

JEHOVAH'S TENDER REGUARD

TO HIS POOR

AFFICTED SAINTS,

DEMONSTRATED IN

A

SERMON

PREACHED AT GREAT WOOD-HOUSE
NEAR LEEDS

IN YORK-SHIRE, JUNE 10. 1719.

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BY JOHN MOORE  
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{PSALMS. 34: 6}, This poor Man cried, and the LORD heard, and Saved him out of all his Troubles.

By the Title of this Psalm it is evident that it was a Psalm of David, Who is sometimes called the sweet Psalmist of Israel, {2 Samuel. 23: 1}. As to the Manner and outward Form of its Composure in the Hebrew, it is Alphabetical each Verse beginning with a Letter according to the Order of the Alphabet. This and the rest of the Alphabetical Psalms are all very choice and singularly eminent.

As to the Matter of this sweet Psalm it is mixed of Praise and Instruction and is a choice Cordial for the afflicted and distressed Saints. The Occasion of David's composing and penning this Psalm was, his being persecuted by King Saul, and his fleeing [For fear of him] unto Gath, where he changed his Behavior [Thro' Infirmary and extreme Fear] before Abimelech [i. e. Achish King of Gath,] who thereupon drove him away, and he departed, and escaped to the Cave Adullam; as the Title declares, compared with {1 Samuel. 21: 10}, to the End. And Chapter. 22: 1}.

In this Psalm we find David praising the Lord, and exhorting others to praise the Lord with him, and declaring the Happiness of those that trust in the Lord, and advising, or exciting the Saints to fear the Lord, &c. showing [by way of Consolation] what inestimable Benefits the Righteous, and such as truly Fear the Lord, do & shall partake of These (in general) are the Contents of this Psalm.

The Psalmist begins with praising the Lord for this his great and seasonable Deliverance from his fears, dangers and troubles (before hinted,) saying, in Ver. 1, 2, I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my Mouth. My Soul shall make her boast [or, shall glory] in the Lord; the humble [the meek, or lowly, made so by Affliction] shall hear, and be glad. Then he calls upon others to join with him in praising the Lord, saying, in Ver. 3, O magnify the Lord with me; and let us exalt his Name together. And then he proceeds to give the Reason of his own Resolution, and of his provoking others, to bless and praise the Lord, viz. His Experience of this great deliverance from all his Fears; Which was such, so wonderful so seasonable, so affecting, that the humble, in the like straits and distresses, shall look to the Lord, and be lightened [viz. with Comfort, &c.] Or, They shall flow together (as a River) to him, for Deliverance; taking Encouragement from this Deliverance of David, saying., This poor afflicted Man called, and the Lord heard, and saved him out of all his Distresses, Ver. 4, 5. 6.

In these Words of our Text we may observe (1) The Subject, or Person spoke of, pointed at and distinguished by a certain Character appropriated to him and others in the like Condition, This poor Man. (2) The Case, or the Circumstances in which, this poor Man was, or had been in time past intimated in the last Clause of the Text Which was distressing and doleful; He was surrounded with, & had labored under many & grievous troubles, distresses, pressures. (3) His Deportment under his troubles, He called, or cried [viz. to the Lord.] (4) The Consequence, or what followed thereupon, viz. The gracious Respect which the Lord showed him,

expressed in two Particulars, 1, Jehovah heard, 2, He saved him out of all his troubles.

I think there is nothing in this Text that needs Explication, unless it be the first Words [Zeb gna,] This [or that] poor afflicted Man: Whereby I conceive we are to understand either David Typical, or David Personal; 1, These Words may be taken "Prophetically, as spoken of Christ Jesus, of whom David was an eminent Type and Figure: And indeed Jesus Christ for our sakes became poor, {2 Corinthians. 8: 9}. He was a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with Grief; He counted himself a Worm and no Man; a Reproach of Men, and despised of the People; See {Psalms. 22; 69; Isaiah. 53}. Who in the Days of his flesh offered up Prayers and Supplications, with strong crying and Tears, unto him that was able to save him from Death, and was heard in that he feared, {Hebrews. 5:7}. So that it may truly and properly be said of Christ, as considered in his Humiliation-Sate, in his Agonies and deep Sufferings, This poor afflicted Man cried, and Jehovah heard, and saved him out of all his troubles. Yea, the very same Word [gnani] is applied to Christ, in {Zechariah. 9: 9},—Behold, thy King cometh unto thee he is just, and having Salvation, lowly, [poor afflicted,] and riding upon an Ass, &c. The Septuagint renders it meek, as also {Matthew. 21: 5}. Both senses agree to Christ, who was both poor afflicted, and meek or humble. So Christ is stilled [gnani] poor afflicted, in {Psalms. 22: 24; 69.29; 109.16, 22}. But I shall not insist upon the Words as taken in this Sense. Therefore,

By this poor Man here we are to understand David himself, the Son of Jesse; Who had labored under sore troubles and distresses from the rage

and bitterness of Saul against him, and thro' his fears of Achijb the King of Gath, &c. For, (as H. Smith saith) Being a Figure of Christ, he was always surrounded with Troubles: As Christ was despised of his Country-men, So David was despised of his Brethren As Herod persecuted Christ. So Saul persecuted David: As Christ fled to Egypt; so David fled to Gath. The Philistines, the Ammonites, the Edomites, the Moabites against him, yea Absalom his own Son against him. And as this Character [poor afflicted] doth primarily and properly refer to David; So it is frequently applied to others in a low, afflicted, distressed Condition; See {Deuteronomy. 24:12; Job. 24: 4; 34: 28; Psalms. 9. 12, 18; 12: 5; Isaiah. 41:17; 49:13; Zephaniah. 3: 12}. I shall therefore consider the Words as referable to the Saints in general, as well as to Christ, or David in particular: [For, as Christ, the Head, passed thro' sore Troubles and deep Sufferings to Glory, {Luke. 24: 26; 1 Peter. 1: 11}. So doth, so must the Church, His Body, and the Members in particular.] They are in many respects, a poor afflicted People.

