which way to take; but this is not in the text either. Thus many in our time, standing still, plead ignorance. They stand still, and will take no side, pleading ignorance. They don't know what to do, for one says one thing, and another says another thing. The King commands one thing, and the Parliament another. They don't know what to do. To go against the King, isn't that rebellion? And so they stand still because they plead ignorance, and their consciences are not informed.

It has been the work of various Ministers who have hazarded themselves in this, to open to you the Counsel of God, and to set your consciences at liberty. I have said diverse things in this place, but certainly men blind their own eyes, and are willing to stand still, to plead ignorance after so much light is revealed. It is strange that any rational man should speak of rebellion now, when as we know, the King himself sent aid to the *Rochellers*, and we know in the case of their liberties and religion, they took up arms to defend themselves against their own King. And he sent help to them. Surely he didn't himself take them to be rebels. And King James in his answer to

Byron that inveighs against the Protestants in France, serves to justify what the Protestants in France did — even King James himself in that book of his, in his answer to Byron.<sup>6</sup>

And besides, we would have to acknowledge that all the Protestant churches in the world are rebels, if it is rebellion merely to take up arms. Don't we know that our own King has matched his daughter to the young Prince of Orange? <sup>7</sup> Now, we know the Prince of Orange is the General of the States in their fields, just as the Earl of Essex is the General of our forces here. And it was their business against the King of Spain (to their praise) to defend their liberties and religion; and they still maintain the same quarrel.<sup>8</sup> And the Prince of Orange is their General, and he undertakes it.

We desire nothing but the maintenance of our liberty and our religion, though things have not gone so far yet, as to have our estates taken. Yet the cause that *they* began with, is *our* cause. And what the General was there, is the same in kind here (there is not a great difference). And certainly, if it were a rebellion, our king would never have matched his daughter <sup>9</sup> to the son of such a rebel — not if it were rebellion merely to take up arms to defend religion, and to defend the liberties of the country, which are liberties according to law. Indeed, we know further that the King himself has acknowledged our brethren, the *Scots*, to be *loving* subjects, to be his *loyal* subjects. And are we doing any more than they did? <sup>10</sup> Are we doing more in our cause? In fact, have we done so much in *our* cause, as *they* have done? How was it generally in their kingdom? And will it be acknowledged that they are loving subjects, doing so much as they did, and yet we be accounted rebels? Surely no man can plead to stand still through ignorance on *that* ground.

3. *There is a third stand still.* The truth is, though it isn't through ignorance, it is through a worse principle, and that is of *neutralizing*. That is, when men, though they are informed well enough, yet they stand still to see which will be the strongest side. They are loth to appear yet, not knowing which side will most prevail. But they have such a principle in their spirits, to go to the strongest side (whichever it may be), that they stand still till it becomes apparent. My brethren, certainly we can allow no *Neuters* in these times. The times have grown to a greater height than for any to be admitted as a Neuter —



either for us or against us. Whatever is not for us at this time, now coming to this strait, may well be concluded to be against us.

4. *There is a fourth stand still*, and this is one of *sullenness of spirit*; and that is more particular. It is true of many men and women, especially those who are in some troubles of conscience, and when they are seeking of God, and performing duties that God requires of them. But not finding that encouragement that their hearts desire, they quit all, and have no mind to do anything except to stand still and die. They will even sink into a sullen discouragement, and go no further, quit their work, and quit duty. *Why should I keep on doing my duty, for I get no good by it? I am never a whit better.* And so they stand still out of a sullen discouragement. The devil himself is the most discouraged Spirit in the world; and yet he is the proudest Spirit in the world. And this standing still out of discouragement may come from pride, and a haughty heart, though you think it is out of humility.

5. *There is a sluggish standing still*, which is sinful and wicked. It is when people stand still because they are idle, and loth to risk themselves, or to put themselves to any trouble, to go forward in any work, for the work is tedious. And thus the sluggard stands still, and is ready to snatch at any arguments that may plead for his standing still. My brethren, this is not that *stand still* here in the text, that we should stand still and do nothing, and be sluggards. No, rather the *stand still* here is after we have gone on, and done to the utmost what we are able, that *then* we should stand still and commit the work to God, as if we had done nothing at all. There is the *stand still* that I will speak more about shortly.

As that worthy divine said, he would labor to preach as if he expected no assistance, and then he would expect assistance as if he had not labored at all. So warriors and people in danger, should prepare in the use of all means, as if they expected no further help; and then they should expect help from God, as if they had used no means at all; so we must use means. <sup>Neh 4.9</sup> As that brave speech of Joab, *Come let us play the men, let us fight for our cities, and the people of our God; and then let God do what seems good to Him.* <sup>2Sam 10.12</sup> Then he stood still and looked for his salvation from God. This is a speech even of Joab himself; it is not then a sluggish stand still. It is no

hindrance at all to any preparations that may be used: therefore all these are nothing.

6. *There is an obediential stand still*; that is, for the hearts of men and women to stand still, to wait, to know further of God's mind. What God reveals, our hearts are willing to yield to. And we will listen to hear what the mind of God further is, what God would have us do — to stand still in order to hearken to what the Lord would have us do, with hearts resigned up to Him, and resolved to walk accordingly. This is good, and that is something of it; but that is not all.

7. *There is a stand still out of Faith, a believing stand still*. And that is when (even in the greatest extremity), having used whatever means we can for helping us, we yet see ourselves wrapped up in extremity. I will now exercise Faith.

(1.) First, *to quiet my heart*; to get out of my spirit those distracting thoughts of that hurry and tumult that there is in the heart, and to silence it all — all murmurings, all distractions, all giddiness of spirit, and the uproar that many times is in the hearts of men and women in time of danger. So by Faith I come to quiet these, and to get my heart to be still within me. Be still O my soul; and therefore the Scripture expresses this waiting upon God out of Faith, as a word of silence. See Psalm 62 at the beginning, and verse 5, *My soul waits upon God; it is silenced* — so the Hebrew word signifies: silence in God. Many times, there is in the hearts of men and women (when they apprehend any danger) a great deal of hurrying and noise in their hearts. All is a combustion in their hearts; it is a grievous thing to see a city in combustion, enflamed and in a tumult. There are many men and women whose hearts are in as great a tumult upon the apprehension of danger, as many times a whole city is in tumult. There is a rising in their hearts, and a mighty noise there. Sometimes they keep their tongues silent (perhaps in private or public exigencies); but their hearts boil within them. But *your hearts must be silent*. You must cry out to your heart, *Be silent there!* My heart is now in mutiny, and a great deal of stir: Cry *Silence!* to your heart, that your heart and thoughts may be composed. That is the meaning of the word, that there should be a settled composed frame of spirit in the hearts of men and women in times of extremity. That is the first.

