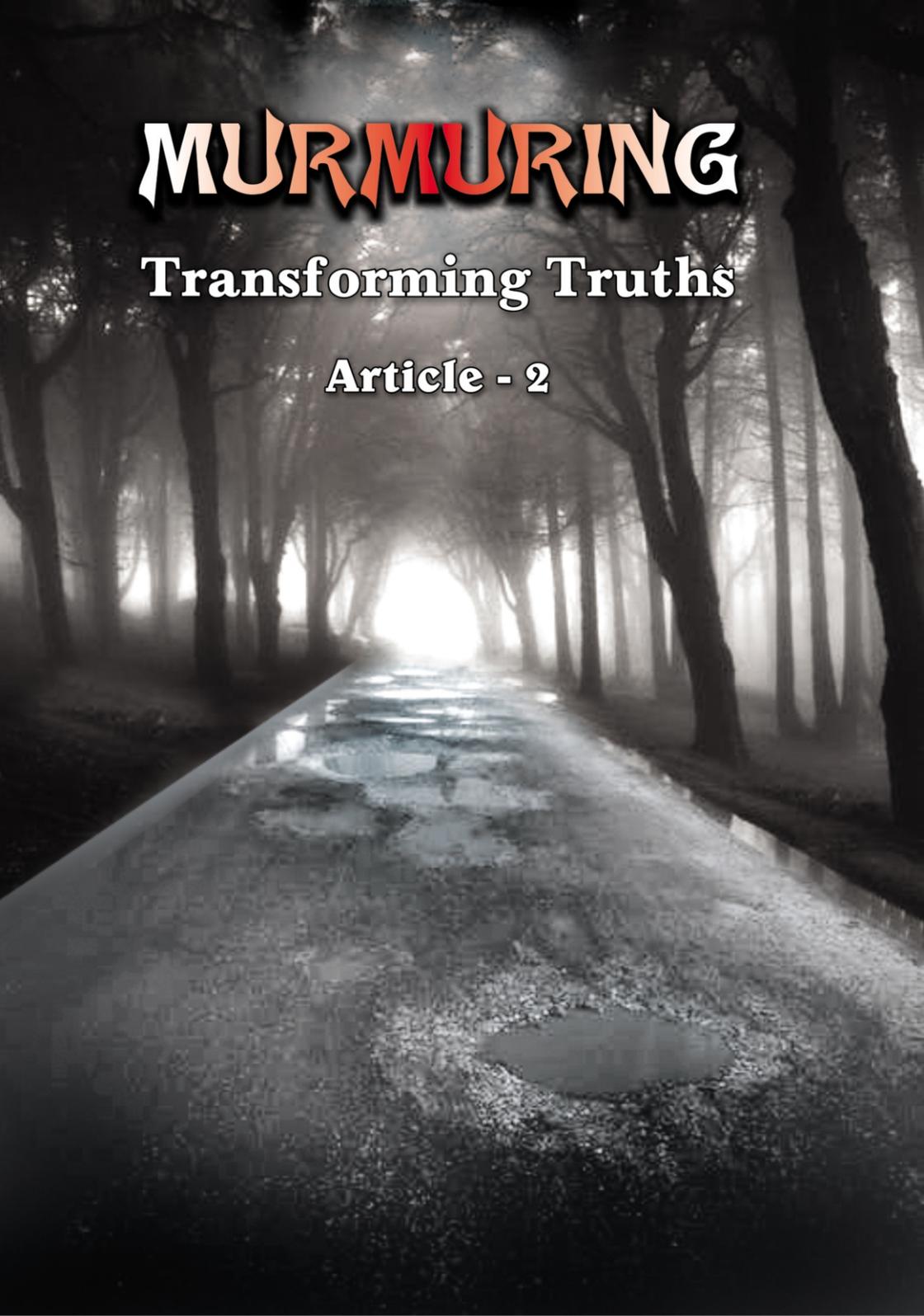


MURMURING

Transforming Truths

Article - 2



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Murmuring

PHILIPPIANS 2:14 – How to Stop Murmuring & Reap Blessings

How To Stop Murmuring and Complaining

Let's begin with the words from the Book of Jude, verses 12-16 (KJV):

“These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.”

The Apostle Jude warned of concerns rising in his day (i.e. the gnostic heresy, which undercut the foundation of Christ), and each of us can look within ourselves to see that inclinations in this direction within ourselves are rooted out. But we need not suppose that all the things Jude spoke about must be found among brethren of our fellowship. In our own Bible Student classes of today, the same things will not be so manifest. Yet we all need to take care of course.

The Apostle Paul also warned the elders at Ephesus that after Paul's parting, **“Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them”** (Acts 20:30).