The Words of our Text then do plainly express and represent, or set forth, the hearty Concern and Practice of David, and consequently of others of the Saints and Children of God, under their Troubles Afflictions; and the Lord's tender regard to them. This poor Man cried, &c. And is it not thus with thee and thee, with one and another of you, when under Troubles, Afflictions and Trials? Is not this your practice? Do not you make it your Concern to cry to the Lord? And have you not sometimes had some sweet Experience of what is expressed in the latter part of the Verse, viz. the Lord's hearing, and saving you out of your Troubles? How can some of the Children of God, in some good measure, witness and set their Seals (as I

may say) to the truth of what is here declared, i. e. That the Lord heard their Cry, when in distress, and saved them out of all their Troubles! But,

I shall now precede to consider the Doctrine Propositions chiefly observable from these Words, for our Instruction and Comfort, (if the Lord please ;) which are these Three,

1. That the Children of God are [in this Life] subject to and exercised with many Afflictions and Troubles, and that of divers kinds. [For, the Lord being said to save his poor ones out of all their Troubles, doth imply and plainly intimate that the Children of God are oftentimes under sore distresses and troubles.]

2. That it is the property and practice, [or usual Method,] as well as Duty of gracious Souls to cry to the Lord in their Troubles.

3. That the Lord hears the Cries and Groaning of his afflicted People, and will deliver them.

I shall speak a little to each of these Points of Doctrine, as the Lord shall please to assist, and time give leave.

In handling the First Proposition, [i. e. That the Children of God are [in this Life] subject to and exercised with many and various Troubles,] I shall (1) Endeavour to demonstrate that the poor Saints are frequently under pressures and troubles. (2) I shall show, in some particulate, what the

Afflictions and Troubles of the poor Saints are. (3) I shall give some Reasons why the Lord suffers his own dear Children to meet with, and labor under so many Troubles and Afflictions.

1. It is abundantly evident, That the poor Saints are frequently attended with Troubles, both from Scripture-Testimonies, from Scripture-Examples, and from common Observation and Experience.

(1) This is apparent from many Scripture Testimonies, See Ver. 19, of this Psalm; Many are the Afflictions of the Righteous. {Acts. 14: 22}, — We must thro' much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God. {2 Timothy. 3: 12}. All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer Persecution. {Psalms. 73: 5}, The wicked are not in trouble as other Men, neither are they plagued like other Men. {John. 16: 33}, In the World ye shall have tribulation.

(2) It appears From Scripture-Examples, that the Saints do often labor under sore Troubles and Afflictions; as Jacob in his hard Service under Laban ; Joseph in Prison ; the Israelites in Egyptian Bondage ; Job on the Dunghill ; David in the Wilderness; Jeremiah in the Dungeon ; Daniel in the Lions Den ; the three Children in the fiery Furnace; Jonah in the Sea ; Lazarus at the rich Man's Gate ; Paul and Silas in Prison ; &c.

(3) Common Observation, and the Experience of Saints in all Ages, do abundantly evidence this, That God's People are often exercised with Distress and Trouble. As this was observed and experienced by Believers of old time, [Whence Job cries out], {Job 6: 2, 3, 4}, Oh that my Grief were

thoroughly weighed, and my Calamity laid in the Balances together! &c. And David, {Psalms. 31: 9, 10}. Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble; mine Eye is consumed with Grief yea, my Soul and my Belly: For my Life is spent with Grief and my Tears with sighing. {Psalms. 73: 14}, All the Day long have I been plagued", and chastened every Morning. And Heman, {Psalms. 88: 3}, My Soul is full of Troubles and my Life draweth nigh unto the Grave. The Church in {Lamentations. 1: 3}, &c. Judah is gone, into Captivity, because of Afflictions, &c. And the Apostles, {2 Corinthians. 4: 8; 7: 5}. We were troubled on every Side without were fighting's, within were fears. So in this our day, we may observe in others, and experience in our selves, that manifold Troubles befall the poor Saints in this World.—But let this suffice to confirm us in the Truth of the Proposition. I shall now proceed to show,

2. What the Afflictions and Troubles of the poor Saints are. You have heard in general that they are many and various: They may be considered under these Two Heads, 1, Such Troubles as the Children of God usually pass under at or about the time of their Regeneration and first Turning to the Lord. 2, Such as they are frequently exercised with afterwards.

(1) The Children of God (generally speaking) are filled with Trouble,, On several Accounts, at or about the time of their first Conversion, as Experience Sufficiently testifies. For, It is the gracious pleasure of God to give his own Chosen ones a Sight and Sense [yea sometimes a deep Sense] of their Sin, and Misery by Sin, when he begins to work savingly upon their Souls. Then their Hearts are q. d. ransacked and laid open, and

they are made to possess the Iniquities of their Youth, to see and feel the Plague of their own Hearts, and to apprehend themselves to be the chief of Sinners; Sin by the Commandment becoming exceeding sinful: So that hereupon they are brought low, and become vile in their own Eyes, base and wretched in their own Thoughts and esteem, and are filled with Trouble and Distress, being made to loath and abhor themselves for their Iniquities. And that which heightens their Trouble is the painful Apprehension which they now have of their lying under the Curse and Condemnation of the Law; as being powerfully convinced that the Law doth accuse, condemn, and accurse every Transgressor thereof, and that they are Children of Wrath by Nature, as well as others. Yea, sometimes they account God their Enemy, and are ready to conclude that he is as a terrible Judge, coming forth in Anger-against them; Whereupon they are sore trouble and dismayed, and go mourning all the Day long, as David in {Psalms. 38: 1-6}. And tho' poor Souls under their first awakenings be ready to think [as it is very natural in that Case to think] of repenting, and reforming, and so making God amends for by-past Offences and miss-spent time; and therefore do resolve upon and set about a new Course of Life, thinking by the Works of their own Hands to procure acceptance with God, to obtain the Love and Favor of God, &c. Yet, Beloved, Experience testifies (I mean, the Experience of true Believers, of such as be led effectually to the Lord Jesus Christ doth testify) that God's Elect, are not left to rest upon any such sandy Foundation, as the Works of their own Hands, or the best of their own Performances ; they are therefore (as I may say) stripped of all, and Brought off from every such Hold ; so that they find nothing in themselves, nothing which they can possibly do, that they see any ground in the least to depend upon, or to

gather any Hope or Encouragement from; But are made to see the best of their own doings to be but dung, yea; to count them but loss and dung, as Paul did, {Philippians. 3: 8}. Or, (with the Church) as filthy Rags, {Isaiah. 64: 6}, All our Righteousness's are as filthy Rags. Thus, I say, these poor Souls are strip of every thing of, their own, they see there is nothing in themselves to commend them to God, and that they can do nothing pleasing in his sight; yea, they are made to see their own shame and Nakedness, their own wretched and miserable Condition ; and it may be, for some time they lie q.d. at the foot of Mount Sinai, and hear nothing but the Thundering of the Law, whereupon they are seized with fear, horror and amazement. It is now that they are (as usually poor Souls, when the Lord begins to work effectually upon them, are) attended and filled with horror and terror of Conscience, as concluding themselves Cast-always, and in a lost and undone State. And now ('tis very likely) Satan assaults them with his Temptations, and stirs up his Instruments against them, using his utmost Power and Policy against them, taking advantage of their present Case to heighten their grief and trouble, attempting to draw them back to their former Course of Sin and Folly, or to drive them into Despair, and so (if-possible) to work their Ruin. Thus poor Souls are (as David in another Case was) as it were, hunted from Mountain to Hill, {1 Samuel. 26: 20}, and are even at their Wits end, as the Psalmist speaks, {Psalms. 107: 27}.— Thus the Children of God, at or about the time of their Conversion, are in Trouble and Distress through a Sight and Sense of Sin and Pollution of their Nature, through a sense and apprehension of their having broken God's holy Law, through a sense of their own unworthiness and undeserving, through an apprehension of Divine Wrath and Vengeance being justly due to them for Sin and