(2.) Secondly, When standing still is done out of Faith, we should *keep our stations till God calls us out*. We are not to run up and down, this way and that, and to think of nothing but shifting courses, to shift for ourselves. As in time of danger (I truly believe) if we could look into the thoughts of many men and women, they scarcely have any thought, but merely of shifting their place or house. They think to shift for themselves. Now, we should not busy our thought so much about shifting, as about quieting our hearts in believing. For (my brethren) in times of extremity of danger, God calls for courage more than discretion.<sup>11</sup> Though it is true, discretion is not excluded, yet that is not the explicit and special work that is called for in times of danger; I mean discretion to shift for yourselves, but discretion so far as it may improve courage. The main work that God now calls for at this time, is courage, and discretion, and prudence, only so far as to manage courage, and to drive it on further; and to improve and not abate it — this is certainly not the discretion that is called for now, but to keep our station.

*Question.* But you may say, *In time of danger, may we not flee? Must men keep their stations? Is it not lawful to avoid danger and to flee? Then we will accuse many of our brethren who before now have fled in time of danger.*

*Answer.* (My brethren) you are to know that the case now is far different from the case that existed before. The case before now was especially (for the present) directed against particular men, not against the general populace, though there were plots against the general. But the hazard and the danger was against such and such particular men, especially your Ministers, who were most faithful and conscionable. They were the forefront; they bore the brunt of it, and it was aimed especially against them. Now the case is far different. When the aim of the Adversary is against particular men, they may use all lawful means, by avoiding and fleeing. When it is against the body in general, then everyone should stand still, and keep in their ways and stations; to come in and add whatever strength they can to the public cause. And certainly those who shift then, and think to flee then, God may justly meet with them.

We read of this with Jeremiah and Urijah (Jer 26.20-24). Urijah the Priest flees in public time of danger, and he was sent for, and caught,

and put to death. Jeremiah stays and is saved. But when the case is the danger of particular persons, then it says nothing against this text in Exodus, to flee in times of danger, because they think they may shift from fleeing themselves. And if others who are in danger should not do so, they would be far enough from helping and assisting those in extremities, and yet they will be crying out against it. Peter Martyr <sup>12</sup> I remember has this answer to it:

It is just for all the world in this case. It is like a man with a dangerous sickness, and the physicians tell him there is no way to cure it except by taking such strong medicine, or by cutting off a leg or a limb. Now he comes and pleads, *I will not so distrust God, and be so impatient of my present pain, as to take such a course to help me. I'd rather continue patient and quiet, and endure my present pain, and trust in God, rather than put myself to any such hazard.*

Now, is this man more patient than another man who *would* take such strong medicine, or have a member cut off? Is it through the strength of his patience? No, it is rather through the weakness of his spirit, because the other is certain of great pain and hazard; and while he goes on in the use of ordinary means, he has a lesser pain, with the hope that he may be delivered from greater pain, and be preserved.

So this is the objection against fleeing a particular danger: because in fleeing, great suffering is *certain*. Those who have fled have found it so. Now, others would satisfy themselves to endure a little *uncertain* suffering, rather than endure a certain great suffering; that is the very ground of it. But to show that this is not against Faith at all — to flee in danger when it is *particularly* aimed at *particular* persons — I'll give you but a Scripture or two to clear it up.

We might spend a great deal of our time in this case here, but have done with it. It is remarkable in Matthew 10.23, that Christ says, *When they persecute you in this city, flee to another.* He speaks of particular persecution of this or that body, and not of a whole kingdom. Now flee, (they say), we will be more believing, and trust in God, and not be afraid; have we not a good cause, and isn't God with us? This would argue too much fear. Note in the next words that Christ speaks after he gave them liberty, and commanded them to flee, he says (verse 26), *Do not fear them therefore* (though it is the

next thing he speaks of in verse 28), *and do not fear those who kill the body*. You see these two can well stand together. There is no fear of those who can kill the body, and yet there is a fleeing. And so Christ himself flees in Matthew 12, when he but heard what Herod did to John (when Jesus knew it, that was when the Pharisees sought him), when he knew it, he withdrew himself, verses 12-13. *And when Jesus heard of it, he departed from there*, etc. When he but heard what was done to John, Christ withdrew himself and went away. Therefore it may stand with Faith, to so avoid danger in particular cases. But now, when persecution is general, we are to *stand still*, and not avoid our station.

(3.) The *third thing* about standing still in Faith, is *looking up for the salvation of God*, expecting a good outcome one way or another. I don't know how salvation will come, but that there be salvation, one way or another, is what my soul rests upon. I don't stand still out of haughtiness of spirit, or because I think I have means enough to resist. Whether I have means or not, when I am put into the greatest extremity, I can yet *stand still*, and look for salvation. What!? *Stand still*, and look for the salvation of the Lord? Why do you talk of salvation (they might say to Moses) when there is nothing but destruction before us? True, if you look before you, behind you, and without you, and within yourselves, there is nothing but destruction. Yet, look up to Heaven, and *there* is salvation. *Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord*.

I have done no more than the opening of the text, and what is contained in it. There are these four *Doctrinal Conclusions* in the text:

*Doctrine 1.* When God is in a way of mercy and salvation to His people, he many times brings them into great straits, even then, even when He is in a way of salvation.

*Doctrine 2.* In the time of these great straits, even the people of God are subject to have their hearts be overwhelmed with trouble, distracting fears, and to be disquieted.

*Doctrine 3.* It is our duty to stand still, keep quiet, and look for God's salvation in the time of the greatest straits.

*Doctrine 4.* The sight of God's salvation coming after straits, is a glorious sight to behold. Stand still, see the salvation of God.



These are the four. Take the first, then.

**DOCTRINE 1.** *First, when God is in a way of salvation, He yet may and does at various times, bring His people into very great straits.* Truly, this strait in the text is exceedingly remarkable. But I'll show you what God further did when He was about to save this people Israel out of the Egyptian bondage, *after* they were delivered from this strait, from Pharaoh and all his host. This is the work God now has to do with us, to save us out of the Egyptian bondage that we were in, and that we were going further into. You'll find in Exodus chapter 15, the very next chapter, that after they had come out of the sea, they presently wanted water to drink. But *the waters were so bitter, they could not drink them* (Exo 15.15). They were ready to perish for lack of water. As soon as they were delivered out of that strait, note in the 16th chapter, they were in another strait as bad as that. You'll find they lacked bread, and were ready to starve from hunger (Exo 16.2-3). *And all the assembly were ready to be killed for hunger* (the text says). Well, Moses cries to God, and God delivered them out of that strait too. In the next chapter, they were also in as great a strait. *They pitched at Rephidim, and there they had no water to drink again.*

I might go through the story, and show you in the wilderness, what great straits God put them in, and yet God was working salvation for them. But I won't; time will not permit.