The Apostle Peter similarly warned brethren of his day, that as

there were false prophets among the Israelites, so some would appear teaching Christian principles and contrary to the sweet teachings of Christ. These influences would be harmful to the New Creature ways, and lead to the Truth being evil spoken of.

These words of warning from three apostles induce us to watch and pray.

BE HOLY STILL

22:11 says, “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.”

GOD allows experiences to manifest the heart attitude of every child of GOD. It is for us to follow Christian principles in each experience, and thus **“be righteous still, and ... holy still.”**

Revelation 1:12-15 pictures the **“feet”** members of the body of Christ as **“fine copper.”** The Apostle John saw the **“Son of Man”** (Jesus) clothed with a garment down to the feet, but saw the bright shining feet, suggesting the character of God’s people.

Copper represents perfect or justified human nature. This copper appeared **“as if they burned in a furnace”** (Revelation 1:15). It calls to mind the prophecy of Malachi 4:1, **“The day ... shall burn as an oven.”** In a prophetic sense, we have been in that day since the return of Christ (his invisible presence, Parousia) in 1874. Thus **“the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God”** (1 Peter 4:17).

In the present ending period of the Gospel Age, God allows trials to purge us, as a furnace of affliction, so that the copper of our justification may shine resplendent in the light of faithful and tested loyalty to GOD.

As Jude suggests, we are not to be surprised if there be murmurers, seeking more or less to have their own will confirmed. Could this include us also?!

— If we are guilty of murmuring, then let us ask God to change us. —

Sin can be a gangrenous growth, like a little bit of leaven that makes the whole bread sour. So murmuring can become a habit, and how easy is it to change a habit?

— It requires prayer, petitioning to the throne of Grace. —

But with GOD all things are possible — He can mold us for change (Luke 1:37).

The more degraded one may become, the MORE WORK is required to reverse the damage.

Wishing to change won't get us anywhere.

We MUST DO AND ACT, while continuously seeking, knocking and asking God, for His help.

WHAT IS MURMURING?

Murmuring is “to utter complaints in a low, half-articulate voice; to feel or express dissatisfaction or discontent; to grumble; often with, at or against” (Webster’s Online Dictionary).

Murmuring indicates we are out of harmony with our lot. First it expresses dissatisfaction; then perhaps pride and covetousness, leading us to rebel against God’s providence. As roots of bitterness lodge in our hearts and minds, disappointment and dissatisfaction with our environment and our circumstances of life allowed by GOD in His love and mercy, will spring up and growth to DISASTER, in our spiritual life.

Have we been guilty of complaining in regards to the Lord’s providential leadings?

Dear friends, if that very circumstance had not been the very best the loving heart of our Heavenly Father could devise for our edification and upbuilding in Christ Jesus, He would not have permitted that

circumstance to occur. Shall not the God of all the earth do right? Of course He will.

“Content whatever lot I see, since ’tis God’s hand that leadeth me.”

We are ALL guilty to some degree to having failed to measure up to the Lord’s standard in this respect.

In **Philippians 2:14**, Paul relates murmuring even with activity in the Lord’s service.

“DO all things without murmurings and disputings”.

The word “do” here is one of the smallest words, but one of the most forceful! It is not that we are to do some things that are hard and murmur about the rest; it is not to be satisfied with some things and be dissatisfied with others.

DOING “all things without murmuring“ is the test of our own hearts and minds!

Complaining is being ungrateful! If we complain we are wordly!

The murmuring ‘domino effect’ will continue until a break is made, and a change is effected. Once this weakness of character becomes a strength of character, it means the test has been overcome. (**2 Corinthians 12:9**).

ANALOGY

Suppose we see a man carrying a corpse along the street, making a public display of it, we’d be mortified! Perhaps we’d ask him the reason and probably someone would phone the Police! Suppose this man replies that he must, day after day, carry this corpse with him, with all its loathsomeness. Would we not think him insane? But do some of us do this metaphorically?

In Colossians 3:3 the Apostle Paul says, “YOU HAVE DIED, and your life has been hidden with Christ in God.”

Yet we hear the corpse complaining and murmuring every day, dissatisfied. What a peculiar corpse it would be from a natural standpoint, if after it was ready for burial we continued to preserve it, and it had the ability to murmur and complain against its condition!

Dear friends, if we bury the dead (and that is what we are to do with our fleshly interests, desires, wants, and preferences), then we must put it out of sight, put it in the tomb, bury it, and every time the “old man” complains, throw another shovel of dirt on him.

Live ABOVE the circumstances of your life. **“Set your affection on things above” (Colossians 3:2).**

Then any temptation to murmur about the things below will be minimized by far!