Transgression, and through the subtitle Insinuations and powerful Temptations of Satan: For [H.S. saith] " As Christ was no sooner born, but Herod sought his Life; So the new Man is no sooner born of the Spirit, but the Serpent is ready to devour him, his Brethren to banish him, and Hell to swallow him up. " But for the Encouragement of poor-Souls under their first Awakenings, consider,

Tho' the Troubles of God's Elect at such a time are very great, many and various, Yet the Word here mentioned is and shall be made good, even in that Case; The Lord hears the Cries of his poor ones, and doth and will save and deliver them out of all their Troubles: As the Psalmist experienced, if I may allude unto that passage in {Psalms. 40: 1-3} I waited patiently for the Lord, [saith he,] What then? And be inclined unto me, and heard my Cry; and how then? He brought me up also out of an horrible Pit, out of the miry clay, and set my Feet upon a Rock, and established my goings; and he hath put a new Song in my Mouth. Even praise unto our God: Many shall see it and fear, and shall trust in the Lord. This is much the Case of poor Souls when under their first Awakenings, and the first Workings of the Spirit of God upon them: They are (as it were) in an horrible Pit, [in a Pit of noise]i. e. in desperate Dangers and Calamities, and in the miry Clay : And when the Lord comes to work effectually upon them, they are made to see and apprehend their Sin and Misery, and to see the shortness and insufficiency of their best doings and so find themselves (as it were) in an horrible Pit, sinking fast in the miry Clay, and know not how to get out, do not find any ability, skill, or capacity to get out of this, so dismal and doleful a Case and Condition: But the Lord is graciously pleased in his own good time to rescue

them out of this Thralldom, from this Bondage, out of this Distress and Trouble ; And so (as the Psalmist here speaks) he sets their Feet upon a Rock, and establisheth their goings ; They are led to the Lord Jesus Christ, and are enabled to rest their Souls, upon him, and to walk in him :

Then a new song is put in their Mouth, even praise unto their God. Thus (I say) at or about the time of conversion the people of God, pass under sore Distress and Trouble, but the Lord doth and will deliver them.

(2) After poor Souls are led to the Lord Jesus Christ, to venture themselves as poor, naked, empty, perishing Creatures upon his Person, Grace, Blood and Righteousness, they are not exempted from Troubles and Afflictions, and that (as I said) of divers kinds.

For, 1, Satan is now very active in making his Assaults upon the poor Believer, and using his utmost Endeavour to divert his Thoughts from Christ, and the things of God, and to disturb His Peace and rob him of his Comforts, casting this and the other Suggestions into his Mind, tempting him to Blasphemy, Atheism, Idolatry, &c. Thus the poor Soul is often plunged into deep Distress, Sorrow and Trouble through the Temptations of Satan, that wicked one, that roaring Lion, that wily Serpent, (as the Scripture stiles him,) who was a Murderer from the Beginning, who is a Liar, and the Father of it. Sometimes he endeavors to puff up poor Souls with Spiritual pride, to stir up the Corruptions, of their Nature so as to make them proud of their Attainments, Gifts and Parts, and puffed up with their Graces, Spiritual Enjoyments and good Frames : As I remember a Saying concerning one of the Fathers (so called) viz. St. Bernard, that when he had been at Prayer,

[in which Duty he was in some good measure enlarged, having railed Frames of Soul, and (perhaps) some sensible Enjoyments,] he thought as if one clap him on the Shoulder and said, Bene fecisti, Bernarde, Well done, 'Bernard, [Thou hast done bravely], Thou hast prayed excellently.] Thus Satan doth at times attempt to puff up the Children of God with Spiritual pride; and useth one Stratagem after another to turn them aside, if it lie in his Power. So that Satan's Temptations are oftentimes the Believer's Afflictions, greatly distressing to his poor Soul.

2. The Children of God often meet with Distress and Troubles (which are sometimes very heavy and grievous) from Men, from the World, the Wicked of the Worlds yea sometimes (it may be) from Professors themselves. The poor Saints have been and are (q. d.) harassed and troubled in all Ages from, time to time through the hatred and bitterness, malignity and persecution of the Men of the World. Hence it is that many of the dear Children of God have been cast into Prisons, or Dungeons, have had their Goods confiscated, have been banished into other Countries, sold for Slaves, yea put to cruel Deaths : At least, they suffer and undergo Tongue Persecution ; when the Men of the World are curbed and restrained so that they cannot prosecute their designs in persecuting the Saints other ways, they will not fail to revile and stander, defame and cast reproaches upon them: So that they must thro' much Tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God, {Acts. 14: 22}. Yea, all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer Persecution, {2 Timothy. 3: 12}. This I apprehend to be particularly intended in that Saying of our Lord, {John. 16: 33}, In the World ye shall have Tribulation. Distress, Tribulation and Persecution is what the Saints may

expect to meet with in this World: This the Word of God doth testify and declare, and the Saints do find the truth of, by their daily and constant Experience and Observation. As David complains in {Psalms. 143: 3, 4}, saying, The Enemy hath persecuted my Soul, he hath smitten my Life down to the Ground; he hath made me to dwell in Darkness's, as Men long since dead,; Therefore is my Spirit overwhelmed within me, my Heart within me is wonderfully astonished: So Satan and his Instruments do continually molest, oppress and trouble the poor Saints. Yet not withstanding this, Christ encourages his poor ones, saying, Be of good cheer, I have overcome the World: Yea, he prays that they may be kept from the Evil, {John. 17: 15}.