When they came to possess the land, they have the Jordan to pass over, without any bridge. Whether the bridges were cut down, or there were none, I cannot tell. But it was more danger to pass over the bridges (if there were any), because it was at the time (the text says, Jos 3.15) that the *Jordan flooded over all its banks*. So then, it was at the worst time that could be, when the banks of the Jordan were all overflowed; and yet God delivered them out of that strait.

When they had gotten over there, I might show you many other straits. But I will mention only one, and it was this: the first enemy the people of God fought with in Canaan, they were discomfited; they were beaten back at the first battle they ever fought <sup>13</sup> — when they came to set upon the land of Canaan, and to fight with the adversary. The adversary comes out and gets the day, and makes them flee before them. That was at the fight at Ai. *They fled before the men of*

Ai (7.4). Upon this, Joshua fell down upon the ground. Why Lord? What, have we come to this? After all these straits, now that we come to fight with the people of Canaan, and at the very first blow, they have the day, and make us flee before them? Now all the people will come out against us.

If these people have such distracting fears now, suppose there were a meeting of both armies, and you heard that one army fled before another — say that our men fled before those who come out against them, before the Cavaliers — what fear and distraction would there be then? Yet, so it was with the people of Israel, though God was coming in with such a mighty hand to deliver them, and to give them possession of Canaan. Still, at the very first blow, they had the worst, and the people of Ai overcame them.

It would take a great deal of time to show you the straits that David, and Josiah, and Jehoshaphat, and Hezekiah were in. I'll only give you a word or two about David, because it may be a very great help to poor troubled spirits in time of straits. David was in such straits sometimes, that he professes he was *overwhelmed*, Psa 61.2. You'll find in Psa 77.4, that *he could not speak*. Many poor souls are in grievous afflictions, and when we urge them to do and open their heart to God and men, *Oh I cannot speak* (they say). David was in such straits that he could not speak; indeed, *he could not so much as look up*, Psa 40.12 — not so much as look up to God, such grievous straits was he in.

And the people of Israel, in their captivity, there were *mountains* before them. What straits did God put them into? When they had come out of Babylon, in Zec 4.7, *What are you O great mountain, that are before them?* But examples will be needless to illustrate the thing, it is so clear that thus was God's dealing with His people. As with wicked men, when God is in a way of wrath against the ungodly, He many times permits them to prosper in the highest way, with the most flourishing prosperity they ever had in their lives. So too, when He is in a way of salvation for his saints, He lets them be in the lowest ebb they were ever in, in all their lives. As in Job 20.22, the text says, *In the fullness of his sufficiency, he will be in straits*. In the fullness of his sufficiency — what a phrase is here! A wicked man will be in straits when he is full, when he has sufficient (he thinks); in the

fullness of his sufficiency he will be in straits. And on the other side, a godly man in his greatest straits, has a fullness of sufficiency.

I will show you this clearly in 2Cor 1.5, *As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds by Christ*. We have a fullness of consolation when we have a fullness of suffering. Yes, we not only abound, but super-abound, for so the word is found in 2Cor 7.4. *I am* (he says) *filled with comfort; I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulations*. We're brought into tribulation, into great straits, and I have a fullness filled with comforts, and *exceedingly* joyful, more than abundantly joyful. So the word signifies. There is *abounding* in the other text, but here it has *super* added to it — a *super-abounding*, more than joyful, and not in prosperity only. Carnal hearts never know how to rejoice except in times of prosperity, when they can eat, and drink, and play; *then* they can be merry. But the saints know how to joy, how to be *filled* with joy, how to *abound* in joy, and how to *exceedingly* abound in joy, when they are in tribulation. Thus, just as wicked men are in straits in their sufficiency, so godly men, when God is in a way of comfort, may be in a way of great affliction. And the reasons for this may be,

**Reason 1.** *Because God would humble His people when He is in a way of salvation*. When God intends the greatest good to His people, and to raise them the highest, He is very careful to keep them very low. That has always been the manner of God's administrations. You see the reason for the people having straits in the wilderness. God gives it here in Deu 8.2, *You shall remember all the way, which the Lord your God led you these forty years in the wilderness — to what end? Why were they so long in the wilderness? It was* (says the text) *to humble them*. I brought you into the wilderness, and it was to humble you.

Does God (my brethren) bring us into straits now, in these times? Certainly He is in a way of salvation for England. He is in a way of salvation to do us good in the latter end; yet He is bringing us into straits. Oh! we may thank the pride of our spirits, that we have not been brought low enough to this very day. There has been (indeed) some humiliation of some of the people of God, in fasting and praying; they have humbled their souls. But yet, though there have been humble expressions, yet there are not humble hearts. For after those times, they have had (many of them) exceedingly froward

spirits. And apparently it argues that their hearts aren't humbled and broken, when their spirits, after days of humiliation, are still as froward and pettish as before. But it argues especially for the majority of the Kingdom, for how far we are from being a humbled people! We are not yet capable of whatever mercy God intends for us in this regard, because we are not humbled. Oh, the exceeding pettishness, envy, and pride (and a great deal worse) not only in many people of the land, but even in those who are godly and gracious!

How opposite are the spirits of men, of one brother to another! And that is because there is some difference in judgment in such and such a thing. O, they could be content (many of them) to have them rid out of the land; and if God did not prevent it (whereas the persecution by Bishops is now at an end), who knows (unless God humbles their hearts more) whether many of God's dear servants, who but differ in some point of judgment, might not meet with a great deal of suffering, even from those who are godly. And that is the worst suffering. It is better to suffer a thousand times from wicked men — it is not so hard on the spirits of godly men to suffer from however many Bishops and wicked men — as to suffer from one godly man. Oh! there lacks that charity and tenderness of spirit, one towards another, that there ought to be. We are not yet humbled and brought to our knees. And therefore it is just for God to lay us on our backs awhile, or that we should even be with our faces on the ground, and confounded in our own thoughts, before that great salvation comes that God intends for us. That's the first reason.

**Reason 2.** *God brings us to straits because He takes great delight in the exercise of faith.* My beloved, faith is a most glorious grace; it is one of the most glorious things that ever God enabled any creature to do, and especially now, when there is so much guilt upon them. It is a more glorious work than Adam performed in Innocency. For a poor creature to believe upon God for his good here, and to rely upon Him in the midst of all extremities, is a most glorious work, and God is exceedingly delighted in it. And therefore the Scripture calls faith, *precious faith*, in the beginning of 2Peter (2Pet 1.1).