EXAMPLES OF MURMURING IN THE BIBLE

We have many illustrations about murmuring in both the Old and New Testaments.

EXAMPLE 1.

The Old Testament book of Numbers could easily be renamed The Grumbler Chronicles. The Children of Israel grumbled against Moses, Aaron, and God.

In Numbers 12:1 we read, **“And Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he married.”**

Miriam and Aaron were displeased that Moses had married at all, and that he was foolish enough to marry without consulting the wishes of the family, and in addition, that he had been foolish enough to marry an Ethiopian woman. Yet the real reason for their murmuring was due to pride and selfish ambitions of their own hearts.

In verse 2 we read them murmuring, “Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the Lord heard it.” We

can rest assured that the Lord will hear and regard every attitude of dissatisfaction with his plans and purposes that may manifest itself in our hearts and lives; it is to be indeed charged up against us!

Notice the results of murmuring... Miriam became leprous. Leprosy is a type of sin. Miriam perhaps represents a certain class, leaders in this rebellion against the Lord, and murmuring against his plans and purposes. Miriam's seven days of punishment is a picture of the eternal punishment (i.e. second death, Revelation 20:6-15) for those who will lead in rebellion against the Lord and his arrangements (Jude 1:13). Miriam represents such who fail to recognize Christ as the leader of spiritual Israel and who fail to honor those whom he uses as his mouthpieces and servants. R4037:5 In this type, Aaron reflects those who are busybodying in other men's matters. R3061:4 A weak character; as shown on this occasion and when he made the golden calf. R5308:3

God probably favored this marriage so the Jews would not choose Moses' children as his successors; they were supposed to look to the Lord as their leader. R3061:4 Of an alien race, she replaced Miriam as first lady, arousing Miriam's jealousy on religious grounds. R5308:1 Zipporah, typifying the Bride of Christ. R1651:6 Perhaps Moses' first wife had died, and Zipporah was his second wife. R5308:1

[NOTE: R – denotes Reprints from the Watch Tower which can be read at <http://www.htdbv8.com> or Google: "Harvest Truth Data Base" for the latest version.]

EXAMPLE 2.

Matthew 20:1-16 - In his parable of the vineyard workers, Jesus noted of disciples how those who worked from the first hour, having "borne the burden and heat of the day," murmured because they received the same wages as those who worked only the last hour. Jesus declared that such labourers in the Lord's vineyard who murmur over what seems to them are life's inequities, actually are murmuring "against the goodman of the house." (Matthew 20:11).

The goodness of the Lord is attested to in so many ways—mansions await!—so let us not allow any ungrateful thought to creep into the mind!

EXAMPLE 3

In the latter portion of Jesus' ministry he began to be more direct. He declared that he was to be the true bread which came down from heaven, of which if any man would eat he would live forever; that God would raise him up at the last day. His hearers began to murmur inquiring, "Is not this the son of Joseph, the Nazarene, whom we know? Have we not been acquainted with him since the days of his youth? And he says he came down from heaven."

Oh, they murmured!

As Jesus continued to say that unless they ate his flesh and drank his blood they had no part or lot in the matter; others turned back saying, "This is a hard saying, who can bear it? This is difficult, hard to comprehend. Who can bear it? Look at the reproaches it will bring; look at the disturbances it will make in our life". They do not like the reproach of the cross of Christ nor to bear the shame or to be made of no reputation. Recall the exhortation of Apostle Paul, "**Let us go forth to him without the camp, bearing his reproach.**" (Hebrews 13:13)

They said Jesus had a devil and was mad. His course was contrary to the world, and the world began to berate the Apostles, and they declared, "**Lord we have left all and followed thee, what do we get in return? Others are turning away, what remains for us?**" (Mat. 19:27) Jesus said, "**Doth it also offend you?**" (John 6: 61) Here, those who had followed Jesus closely began to be offended at him, and murmured.

The same spirit of pride and rebellion, discontent, eating at their very hearts, began to manifest itself under the severity of the tests that were coming on them. As it is written, "**There are some of you who believe not.**" (John 6:64) At one point Jesus turned longingly and lovingly to them, and said, "**Will ye also go away?**" Apostle Peter replied, "**Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life**" (John 6:68).

Indeed, to whom would he go? To whom will you go, if you go out of the Truth? If you are dissatisfied, discontented, with God's plan and providential leadings, if you turn aside, unto whom will you go? And what is the remedy for murmuring?

With God's help through prayer and petition, here are some helpful tools in regards to :

HOW DO WE STOP MURMURING?

Here are 6 suggestions:-

1. REALIZE THAT COMPLAINING IS A DANGEROUS SIN.

We know the enemy of our souls doesn't want us to fulfill God's intended purpose for our lives. If he can't derail me, or you, because of lust or immorality in our private lives, then the devil will seek a different bait for his trap. For many of us, that snare is the temptation to gripe, grumble, and complain against God (1 Corinthians 9:24-10:13).