3. Sometimes the poor Saints are left in the dark, (as I may say:) The Lord is pleased, for some wise Ends, to hide his Face, to withdraw his gracious, comforting Presence, to withhold sensible Enjoyments from his dear Children for a time : And this is one of the greatest Troubles, one of the sharpest & bitterest Afflictions, that a Child of God passeth under ; I say, It is one of the bitterest Afflictions that a sensible Believer meets with, to be left (as it were) for a season by the Lord under [what we call] Desertion & Darkness. Oh, how dismal, doleful & lamentable is the Case of a poor Soul whilst in this Condition! Such an one is filled with Sorrow & Complaints, as David in {Psalms. 30: 7}, Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled. Or, as the Spouse in {Cant. 3: 1, 2; 5: 6}; Where, she laments the Absence of her Beloved, saying he had withdrawn himself and was gone, I sought him (saith She) but I found him not and again, I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no Answer. I will rise now (saith She) and

go about the City in the Streets, and in the broad ways, I will seek him whom my Soul loveth; I sought him, but I found him not: Thus She bewails the want of his Presence, his gracious and comfortable Presence. So Heman in {Psalms. 88: 6}, Thou hast laid me in the lowest Pit, in darkness's in the deeps, and in Ver. 14, Lord, Why castest thou off my Soul ? Why hidest thou thy Face from me? So you find the Church bitterly lamenting her Case on this very account, {Isaiah. 49: 14}, But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, & my Lord hath forgotten me. Oh what! a doleful Complaint & Lamentation is this! But not withstanding this sad Case, which the Church was in, according to her own apprehension & feeling; Yet you find the Lord had a special Regard & Love to her, as the next Words show, in Ver. 15,16, Can a Woman forget her sucking Child, that she should not have compassion on the Son of her Womb ? Tea, they may forget, [it is possible that tender Mothers may forget their sucking Children,] Yea (saith the Lord) I will not forget thee: Behold, I have graven thee upon the Palms of my Hands; thy Walls are continually before me. Oh what Grace and Love is in the Heart of Christ! What Bowels & tender Compassions are in the Heart of our Heavenly Father towards his Children! For, not withstanding his withdrawing himself and withholding the Influences of his Grace and Spirit for a time from his Children, Yet his Heart is the same, his Love continues the same to them ; he always hath an endeared kindness to his Children. Hence it is that even such as walk in Darkness are advised to rest and confide in him, {Isaiah. 50:10}, Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the Voice of his Servant, that walketh in Darkness and hath no Light ? Let him trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay himself Upon his God, Oh that Believers may hearken to, and be helped to embrace the

Advice here given, notwithstanding present Darkness, notwithstanding the present Hidings of God's Face, &c.

4. Sometimes poor Saints are in Trouble thro' a deep Sense of Sin, through the prevalency of their own Corruptions, and through their Apprehensions of Divine Wrath due for Sin. A deep Sense of their own Sins and Sinfulness oftentimes fills the Saints with Trouble, When they are led to see the Pollution of their Nature, the Plague of their own Hearts, the continual Ebullitions of Sin, and the constant Lusting of the Flesh against the Spirit. Whereupon they are ready to cry out in the Words of the Apostle in {Romans. 7, from Ver. 15 to the end: Where he gives an Account of his own Experience, as to this matter, concluding it with this pathetic Lamentation, Ver. 24, O wretched Man that I am, Who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death! Yea, sometimes the Sins of others are a Burden and matter of Trouble to the poor Saints, Thus Lot is said to be vexed with the filthy Conversation of the Wicked : (For that righteous Man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous Soul from Day to Day with their unlawful Deeds,) {2 Peter. 2: 7, 8}. Oftentimes a Sense of their Backslidings and of the prevalency of their own Corruptions, the head strong Corruptions that they find and feel within themselves, occasions great Distress, Affliction and Trouble to the Children of God, as David witnesses from his own Experience, {Psalms. 51: 3, 4} &c. I acknowledge my Transgressions, and my Sin is ever before me: Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this Evil in thy Sight.) &c. Oh what a burden oftentimes, I say, What a Burden and Trouble is it to Believers to feel the workings and bubbling up of Corruption in their Hearts and Natures, and the

prevalency of Unbelief, and of other Sins! Hence the poor Soul is many times lamenting and bemoaning his Case and Condition, Oh that ever I should sin thus against so gracious and loving a God! Oh that I could live more without Sin! And Oh that I could love God more, and serve God better, &c! Yea, the poor Soul is at sometimes groaning to be delivered from the Body of Sin, the Old Man, the Corruption of Nature, Which doth annoy and press him down [as an heavy Weight] like a dead, stinking Carcass cleaving to a living Man. Sometimes poor Saints are full of Trouble and Heaviness through an Apprehension and Feeling [as it were) of God's Anger and Displeasure against them. Thus Job cries out, in Chap. 6. 4, The Arrows of the Almighty are within me, the Poison whereof drinketh up my Spirit, the Terrors of God do set themselves in Array against me. So David, under a deep Sense of Sin, accompanied with a Sense of Divine Wrath, complains in {Psalms. 38: 2, 3}, &c. Thine Arrows stick fast in me ; and thy Hand presseth me sore : There is no Soundness in my Flesh because of thine anger neither is there any Rest in my Bones because of my Sin.—Yet notwithstanding all this, such poor distressed Souls may be encouraged, tho' Guilt stares them in the Face, tho' they be burdened with the Body of Sin, tho' at present they lie under sore Rebukes, under a sense of God's Wrath, they shall be saved out of all their Troubles. See {Isaiah. 54: 8}, In a little Wrath I hid my Face from thee, for a Moment But with everlasting kindness will I have Mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. And {Isaiah. 57: 17, 18}, For the iniquity of his Covetousness was I wroth, and smote him; I hid me and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his Heart, Yet saith he, I have seen his ways, and will heal him, &c. See also {Hosea. 11: 7, 8,9}. Oh see the astonishing, super abounding, heart-melting

Grace and Loving-kindness of the Lord to his poor Children in Distress and Trouble! I need not add,