Now, God loves the acting of precious things. God loves to see the actings of all His creatures, every creature active in its way. But when God has put such a precious grace as faith into the heart, O how God

delights to see the acting of that precious faith! And therefore it has been the way of God to go quite crosswise after the Lord has made a promise of mercy and salvation. He goes seemingly crosswise, only to exercise our faith. I think I have told sometimes about that with regard to Abraham, that there were but two promises made to him. First, that the country that God would give him, would flow with milk and honey (Gen 12.7; Exo 13.5). And secondly, that his seed would be as the stars of heaven (Gen 15.5). And mark which way God brings this about. As soon as he gets into Canaan, he nearly starved there (Gen 12.10). Is this the country that flows with milk and honey? And then, for the other, his seed would be as the stars of heaven. He waited twenty years before he had a child; and Isaac waited twenty years before *he* had a child <sup>14</sup> — and yet his seed would be great. And Isaac must be killed too (Gen 22.1). And then there was another thing that exercised his faith. God would give him the land; and yet notwithstanding this, during his lifetime he didn't possess even one foot of the land, but only a burial place (Gen 23.9). And what was the reason for all this? It was to exercise his faith.

And there is the promise God makes to his Son Christ, *I will give you the heathen for your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for your possession* (Psa 2.8). Yet Christ did not have a hole to hide his head in; he didn't have so much as foxes and birds have, to hide his head in (Mat 8.20). Thus the way of God seems quite contrary, so that He might draw out that glorious work of faith that He so much delights in. And because this is the only time to exercise this precious grace, and there will be no such faith as this exercised in heaven, God therefore (because He would have as much of the excellence of this faith as possible), even though He is in a way of salvation — He brings his people into straits.

**Reason 3.** *Because the Lord delights so much in the prayers of His people, that He might draw out their prayers.* Oh! the voice is sweet; the voice of prayer is very melodious in the ears of God. It's true, God delights in a praising voice too. But here in this world, He rather delights in prayer. Why? Because God will have a praising voice to all eternity. God's saints will be *praising* Him to all eternity; but they will not be *praying* to Him to all eternity. For now — delighting so much in the praying voice of his saints, and knowing that He will have a great deal of praise from His people when they



are delivered from great troubles — it is no marvel that God exercises His people. What pleases God more than heaven and earth, is the exercise of faith, and the prayers of His people. They are the most pleasing things to God in all the world. And therefore He brings us into straits.

**Reason 4.** *Because God would reveal wicked men.* Before He brings his great salvation, He would reveal those who are vile and wicked, so that they would not partake of that glorious salvation. As in our times, we know how God — in every strait that we have been in — has made some useful revelation to us. It has been a time to discover many whom we now know to be vile and naughty, that we did not know before. Luk 2.35 (you know the place), *A sword shall pierce through your soul — Why? — that the thoughts of many may be revealed.* There will be great afflictions and troubles, and the end I am at is to reveal the thoughts of many. How have men's thoughts been revealed by plots? When God was bringing His people into Canaan, He would not have a rebellious generation come in among them, and cause trouble as they had in the wilderness. It was by a mixture of a base and vile generation, that you see plainly in Numbers 11. This is when they were in such a distressed condition, and in a murmuring and vexing way. Note verse 4, *The mixed multitude that was among them, fell into lusting.* They disturbed all the host of God.

And certainly, if such men are not revealed more than they are, if God were to come to set up a full reformation among us here in England, to bring us to that Canaan (that Promised Land) we desire, then we would be so troubled with a mixed multitude — the mixed multitude would so vex and trouble the Church of God — that they would scarcely ever have peace among themselves. And therefore God in His mercy reveals them beforehand — *before* Canaan comes, He will reveal this mixed multitude.

**Reason 5.** God brings them into straits, *because he would give occasion to the Adversary to vent his malice to the utmost, and to ripen his sin, that it may be ripe to the full before God comes to deliver us* — that these adversaries might be gathered together to be a great sacrifice to the Lord.<sup>15</sup> Therefore God's people are brought to such straits, that if they blaspheme, they will blaspheme to the full.

In our times now, the more straits we are brought into, the greater are the blasphemies of the wicked. And if God should bring us into more straits, and give them the better over us, I believe there will be that horrible blasphemy in England, that was never found anywhere in the world, that the heavens never heard, nor did the earth ever bear such blasphemies (and blasphemers) as there would be if God but delivered up His people in any degree, to the hand of their enemies. We don't know if, for the ripening of their sins, and that they may be remarkable for God's vengeance on them here in this world,<sup>16</sup> God may give them power over His people, and bring His people into still greater straits. And then the last reason is,

**Reason 6.** *Because the work of Jesus Christ will be more apparent at the end, the greater the strait is.* And therefore, in Dan 9.25, *He will build up the City even in troublesome times.* Anyone can build in quiet times; but in troubled times, *Christ will build up the City.* And *He rules in the midst of His enemies* (Psa 110.2). Christ loves to rule in the midst of His enemies, so that his rule may be more conspicuous.

**Use.** Is it so with us? Take heed then, that we don't have our hearts sink because of straits. Let us not say, Why is it this way with us? If God is in a way of mercy, why does He deal thus with us? And shortly we are ready to conclude against the ways of God. "Certainly (we say to ourselves) all is gone, God is gone. Surely whatever the hopes and confidences of such and such were, we see all this is undone; all their hopes are undone." God forbid there should be such an unbelieving heart in any of you, or such murmuring and repining <sup>17</sup> speech among any of you, whatever strait you are brought into!

**DOCTRINE 2.** *In these straits, God's people are mightily troubled.* It was so here in Exodus, in every strait they repined, and were disquieted, and especially at this time. *Stand still* (says Moses). What do you mean to do? There were all in a confusion. And as it was here, so it is many times in many of God's saints — as with the blessed man Heman, who wrote Psalm 88. You'll find in that psalm that he was disquieted. And yet, Heman was one of the wisest men on earth. For so you find him described in 1Kng 4.31, where the Holy Ghost speaks of wise men. Solomon exceeded the wisdom of all of Egypt, for the text there says, *He was wiser than all men, wiser than*

Heman. And yet Heman was in woeful perplexity when he was brought into straits. And in Isa 8.11-12, it was the same case *there* that seems to be our case *now*. Oh, there was a conspiracy, a conspiracy, and many people joined together against God's servants, and upon that (the text says), *The Lord spoke to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of His people, saying to me, "Don't say A conspiracy to all those to whom this people say A Conspiracy; nor fear what they fear."* Mark this, that God was pleased to speak to the Prophet with a strong hand, that he should not be so troubled as other people were in the time of their fear.

Yes, many of God's saints whom He has delivered in a most glorious way in the past, will find at other times, when they have been too secure, that their hearts have been all in a confusion, and were not able to stand before the difficulties they met with.

And for that, you have a famous example of Elijah, in 1Kings 19. If you read 1Kng 18.15, you'll see what a spirit Elijah had; he said he would appear before Ahab: *As the Lord of Hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself to him today* (i.e., to Ahab). And he did show himself to Ahab, and tells him it was him and his people who troubled Israel, when Ahab asked him, *Are you the one who troubles Israel? No, Elijah says, It is you, and your father's house that troubled Israel* (1Kng 18.17-18).

And then Elijah comes and gets the priests of Baal together, and gets fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice; and he destroys all the priests of Baal; and he gets rain from heaven to rain upon the earth. What an excellent spirit Elijah had in the 18th chapter. And yet, in the 19th chapter, Jezebel merely threatens Elijah, and he takes to his heels, and runs away at her threat — even though he had such a brave spirit in the previous chapter.

So it is, truly, with many men, that sometimes their courage makes their adversaries afraid, and at other times, their cowardice makes their friends ashamed. Many have been so; they have been a terror to their adversaries one day, and a shame to their friends another day. The reason is:

**Reason 1.** *Because we have still a great deal of flesh in the best of us, and we are greatly led by our senses; and because we are not*

thoroughly skillful in the ways of God, because the fear of God is so weak in us. Therefore it is that the fear of man is so strong, and we know so little of God's secrets. The secrets of God are with those who fear Him. If we feared God more, we would know His secret ways, and not be troubled so much.

**Reason 2.** *Because there is a great deal of guilt that rests in the best, and that will make anyone afraid; where there is great guiltiness in their hearts, it is exceedingly troublesome to the soul.*

**Reason 3.** *Because they are too confident in the flesh, they are far too confident in themselves.* This is why God withdraws Himself from them; and whenever they are afraid, they cannot trust God, as David professes (it is an admirable, sweet text) that *whenever he was afraid, he would trust in God.* Many a man for the present thinks he can trust in God; but he cannot do it at that time when he is afraid. Psa 56.3, *Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in the Lord.* When your passion comes, then you make no use of your faith to trust in God. As now, many a man or woman can be meek and quiet, till they have a temptation. But when your passion is up, can you be meek then, and rise then, and beat it down with the contrary grace? So when the passion of your fears and troubles comes up, can you *then* trust in God? "Yes; that is, somewhat..." But because we trust so much in ourselves, when the time comes that we *should* trust in Him, God withdraws Himself from us, and we are most afraid.

**Use 1.** This use is that we should lay our hands upon our hearts, and charge our souls for this, and be ashamed of it before the Lord. There is no one here who doesn't have cause to lay his hand upon his heart and say, "Oh that I [should be troubled this way], who have had so much experience of God, of His ways of helping and delivering me out of six and seven troubles. And yet the Lord knows, upon any new trouble, I am to seek Him *then* as much as ever — in any hurly burly, <sup>18</sup> in as great a distemper or fear as ever. Be ashamed of this before the Lord. It is true, God's people may be so, and you are so; and therefore, be ashamed of it, and labor to prepare for such times. Those who are troubled with fainting fits, used to carry their bottle of *Aqua vitae* <sup>19</sup> about with them. So you who have been disquieted in times of trouble, lay up something that may help in those times. Though a candle's light will serve to carry in a yard in calm weather,

it must be a torch, a great light, that must serve when the wind blows. So a little may serve now; but a great deal must be laid up for times of extremity. (1) lay up encouraging *promises*; (2) lay up encouraging *experiences*, that may help you against such times of fainting and trouble.

**Use 2.** But then, if it is this way with the saints and God's own people — that when they are in straits, they are so ready to be troubled with distracting fears and cares — what then will become of the wicked and ungodly? When they come into straits, how their hearts must sink in horror! Because all their straits are no other than the beginning of eternal straits, present sorrows making a way to eternal sorrows, the way of their deliverance from present straits is by being brought into greater straits. Many women with child have strong pains in their childbirth. Yet when they think they will be delivered, they have joy instead of sorrow.

But a woman that is with child, and is only reprieved from being hanged *because* she is with child, and only *until* she is delivered — even though she has a great deal of trouble and pain before she is delivered, she doesn't desire to be rid of it — because then she knows she will come to greater trouble, and be hanged. If she could live seven years with child, and never be delivered, she could be content with that trouble, because when that is gone, greater trouble comes. So too, wicked and ungodly men who are in great straits for the present, may well be content with them, because when they are gone, greater will come.

**DOCTRINE 3.** *In the time of these straits, it is our duty to stand still and look for God's salvation, to quiet our spirits, and to look up to God.*

First, *For the quieting of our spirits.*

As the Israelites were to be delivered out of this Egyptian bondage in that way, so they were to be delivered out of the Babylonian bondage in the same way. See what God says for that deliverance. He tells them plainly in Isa 30.15, *In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength; but you would not.* In quietness and confidence. It's true, they were in a passionate way, and God tells them that in quietness and in confidence is their strength; but they would not. So, when you come to many people who are in great extremities, to some



women and others — when they're wringing their hands, and hanging about their husbands necks — tell them their confidence must be in quietness, and they'll be ready to throw you off a cliff. But they would not (says God). So too, we read in Isa 30.7, *I cried out concerning this, Their strength is to sit still.* <sup>20</sup>

My brethren, this day in the Name of God, I cry out concerning all our straits, after we have used all the means we can, we are to *sit still*, and look up to God for salvation. It was their great fault, that they did not do so in their deliverance out of their captivity. There is one remarkable place for that in Jer 31.22, *How long will you go about?* <sup>21</sup> *Oh, you backsliding daughter! For the Lord has created a new thing in the earth.* How long will you go about, Oh you backsliding daughter? What's the meaning of this text? It means this: in the time of their deliverance from Captivity, they met with a great deal of difficulty, many straits, and they went about to this and that sharking course; they backslid. And even when they were in a good way, they went back again. And the Prophet couldn't get them to stand still in *any* way. It's as if he should have said, "Go on right in the way; don't be discouraged by difficulties or extremities. Don't seek any shifting way; don't backslide — but stand to your tackling and work that God has set you about. For the Lord has created a new thing."