5. The Troubles and Afflictions which are common to others as well as to the Saints, (tho' perhaps the Saints are more deeply, more grievously exercised thereby than others) I mean, Afflictions of Body, or Family-Afflictions, as Sickness, Weakness, Pain, Separation of near Friends and Relations, or Dangers, Losses, Disappointments in their temporal Estates, &c. The Lord is pleased many times to afflict his own dear Children on this wise (as well as otherwise,) and that for wise and gracious Ends. Thus you see "The Cross-way is the "Way to Heaven, (as H. S. observes,) and the Righteous walk in it; Paul describing the Way "to Heaven, draws it by this Line, viz. thro' many Tribulations. This (saith he) is the State of the Church Militant, She is like the Ark floating upon the Water, like a Lily among Thorns, like the Bush which burned with Fire, "and was not consumed: The City of God is always besieged, but never ruined " (But here Note (by the way) that the Afflictions and extreme Sufferings of the Godly (as Bp. Reynolds well saith) are not formally or properly Punishments nor Effects of Divine Malediction or Vengeance towards their Persons: For, the Sting, and Malediction, or Curse of them is in and by the Death of Christ destroyed and taken away; Tho' the Substance and Painfulness of them be and (for a time,) remain in them. Lastly, Sometimes some of the dear Children of God are in sore Distress and Trouble even at the Hour of Death: Not only when God calls them by his special Grace, and in the Course of their Lives afterwards (as hath been demonstrated ;) but also; when pale Death looks in upon them. Their Distress and Trouble then besides the

Distempers of Body, which [perhaps] are heavy upon them do often arise from a Sense of their own Unworthiness, or from the prevailing of Unbelief, or from God's hiding his Face, or thro' Satan's Assaults and Suggestions, Who is usually very busy with Persons on a Sick, or Death-Bed ; I say, Satan is often very active then; That is his time (as I may say) to use his last and strongest Efforts to turn aside poor Souls, or to drive them into utter Despair (if possible) and therefore he useth his utmost diligence, power and policy against them. I remember I have read, or heard of a Passage concerning a Man that was accounted eminently gracious, and not only so, but a faithful Preacher of the Gospel, who, being cast on a sick Bed, and near to his Death, lying under great Affliction of Body, wanted the Presence of God, and was assaulted with Satan's Temptations, ; and cast down thro' Unbelief; Mr. Dod (of whom ; I doubt not but many of you have heard) hearing of this Preacher's Sickness, goes to give him a Visit, and coming to his Bed side asked him how he did ; How do I (said he) ? What will you say to a Man that is going into another World and hath not one Dram of hope? Well (said Mr. Dod, in Answer to him,) What will you say as to our blessed Lord and Saviour, Who, when he was upon the Cross ready to give up the Ghost, cried out, My God, my God, Why hast thou forsaken me ? This (through the Blessing of God) gave a Lift and was some Relief: to the poor Sick Man, so that he (through Grace) from thence forward gathered some Hope and died comfortably. Thus (I say) some of the dear Children of God. are in sore Distress, Trouble and (as, it were) Agonies of Soul On their Death-Beds. Tho' it must be granted (because Observation and Experience do witness it) That the Lord is pleased to favor some of his poor Children at such a time with his gracious Presence, with more than ordinary Comfort,

Joy and Peace, so that they go off the Stage of this World triumphing in Christ. How ever the State of other poor Saints is safe, their Souls are secured, they are in safe Hands, in a blessed Condition, notwithstanding their grievous Afflictions and Troubles. For, the Safety of our States doth not depend upon our Frames, or Enjoyments, nor yet upon our Acts of Faith, or Exercise of other Graces; But upon the unchangeable Love of God, the immutability of his Counsel and Covenant of Grace, and upon the distinguishing Grace and Love, Mercy and Power of Christ, and upon the Efficacy of his Obedience, Sufferings and Intercession.—But I shall now proceed to lay down and briefly consider,

3. Some special Reasons why the Lord suffers his own dear Children to meet with, and be exercised, by so many Afflictions' and Troubles. The Reason are many and divers; As

(1.) To embitter Sin unto them, and to purge them there from: By this (saith the Lord by the Prophet, {Isaiah. 27: 9} speaking of Afflictions and Chastisements) shall the Iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the Fruit [of his Chastisements] to take away his Sin. The Lord (I say) is pleased sometimes to inflict, or permit Afflictions upon his own Children, to embitter Sin to them, to prune and purge their Corruptions, to draw off their Hearts from Folly and Vanity, to correct their carnal Security and Slackness in their Christian Progress.

(2.) To wean them from this World and the things thereof. Alas! The Saints (as well as others) are too apt to have their Affections too much set

upon things here below, as [perhaps] on their Wealth, fine Houses, Estates, Wives, Husbands, Children, &c. I say, The Children of God themselves have sometimes their Affections too much placed upon sublunary things: Wherefore the Lord may be graciously pleased to strip them of such, their Enjoyments (which they are idolizing,) or some other way to afflict them, and so make them drink of the Powder of their Idols, on purpose to wean them from things here below. "We are apt (saith H.S.) to love the World more than is good for us; therefore God sets an Edge of Bitterness a upon it, to make us loath it, like the Nurse who "lays Mustard on her Breasts to wean the Child there from: So the Saints are exercised with many Troubles to wean them from the Dug of the World.

(3.) The Lord permits, or inflicts Trials and Afflictions upon his own Children for the Trial of their Faith, and other Graces of the Spirit. As in {1 Peter. 1: 6, 7}; The Apostle, in the foregoing Verses, is speaking of the glorious Inheritance, that the Saints are begotten to, which is reserved in Heaven for them who are kept by the Power of God thro' Faith unto Salvation, ready to be-revealed in the last time: Wherein (saith he) ye greatly rejoice ; tho' now for a season (if need be) ye are in Heaviness thro' manifold Temptations or, Trials , and then he shows, for what end they were in Heaviness, or Trouble, viz. That the Trail or Probation of your Faith being much more precious than of Gold that perisheth, tho' it be tried with Fire, might be found unto Praise and Honor and Glory, at the Appearing of Jesus Christ. Our Faith in God's Providence is then the greatest (saith Bp. Reynolds) when we dare cast our selves on his Care, even, then when to outward Appearance he seems not at all to care for us ; when we can so

look on our Miseries, that We can with all look thro' them, &c.