Perhaps you'll say, "There was never a strait like the one we're in." Well, God has such *mercy* as He never showed the likes of before. God has created a *new* thing. Many cry out in their straits, "O my affliction, and my strait is such as was never in the world!" Well, gratify them so (as many times we must gratify distempered spirits when they cry out about the greatness of their straits). Yet, is there no comfort for them, to stay them? Yes! Isa 64.4. *It was never known since the beginning of the world, what God has laid up for those who wait for Him.* Only wait for Him, and there was never such mercy shown in the world, as God has laid up for you. So that, come, let us grant it: that there was never the like of that affliction that you are under. Yet there is reason enough for you to wait, and to look for the salvation of God in such a way, and in such a condition.

I will give some reasons for that part of the Doctrine that we are to stand still and be quiet. For by standing still, and quieting our hearts in our straits:

**Reason 1.** *We are fit to look to the wisdom, faithfulness, and power of God.* We are not able to see God's wisdom, faithfulness, and power, nor to make use of it, *unless we get our spirits to be quiet.* First, get the quiet, and then we can look up to God. Psa 46.10, *Be still* (says the text) *and know that I am God.* There is a God in heaven who can help and succor us in time of great straits and extremities. But for all this, people are in a hurly burly; their spirits are distempered, and they're wringing their hands, and crying. They cannot know that God is God, they can have no use of all the power, and goodness, and faithfulness, and mercy of God. *First* get your hearts still and quiet in your families, and in your own spirits, and *then* you'll know that God is God. God will not appear till first, you're still.

**Reason 2.** *We are not able to make use of our own graces, till we are quiet and still.* If God had bestowed graces when we are in a hurly burly, we have no use for them at all. Therefore it says in Psa 4.4, *Stand in awe; do not sin; commune with your own hearts upon your beds, and be still.* Commune with your own hearts: you have something in your own hearts, perhaps, that may quiet you. Commune with your own hearts and be still. You are fit to commune with your own hearts, till you get them quiet. First be quiet, and then commune. (Oh! my brethren) A man or woman of a staid, sound, quiet, and still spirit, has a mighty advantage over all passionate spirits. There are many of you who are passionate at all other times; and that is the reason that in such great extremities, you are so overruled with passion. You are so overruled with your passion of anger at other times, and out of God's judgment, that you are overruled with the passion of fear now. But if at other times you would labor to rein in your spirits, God would help you now.

**Reason 3.** Because without this stillness, and quietness, we cannot manifest that subjection to God that we owe Him. For then there is a great deal of sin, and pride, and haughtiness committed against God. And therefore in that fourth Psalm, the old Latin has it, *My soul be silent;* my soul is subject to God. And the subjection of our souls to God, depends much upon this quieting of our hearts.

**Reason 4.** Our reverence of God depends much upon it; and therefore in this fourth Psalm, *Stand in awe, and don't sin; commune with your own heart, and be still.* For us to behave

ourselves in such a manner as many people do, wringing and throwing up their hands, and keeping such a stir as they do — this shows there is not in their hearts, that reverence they owe to God; *stand in awe*. If your hearts were possessed with the fear of God, you wouldn't keep such a stir as you do in times of great danger.

**Reason 5.** This makes people unfit to listen to anything that is spoken to them. Let anything be spoken to them that is of use, and they cannot hear it or make use of it. As we read about the people of Israel, Exo 6.9, when Moses came to tell them of their deliverance, the text says, *He spoke to the children of Israel, but they didn't hearken to him — why? — for anguish of spirit*. How many in trouble of conscience, and in other times of extremity, have their spirits in such anguish that they never hearken to anything that is delivered to them; and therefore they come with the same objection over and over again, a hundred times in cases of conscience.

**Reason 6.** Without this quietness of spirit, you are mighty hinderers of others, and you daunt and discourage the hearts of others. And many times, the cause miscarries merely upon the unquietness of the hearts of men and women in time of danger. Therefore, you must be quiet, and look up to God for salvation. For faith has this excellence, that it is able to bring life out of death, light out of darkness. It has a kind of creating virtue. As God himself brings one contrary out of another, so faith has such a kind of working. If faith is of the right stamp, a genuine faith, it has a mighty power in times of extremity, to behold God's salvation, and make use of it.

I'll give you one example of the use of faith in times of extremity, and that is of David, when he fled from Saul, and was in the cave. Mark what he says, Psa 57.1, *Be merciful to me, O God; be merciful to me, for my soul trusts in You. Yes, in the shadow of your wings I will make my refuge*. What was the shadow of God's wings? Poor David had gotten into the shadow of the cave, and the sun didn't shine upon him; but he looked at himself in the cave, as being under the shadow of God's wings. You poor people who live, it may be in cellars, and in poor dark holes and lanes; the sun scarcely shines on you in a year. And yet, if you are godly, you are under God's wings by faith.

I will now speak to the second part of the Doctrine, that *we are to expect salvation from God*.

David fled from Absalom, and yet what confidence did David have (in that case) in God? Read but that third Psalm,<sup>22</sup> and you'll see confidence enough in David, and yet fleeing too. I will give various grounds and reasons for this, for why we must *look up to God*, as well as *be still*.

**Reason 1.** By this we sanctify God's names: *don't fear what they fear* (Isa 8.12), but *sanctify God in your hearts*, says the text, 1Pet 3.15; or else you don't sanctify God. I suppose many of you would be loath to be guilty of swearing, and taking God's name in vain in that way. But by your disquieting thoughts, and unseemly carriage in times of danger, you take God's name in vain; you break the Third Commandment.

**Reason 2.** This shows the beauty and excellence of faith. As David said, *You shall see what your servant can do* (1Sam 28.2). So now, there is a great deal of talk of faith in the world; let us see now what it can do. The truth of love is when I can *love* God for Himself without His gifts; so too when I can *believe* God without experience.<sup>23</sup> I show the excellence of my faith when I can *trust* God merely upon His word — as I love God merely for Himself, when my faith takes God's single bond, without any security.<sup>24</sup> *That* is the excellence of faith. When I must have outward helps and assurances, I call for sureties. So Christians, when they must have outward helps, and former experiences, they call to God for sureties, as if they wouldn't trust God upon His single bond. *That* is the excellence of faith, to trust God upon His single bond.

**Reason 3.** When we look up to God for salvation, we engage God in our cause. God doesn't own the cause till then, and then He owns it. Now, how happy we would be if we could thus, in all our particular and private straits, *stand still and look up to God for help and for salvation*. It is true, you cry out and complain — I have lost a dear husband, and a dear friend; never has man lost such a friend, and I have been brought into these great straits. But don't lose the quiet of your heart too; take heed of that. That is a greater loss than any loss you can have in this world. I remember I read of a philosopher who had this expression, saying, "If the gods would grant me my desire,

and bid me to ask what I would have, I would ask them for this — that I might have the composed spirit of Socrates, that I might have such a spirit as Socrates had. For it is observed about him, that he scarcely changed his countenance upon anything that befell him; he was always in a quiet composed frame.” And yet Socrates was a heathen. How much more should a Christian say, “If God would give me my asking, I would ask for nothing but that.” For indeed, there is a great deal of glory and excellence in a composed spirit. *This is worthy of the Gospel. Therefore mark what the Apostle says in Phi 1.27, Only let your conversation be as it becomes the Gospel of Christ, that whether I come to see you, or am absent from you, I may hear of your affairs, and that you stand in one spirit.* This is to walk worthy of the Gospel: to stand fast in one spirit.

And observe this: that unless we stand fast, and quiet our hearts, we lose everything that would help us. When we are in a hurly burly in our spirits to get some help, alas, we lose all our help. Therefore, in Phi 4.7, *Let the peace of God keep your hearts*, the original word there is *guard your hearts*. The peace of God in your hearts must be the best guard of your hearts in time of danger. Now, because you would avoid trouble, you put away your guard. What madness is this? Casting away the peace of God, is casting away your guard. Therefore, keep that in your hearts, whatever else you may lose. Yes, it is our Armor. Mark Ephesians 6. What is the Armor of a Christian?

First, *the girdle (belt) of truth*; but fear dissolves the heart, and makes a man so that he cannot gird himself. When he is in fear, his heart is melted, and he has little use of his truth — then the girdle is loosed. In the text, there is *the helmet of salvation*; but in fear, hope is gone. There is the breastplate of righteousness; but in fear, a man has no use for his righteous conduct, nor any use of the sword of the Spirit. He can use nothing in times of such disquieting fears. Therefore, don't lose your Armor. It is very observable in Ephesians 6 how the Holy Ghost still calls upon us to stand. Verse 10, *My brethren, be strong in the Lord*, and not only strong, but *strong in the Lord*; and strong in the might of the Lord, *and in the power of His might*; *put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand*. Then again, in verse 13, *Therefore take on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand the evil one; and having done all, to stand*.



Even if perhaps you have overcome at one time, *still* look to your own hearts. When you have done all, *stand*. Four times we're called up to stand, noting what a great advantage we have by standing. It is true, our afflictions are great, and the soul says, *The Lord is my portion* (Lam 3.24); and it is good for a man to say, What, will I who am so full of sin, not be willing to have some trouble, but instead, be so full of fears upon every trouble that befalls me? Why should I not yield to God's providential will, as well as to His commanding will? How do I know if God doesn't have glorious ends to work out of these extremities and troubles that I'm in? Why shouldn't I give myself up to God, to have His will upon me? And hasn't God previously delivered me from great straits and extremities, even from the wrath of God Himself, and from His Justice? These are greater and other manners of straits than I am now in.

And if I don't believe in God now, but am disquieted, perhaps these straits may be to bring me to greater straits. What if these straits of affliction *were* to bring me to greater straits? And isn't it just for God to leave me to fall into the straits of sin, who cannot bear the straits of affliction? Therefore, let me *stand still*, and look up to God's salvation. Let us be so affected with our straits, as to carry us up to God in prayer. Pray as much as you can, but still keep your hearts in a quiet frame. And if your prayers are right, they will be to you, as Luther said, the leeches of your cares. When you're distempered, go to prayer; and then examine what a great deal of corrupt blood those prayers have sucked out of your heart. As with Hannah, when she had been at prayer, she no longer looked sad (1Sam 1.18).

There are many things I thought to have given you, to stay your hearts in time of extremities. *Peace shall be to that man whose heart is stayed on God; and blessed is that man who stays his heart on God*. And if ever people had cause to stay their hearts upon God, certainly we have at this day, for we have God with us. Therefore it is unworthy of a Christian to have a distempered spirit. I remember I have read of the Romans, that when Hannibal was just before them, they still bought and sold their ground as they did at other times — they were so quiet in their hearts. It was a speech that Antigonor <sup>25</sup> gave when some were afraid of the multitude that came against him (they say). "So many are coming against us." He says, "How many do you reckon *me* for?" So may we say, "We hear of so many thousands

coming against us; but how many do you reckon Jesus Christ for?" How many do you reckon him for, who is the Captain of all our Hosts? (Jos 5.14) Haven't prayers been sent up to God? Why do you despise the prayers of the saints of God, as if there were nothing in their prayers? Isn't God's name engaged in all this business?

Oh therefore *stand still*, and don't be afraid. And especially let me speak a word to you who are of timorous and fearful spirits. Isa 35.4, *Say to those who are of a fearful heart, Fear not*. Don't excuse yourselves in this, that you are of a timorous nature (says God). *Say to those who are of a fearful heart, Fear not*. And especially mark what the Holy Ghost speaks to women in 1Pet 3.4: *Women must clothe themselves with a meek and quiet spirit, which is of great price in the sight of God*. And in the 6th verse, *As Sarah obeyed Abraham, and called him Lord, whose daughters you are as long as you do good, and are not afraid of any terror*.

What should the meaning of that be, that women must be the daughters of Sarah on these terms? It means that Abraham was brought into straits many times, and carried from his own country. Now Sarah, if she had been such a spirit as many women are, Oh how Sarah would have hindered her husband Abraham, in every strait he was brought into. She would have said, "Husband, why do we go from our own country, and our friends, and so we are brought into such straits? I pray you husband, go back again, and don't risk yourself thus and thus." But it seems she was of a gracious spirit, and quieted herself in God, and was not afraid with terror. If you would approve yourselves the daughters of Sarah, do so when God calls your husbands to any service, even if it is with some hazard. Don't hang about their necks and wring your hands, and say, "I beseech you husband, consider what will become of me and my children! Will you leave me now?" Take heed, you are *not* the daughters of Sarah if you hinder your husbands at such a time as this.

**DOCTRINE 4.** *That the sight of salvation after straits, will be a glorious thing*. If we are brought into straits, that which is coming will pay for all; there is enough to satisfy. Let us not be troubled at greater straits than we yet have. Suppose blood should be shed (beloved). God has such mercy for England, that shall pay for all the blood of his saints, that shall be shed; and the blood of His people is a precious thing. Every drop of the blood of His people is very

precious, and the Adversary shall be accountable for every drop. God will value it, and there shall be a valuable consideration given for every drop of blood. And the more difficulties we have in obtaining that mercy God is about to give us, the mercy shall be the greater. Isa 54.11, *O you afflicted one and tossed with tempests, your foundations will be laid with sapphires, and with precious stones.* If we are afflicted and tossed with tempests, and the blood of God's people goes with it, then comfort yourselves with this: the more precious blood that is shed in this business, the greater mercy is to come. For God will have a valuable consideration for all the blood of His saints.