(4.) Another Reason of the Saints Afflictions and Troubles, sometimes, is to humble, and instruct them, and so to do them good. Alas! The Saints (perhaps] are overgrown (as I may say) with Carnality, Selfishness, worldly Mindedness ; perhaps they are sunk into the World, and the World has got too much place in their Hearts and Affections, and they grow high-minded, and their Hearts lifted up: Wherefore the Lord is minded (for the Good of their Souls) to humble them ; and there fore he lays his Afflicting Hand upon them, or suffers them to be exercised with Trouble and Distress, in one respect or other. This was Hezekiah's Case, and Experience, {2 Chronicles. 32: 25, 26, 31}. So the Lord tells his People Israel, saying in {Deuteronomy 8: 2}. Thou shalt remember all the Way which the Lord thy God led thee these 40 years in the Wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thy Heart. So in Ver. 15, 16, Who led thee thorough that great and terrible Wilderness, where* in were fierce Serpents, and Scorpions, and Drought, and no Water, &c. that he might humble thee, and that he might, prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter End. All Troubles and Afflictions (tho' in their own Nature they be Evils and Pressures of Nature yea contrary to the Integrity of Nature, and so tend rather to harden and estrange the Heart from God than otherwise, which do occasionally follow Sin, and are commonly inflicted because of Sin, yet) to the Godly they are New-Covenant Blessings to which they are appointed, {1 Thessalonians. 3: 3}, and which have a Voice in them to such as be (exercised thereby ; hence we are commanded to hear the Rod, and who hath appointed it, {Micah. 6: 9}. Thus the Lord chastiseth his Children for

their Instruction and spiritual Advantage, as in {Proverbs. 29: 15}, The Rod and Reproof give Wisdom. And {Psalms. 9: 12, 13}, Blessed is the Man whom thou chastenest O Lord, and teachest him out of thy Law, & c. So the Apostle declares that the Lord chastens his for their Profit, that they might be Partakers of his Holiness, &c. {Hebrews. 12: 10, 11}. David acknowledges his receiving Benefit by Means of Affliction, {Psalms. 119: 67, 71}; One speaking of Affliction saith, Our Heavenly Father permits and inflicts it, not in a way of Vindictive Judgment, as upon the Vessels of Wrath; but in a way of Mercy and Grace, out of Love to our Souls, as amending Corrections on the Sons of his Love. So then, with respect to the Saints, the Lord turns the Evil of Affliction to Good, brings Good out of Evil, We know (saith Paul?) that all things (Affliction, Tribulation, Distress, Persecution, Temptation, &c. work together for Good to them that love God, to them who are the Called according to his Purpose, {Romans. 8: 28}.

(5.) The Saints are exercised with many Afflictions and Troubles, that so they may be made conformable to Christ in his Sufferings, as in {Romans. 8: 17}, if we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together. So in {2 Timothy. 2: 12}, If we suffer, we shall also reign with him. Hence Peter adviseth the Saints not to think it strange that they pass under fiery Trials, but to rejoice, seeing they are Partakers of Christ's Sufferings,— {1 Peter. 4: 12, 13, 14}. See likewise {Colossians. 1: 24}.

(6.) Sometimes the Lord permits, or lays Affliction and Trouble upon his own dear Children, to let them see the Shortness and Emptiness of every thing below himself, and to induce them to look to, and depend upon

himself, as being brought (by this Means to see and acknowledge where their Help is, where their Strength lies; In their Affliction (saith the Lord) they will seek me early, See {Hosea. 5: 12, 13, 14, 15}; compared with Chap. 6: 1. King Nebuchadnezzar must feel and lie under God's afflicting Hand, till he is brought to know and acknowledge that the most High ruleth over all, &c. {Daniel. 4: 35}.

(7.) Sometimes the Children of God are exercised with Afflictions and Troubles, and the Lord is pleased to suffer, or bring them upon them, for the heightening of his rich Grace, Mercy, and Power in their and others Esteem: For, poor Souls experiencing and observing how the Grace and Kindness of the Lord, the mercy and power of God is displayed on their behalf and supporting them under, and carrying them through, and at length (one way are other) rescuing and delivering them out of the distresses, heavy afflictions and troubles which they have labored under, they are made to admire and adore the Divine goodness; this, this many times heightens to grace, mercy, and power of God in their esteem, And this the Lord would have his children to know and observe, according to that encouraging word which he gave to his servant Paul in his distress, {2 Corinthians 12:9}, My grace is sufficient for thee, &c. The Apostle, in the foregoing part of this chapter, is giving some account of his experience in some regards; mentioned in some visions and revelations which he had, how he was called up to the third heaven, into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter; and lest he should be exalted above measure through the abundance of revelations, there was given him a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him: For this (says he) I

besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me; and he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee, my strength is made perfect in weakness. Thus, I say, the Lord would have his children know the sufficiency and efficacy of his grace and mighty power; that he is well able and as willing as able to succor, support and relieve them under, and deliver them out of their distresses and troubles, in his own way and time; And his own way and time is always the best; we should make but sorry work of it, if we work our own carvers: The Lord knows better than we can dictate are prescribed to him what is best for us, and it is well to be at the Lord's disposal, who has graciously promised that though the young lions do lack, and suffer hunger; yet they that seek the Lord shall want no good thing. [No thing that infinite wisdom sees good for them,] {Psalms. 34:10}. And again, the Lord God is a sun and a shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly, {Psalms. 84:11}. Oh therefore it is well to depend upon the Lord, upon his grace, mercy, power and providence. For, the name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe, {Proverbs. 18:10}. But I must proceed to,

The second proposition, viz. That it is the property and practice, as well as the duty of gracious souls, to cry to the Lord in their troubles. I shall endeavor briefly to demonstrate the truth of this, and to show some grounds and reasons for it.

1. This is evident from the words of our text, This poor man cried. And from verse 17, The righteous cry. This is also apparent from several verses in {Psalms. 107}; where the Psalmist exhorts the redeemed of the Lord to

praise him, who redeemed them from the hand of the enemy, and gathered them out of the lands, from the East, West, North and South. They wandered (says he) in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in: Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. [Thus they labored under affliction and distress, sorrow and trouble.] Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he deliver them out of their distresses, verses 2-6. So in verses 12,19, 28 we find the same repeated, Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, &c. Thus Jacob in his distress cried to the Lord, saying, deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Saul; &c. {Genesis 32: 11}. So St. Paul having a thorn in the flesh given to him, the messenger of Satan to buffet him, declares that he besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from him, {2 Corinthians. 12: 7-8. This may suffice to evidence that it is the property and practice of poor souls to cry to the Lord in their trouble.

2. I shall mention some few grounds and reasons including the poor Saints thus to cry to the Lord in their troubles. Which are these,

(1.) Because the Lord bids and enjoins them so to do, as in Psalm 50:15, Call upon me (says he) in the day of trouble. So in {James 5:13}, Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray.

(2.) The poor Saints cried to the Lord in their troubles, because he has graciously promised to answer their cries, to hear and deliver them; this is a special ground of encouragement to them to unbosom themselves to him; the Lord's promising to hear the cries of his children, and to deliver them out

of their troubles, is frequently attested in the Scriptures, as in {Psalms 12:5}, For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now well I'll arise (says the Lord:) I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him. So in {Psalms 91:15}, He shall call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. And {Psalms 145:18-19}, The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him; to all that call upon him in truth: He will fulfill the desire of them that fear him; he will also bear their cry, and will save them. So in {Isaiah 41:17}, When the poor and needy seek water and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them, &c. The poor Saints (I say) to make it their business to cry to the Lord in their trouble, because they read and understand that he has promised to hear and answer the request of his poor children put up to him in the name of Christ.