**FINIS**

## Notes

[←1]

This sermon was given during the English Civil Wars (1642-1651). *Restormel Castle*, the site of the battle, remained in Royalist hands until the following year. After the Battle of Naseby (June 1645), the Royalist cause was lost, and Parliamentary forces commenced an assault on the South West. Restormel Castle was evacuated by the Royalists as they retreated to the West. That was just before Burroughs gave his series of sermons, labelled by others as the *Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment*. This sermon was included in the 1651 edition of that work.

[←2]

*Timorousness*: fear of the unknown, or of venturing into new and unknown places or activities.

[←3]

*Cavaliers* were Royalist cavalry, fighting for King Charles I during the English Civil Wars. The Cavaliers opposed the Roundheads, who supported Parliament. Cavaliers were aristocrats. They wore their hair long, and dressed in finery on the battlefield. Roundheads cut their hair short and dressed plainly. The aristocrats had a certain unimpressed attitude (they were *cavalier*) towards those they considered their *inferiors*. Those same inferiors refused to bend the knee to them, and proved their equality on the battlefield. When the Republican rabble finally defeated the aristocrats, Oliver Cromwell showed his disdain for the British class system by executing the king. He was therefore hated and feared by the aristocracy. Their contempt for him continues to this day in England. Americans, by contrast, see Cromwell as a champion of the common man, and of representative government — a precursor to their own Revolution in 1776.



[←4]

The *Seventy* is a nickname for the Septuagint, the translation of the Old Testament by seventy Jewish scholars, from Hebrew to Greek. It is the version often quoted by Christ in the New Testament.

[←5]

That is the word typeset in this edition; but in the NT the Greek is *steko*, and Psa 62.6 in the LXX it is *steusoo*.

[←6]

Charles I sent a fleet of 80 ships, to encourage a major rebellion in La Rochelle France, a Huguenot stronghold against the Catholics under Louis XIV. In June 1627, Buckingham landed with 6,000 men to help the persecuted Huguenots. It began the Anglo-French War of 1627. The reference is to King James I, and probably Sir John Byron of Newstead Abbey; both died in 1625. Byron's son John (1599-1652) served Charles I in the Civil War, and was made Baron.

[←7]

This is William II (1626-1650), Prince of Orange. His only child would become William III, King of England, Ireland, and Scotland, in “The Glorious Revolution” of 1688.

[←8]

Referring to the Eighty Year's War (1568-1648), or the Dutch War of Independence. It was a revolt of the Seventeen Provinces (today known as the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg), against Philip II of Spain, who was the sovereign over the Habsburg Netherlands.

[←9]

Speaking of Mary, *Princess Royal* (1631-1660), first daughter of King Charles I. The king thought it beneath her to marry Prince William, but financial and political troubles required it. They were betrothed in 1641 (she was 10). Their only child, William (William III), married his cousin Mary, the fifteen-year-old daughter of Charles II's brother James, Duke of York. Orange, curiously, is a province in the south of France on the Rhone; but that's another story...

[←10]

Referring to the Bishops Wars of 1639 and 1640, disputes over control and governance of the Kirk of Scotland. In 1637 Charles I attempted to impose uniform practices between the Kirk and the Church of England. Charles favoured rule by bishops, while the Scots advocated a presbyterian system. The 1638 National Covenant pledged to oppose these innovations; and the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland voted to expel the bishops. When Charles resorted to force, the “Covenanters” (Presbyterian Scots) defeated the Royalist forces (Catholic Scots) in Aberdeenshire, in 1639. Then they defeated an English army in 1640, leaving the Covenanters in control of Scotland. As a postscript, three weeks after this sermon was given by Burroughs, the Royalists defeated the Covenanters at Aberdeen, Sept. 13, 1644.



[←11]

As in, “*discretion is the better part of valor.*” Such discretion might cause us to quit the field as a prudent choice, to preserve life and limb. But, says Burroughs, this isn’t the time for such discretion; we need courage to *stand still*.

[←12]

Peter Martyr Vermigli (1499-1562) Italian-born Reformed theologian. His early work as a reformer in Catholic Italy, and his decision to flee for Protestant northern Europe, influenced many other Italians to convert and flee as well. In England, he influenced the Reformation, and contributed to the 1552 Book of Common Prayer.

[←13]

At Jericho, in Joshua 6, there was no open battlefield or opposing army, only skirmishes within its fallen walls.

[←14]

Burroughs originally said that Isaac waited 40 years for a child. But Isaac married at 40 (Gen 25.20), and had Jacob at 60 (Gen 25.26). So I changed it to 20 years. I suspect this sermon was given verbally, and recorded shorthand.

[←15]

**Gen 15:16** But in the fourth generation they will come back here: for the iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet full. **Joe 3:13** Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; For the winepress is full, The vats overflow-- For their wickedness *is* great. **1Th 2:16** forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up *the measure of* their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.

[←16]

As with Sodom and Gomorrah, the angels came to see if the sin was as bad as the outcries against it (Gen 18.19-20). When it was confirmed, and had reached its peak, God rained down fire from heaven on them in His wrath (19.24).

[←17]

*Repine*: to express discontent; to “whine and moan.”



[←18]

*Hurly burly*: a tizzy or frenzy; disorderly outburst or tumult; a violent agitation.

[←19]

*Aqua vitae*: a stimulant like smelling salts; a concentrated solution of ethanol; also brandy or “spirits of wine.”

[←20]

In the KJV it reads, *Rahab-Hem-Shebeth*, translated “Rahab who sits still.”

[←21]

Variously translated, gad about, waver, wander, vacillate, go here and there, etc. The Hebrew *chamaq*, is to withdraw, turn around, or turn away – as if to turn back to Babylon, as the first Israelites wanted to return to Egypt, and we to sin.

[←22]

**Psa 3:3-6** But You, O LORD, *are* a shield for me, My glory and the One who lifts up my head. <sup>4</sup> I cried to the LORD with my voice, And He heard me from His holy hill. Selah <sup>5</sup> I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the LORD sustained me. <sup>6</sup> I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people Who have set *themselves* against me all around.

[←23]

**Joh 20:29** Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed *are* those who have not seen and *yet* have believed.”

[←24]

Loaning money on a promise (a bond), based on trust alone, without demanding collateral to secure its repayment.



[←25]

Antigonor or Antigonus, one of Alexander's generals (c. 336 B.C.), later the possessor of Asia. Josephus mentions Herod fighting against Antigonus (Mattathias), the last Hasmonean king (37 B.C.).