(3.) It is the property and practice of the poor Saints to cry to the Lord in their trouble, because they are sweetly moved and engaged there to by the spirit of adoption, who is therefore styled the spirit of grace and supplications, {Zechariah. 12:10}, I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn &c. See {Galatians 4:6}, Because ye are sons [by adoption] God hath sent forth the spirit of his son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father. So in {Romans 8:26, 27}, The spirit helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: But the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered: and he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for

the saints according to the will of God. The Spirit of God in the hearts of his children is that living principle, or by and from whence they are influenced and engaged to any spiritual duty: There is no spiritual exercise or duty rightly performed, but the Saints are influenced thereunto by the Spirit of grace, and so in particular this Duty of prayer: Alas! How dead and cold often times are our prayers! How lukewarm and formal are our supplications! Yea, how are our hearts too, too frequently filled with darkness, with carnality and with vain and wandering thoughts! It may be we can speak words, but alas! There is little or no life, savor, or fervency in the words spoken, unless the Lord of the Spirit does move upon and engage the heart; unless the Lord the Spirit does dictate (as it were) to the poor soul, and draw forth the soul in requests to the Lord. It is hence that prevalent prayer is said to be inwrought, viz. in the heart by the Spirit of grace, {James. 5:16}. So then the saints cry to the Lord in their troubles, because the Spirit of God does influence and engage their souls thereunto. Oh what a mercy, privilege, and happiness is it then to be from day to day under the conduct and efficacious influences of the Spirit of grace and prayer and in the practice of other duties!

(4.) Another ground in reason of the saints crying to the Lord in their troubles is, because it is the nature and property of the new creature formed in their souls to breathe after God; it is the nature and property of the heaven-born soul to be crying to God his Father; so says the Apostle, {Romans. 8:15}, – We cry, Abba Father, viz. in or by the Spirit of adoption: see {Ephesians. 6:18-19}. There is a spiritual principle, a new principal of life and grace produced by the Spirit of God in the soul that is born from

above: and this principle is maintained and (as I may say) kept alive in the soul by the indwelling Spirit; and it is the nature and properties of this living principle, this new creature [as influenced by the Spirit of grace] to be breathing and groaning and thirsting after God: As in {Psalms. 42:1-2}, As the hart panteth after the water-Brooks; so panteth my soul after thee, O God: My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God. So in {Psalms. 63:1}, and {Psalms. 84:1}. God in Christ is the new creatures center and rest. The soul that is born of God finds no solid rest or satisfaction short of God in Christ; short of nearness to, and Communion with God the Father in Christ the Mediator. The heaven-born soul cannot take up with earthly trash; so far as the soul is regenerate and born from above, it cannot take up with any thing in this world. No, no; it is converse with God in Christ, it is Communion with God, it is fellowship with the Father, Son and Spirit, which is the earnest desire of the heaven-born soul, It is (I say) Communion with God through a Mediator that the new creature breathes after; and the poor soul, so far as regenerate, is never better than when lodging in the bosom of divine love, never better than when lying in the embraces of Jesus. Oh how desirable, how pleasant and delightful is it to the soul that is born again to be dandled on the knee of love, to lie in the bosom of Jesus Christ, to lodge in the embraces of its beloved! Then, then can the souls say with pleasure and comfort, as the spouse did, {Song of Solomon 2:16}, My beloved is mine, and I am his; he feedeth among the lillies. This, O this is the life of a Christian! This is the sweetest part of a Christian's pilgrimage in this world! So then the soul cries to God in his trouble, because it is natural (as I may say) to the new creature to breathe after God. Hence the Psalmist calls upon his soul, saying Return

unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. {Psalms. 116:7}. What is the rest of a poor soul quickened by grace, but Jesus Christ, & (as I said) God in Christ. The new creature comes from God, and its proper center and resting place is in God, in the bosom of eternal and unchangeable love: so that the new creature [as influenced by the Spirit of grace] is constantly breathing after God, after nearer and nearer, closer and Fuller communion and fellowship with the Father and the Son. – But I must hasten to a conclusion: Therefore I shall proceed to take a little notice of,

The third proposition observed from our text, viz. That the Lord hears the cries and groans of these afflictive people, and will deliver them, or save them out of all their troubles. – This is attested in these words of our text; and again in verse 17, The Lord hears and delivers his out of all their troubles.

1. He hears their cries, as in {Psalms. 3, 4}, I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. And in {Psalms. 6:8-9}, – the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping; The Lord hath heard my supplication, the Lord will receive my prayer. So in {Psalms. 28:6}, Blessed be the Lord, because he has heard the voice of my supplications. So in that forecited text, {Isaiah. 41:17}, When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst; [a sad case indeed, a sower distress, and great affliction, matter of sorrow and trouble! But what then?] I the Lord will hear them; I the God of Israel will not forsake them. Oh how gracious is the Lord to his poor children, in hearing their cries when in trouble! They have [on this account] great reason with David to say, I love

the Lord, because he hath heard my voice, and my supplications: because he hath inclined his ear unto me; therefore will I call upon him as long as I live; The sorrows of death (says he) compassed me, and the pains of hell got hold upon me; I found trouble and sorrow. And what then? Then called I upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul. And then he adds, gracious is the Lord and righteous; yea our God is merciful, {Psalms. 116:1-5}.

2. He will deliver them: the Lord not only hears the cries of his poor distressed children, but will save them out of all their troubles. Call upon me (says he) in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me, {Psalms 50:15}. So in {Exodus 3:7-8}, I have surely seen the affliction of my people, which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry, by reason of their task-makers; for I know their sorrows: And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land, unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey. So in {Psalms. 40:1-2}, I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry; he brought me up also out of an horrible pit, and of the miry clay, and set my feet on a rock, and established my goings. Though the troubles of the poor Saints be many, yet they are not everlasting; The Lord will deliver them out of them all, The needy shall not always be forgotten, {Psalms. 9:18}. Therefore says David, {Psalms. 25: 5}, On thee do I wait all the day, q.d. If he comes not in the morning, he will come at noon; if he comes not at noon, he will come in at night; he will sooner or later deliver me, [as H. S. observes on the words:] Then my joy shall be sweeter after fears than before; see {Psalms. 30:5}. Many were the troubles of Abraham.

– Of Joseph, – of Job, – of David, – of Paul; but the Lord delivered them. He will certainly save his people out of all their troubles, either in this life, or however at and by death. (1.) In some measure in this life. This is frequently experienced by the children of God. How often are they delivered from this trial and the other trouble; from one affliction and another which they have been harassed with? When they have been groaning under affliction and distress (it may be) days, and weeks, and months; the Lord has took his own time to deliver them again and again. But (2) At and by death they shall be wholly delivered out of all their afflictions and troubles. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, &c. {Revelation. 14:13}. They are wholly and for ever freed from all their toil and troubles, from all their afflictions and sufferings: Then sorrow and sighing shall flee away, {Isaiah. 35:10}. Then they shall be no more annoyed with Satan's temptations, nor harassed with persecution from men; nor afflicted, nor attended with a body of sin, nor with a body of affliction; but shall be wholly freed from all their troubles; and shall launch forth into the harbor of rest, into the bosom of Christ, to live in uninterrupted communion with the Father and Son and Holy Spirit for evermore.

3. I shall close this discourse with a few reasons why the Lord does hear the cries of his people, and will certainly deliver them out of all their troubles. Beloved, the children of God (how sorely for ever they are, for the present, distressed) may be encouraged as to this matter, and have good reason so to be. If you ask, what ground, or reason, have we to think that the Lord does hear her cries, and will deliver us out of our troubles? I answer,

(1) Because of his great and tender love. His love (if I may so express myself) will not suffer him always to keep his children under affliction. No; He will take the opportunity, and the best opportunity to deliver them out of all their afflictions, troubles and sorrows. Oh the great love of God to his people! It is beyond humane conception; no creature can fathom, comprehend, or fully understand the greatness of his love: it passeth the knowledge of men and angels, {Ephesians. 3:18-19}. Well, Believer, The Lord hath set his love upon thee, and therefore he hath thee (as I may say) always in his keeping, always under his eye and care. Art thou afflicted with the bubblings up of corruption, or assaulted by the temptations of Satan? Dost thou grown under affliction of body, or darkness of soul? Doth God hide his face from thee, or men revile and persecute thee? Be encouraged notwithstanding all this, for the Lord as a special and peculiar love to thee, and from the greatness of his love that he bears to thee, he will in his own good time, deliver thee out of all thy troubles, from all thy sorrows and fears.

(2) Another ground and reason hereof is taken from his covenant-engagements. The Lord hath (if I may so speak with reverence) tied himself, bound himself to his children for their good in an everlasting covenant: I will be their God (says he) and they shall be my people, I will be there Father, and they shall be my children; I will forgive their iniquity, and will remember their sin no more; And, I will not turn away from them to do them good; And, I have sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee, &c. {Jeremiah. 31:33-34}, and it {Jeremiah. 32:40; Isaiah 54:9-10}. Thus the Lord hath bound himself by covenant to his children in Christ, and his covenant does and shall stand fast with him; there is no

possibility of violating or breaking this covenant: Therefore here is matter of encouragement for the poor Saints, notwithstanding present trials, troubles, and afflictions. Nay, shall I add this further? The very afflictions and trials of the saints are fruits of God's love, and blessings of the covenant of grace. As many as I love (says he) I rebuke and chasten, {Revelation. 3:19}. It is in faithfulness that he afflicts his children, {Psalms. 119: 75}. And because he is faithful, he will not suffer them to be tempted above what they are able, but will with the temptation [or trial] also make a way to escape, that they may be able to bear it, {1 Corinthians. 10:13}. Therefore the children of God have the highest reason to be patient under trials and tribulations, to be submissive to God's will and pleasure; not to murmur, or repine at his dispensations, but to kiss the Rod wherewith they are corrected, and to look to the hand that wields it, or rather to the heart of him that does correct: God is thy Father, [a loving, tender-hearted Father,] and corrects thee for that good; it is thy advantage that he designs and his rebukes and chastisements, as in {Hebrews. 12: 9-10}, father's of our flesh correct us after their own pleasure, but he [viz. our God and heavenly father] for our profit, &c.

(3.) The greatness of his pity and compassion is another ground and reason why the Lord does hear his people's cries, and will certainly deliver them out of all their troubles. He pities their case, he sympathizes with them in their distresses and troubles; he bears up (as I may say) the heaviest end of their burden; in all their afflictions he is afflicted, {Isaiah. 63:9; Hebrews 4:15}. Like as a father, pitieth his children, so the Lord piteth them that fear him, {Psalms. 103: 13}. Therefore he will in his own good way and time save

them from all their pressures and sorrows.

(4.) The Lord will hear, and save the poor Saints out of all their troubles, because of his promise and faithfulness. Oh how great, how precious, how manifold are the gracious promises of Jehovah made to his children in Christ for their encouragement, support and consolation, as they are passing through this wilderness-state and vale of tears! He has said he will not leave them comfortless, {John. 14:18}. He has promised to deliver them, as before hinted; and he will be faithful to his Word in delivering them, either in this life, or at furthest at and by death, out of all their afflictions and troubles.

(5.) The Lord does hear the cries and groans of his people, and will save them from all their pressures, because of that near relation he stands in to them. They are his children, the brethren, the spouse, the members of Christ; God is their own God and Father in Christ Jesus: They are taken into this near and intimate relation to God by an act of his own grace, and are dearly beloved by him, and shall certainly enjoy the privileges of children. Relation among men (if there be any natural affection) is binding, much more in this case. When children come to their loving and tender-hearted parents, and bemoan themselves, and tell them of their distresses and troubles, or of what they meet with of difficulties and trials, &c. their parents are ready to relieve them the health it lies in their power, and to speak some encouraging word or other to them. Much more will God our heavenly Father succor and relieve his children. They are took notice of by him in their troubles, he cares for them and watches over them, he considers their

troubles, he knows their souls in adversities, {Psalms 31:7}. He hears their complaints, and will rescue and deliver them in his own way and time out of all their troubles, and from all their fears. Nothing shall hinder their being delivered, for nothing can withstand, or stand against the sovereign grace and almighty power of God, which are engaged on the behalf of his children.

– But I must conclude:

From what has been said we may observe, for a conclusion, that the children of God, though exercised with many and various afflictions, distresses and troubles in this world, are in a happy case and condition, and are highly privileged; and that the Lord has such a peculiar regard to them, that he hears their cries, and will save them out of all their troubles: Therefore they have good ground of encouragement, under whatever distress they be, to cast their burdens upon him, to trust in him, and depend upon him. And oh that you and I may be encouraged and enabled at all times to commit ourselves and all our concerns to the Lord, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; whose bowels yearn (if I may so express myself) upon his poor distressed children! **FINIS.**