Murmuring is a sin. Here are 10 reasons why :

1. It is questioning God's capacity, in the face of all God's assurances to us in the Bible to display that He does care about us (Romans 8 :28, 1 Corinthians 15:22).

2. It is a rebellion against's God's will, (Job 23:2) and thus, dissatisfaction with what God sees as the perfect experiences for us and in His perfect time (Ecclesiastes 3:1). Joshua and Caleb urged the murmuring Israelites not to "rebel against the Lord" (Numbers 14: 9). But rather than listen to reason, the Israelites were ready to elect new leaders who would oversee their rebellious plans.

3. It is another form of mocking God's plan of salvation, where despite acknowledging God, one criticizes His ways by wanting things to be done in our ways, even though our ways are much lower ways. (Isaiah 55:8).

4. It ignores God's potential. The report of the ten spies (see Numbers

13) reflected a godless perspective. God had opened the sea to save the Israelites, the heavens to feed them, and the rocks to provide water for them. He had defeated mighty armies throughout their wilderness trek. He had freed them from perhaps the most powerful nation on the planet (the Egyptians). Certainly He could deal with any problems the new land might present.

5. Murmuring leads to self-pity. **“Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness!” (Numbers 14: 2).**

Murmurers often feel sorry for themselves and focus on how they have been mistreated, misused, and let down.

6. Murmuring is born in the context of bad report. Sins of the tongue that spread negative reports (beguilement, gossip, slander, false witness) create an environment in which murmuring can thrive.

Are we such complainers?

7. Murmuring also drains us from the energy we need to RUN the race of the High Calling set before us and energy to carry our cross. The cross can only “be light” as Jesus promised us in Matthew 11:30 if we do not carry the extra unnecessary and dangerous baggage of sin: “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us...” (Hebrews 12:1, ESV)

8. Murmuring distorts good judgment. The murmurer misinterprets and misrepresents reality. For instance, after God gloriously delivered them from Egypt, the Israelites began to speak of their former life in Egypt as better, saying, “Yahweh delivered us out of Egypt only to kill us and our children in the desert. This Yahweh is no redeemer; he is more cruel than Pharaoh himself.” Here we see the utter inability to interpret reality correctly. And eventually these murmurers tried to stone Moses and return to Egyptian bondage, like a dog returning to its own vomit.

When people murmur, their hearts become darkened and they become incapable of interpreting reality correctly. Thus, good is evil, and evil is good: autonomy is good, and the Lordship of Christ is bad; worldly friends are good, parents and other authorities are bad. The

sons of Eliab told Moses, “Isn’t it enough that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey to kill us in the desert? And now you also want to lord it over us?” (Numbers 16:13).

9. A murmuring spirit is quick to jump to the wrong conclusion. Just like the Israelites wanted to return back to Egypt.

10. Murmuring thrives in an atmosphere of fear. Twice Joshua and Caleb exhorted the people not to be afraid (Numbers 14:9). But the Israelites’ fear of the unknown fanned the sparks of grumbling in their midst. They were in a situation beyond their control, and they felt threatened and insecure. Their faith disappeared as their fear increased.

2. TRUST THAT GOD KNOWS WHAT HE IS DOING –

GOD KNOWS WHAT HE IS DOING! So let us let God be in charge of what He sees must be our experiences if we have given up our wills to do His.

Look at Joseph – He was thrown into a pit by his brothers, sold by them into slavery, unjustly accused of fooling around with Potiphar’s wife, thrown into prison forgotten by a friend he had helped – and yet Scripture does not record even a single complaint!

Joseph could have become bitter against his brothers... Joseph could have smashed his fist against the prison walls and complained that his circumstances were unjust...

But did he do that?

No. He surrendered to God’s power. He had **TRUST IN GOD**.

Let us not forget, through Joseph, to look unto Jesus, who suffered being tempted, yet without sin; who was slandered, and persecuted, and ...**“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.” (Isaiah 53:7)**

What was the secret of Joseph’s complaint-free life?

The answer is in Genesis 45:5-8 where we find Joseph, now the Governor of Egypt, addressing his starving brothers,

“Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.”

Three times in four verses Joseph says – “God sent me here”. Talk about perspective that comes as a result of an uncommon faith in an Omnipotent God. Joseph grasped the truth that God is in control, and that He knows what He is doing.

3. “GIVE THANKS IN ALL THINGS – 1 Thessalonians 5:18.

4. FOCUS ON OUR BLESSINGS we receive from the Lord, such as:

That our sins can be forgiven thanks to Jesus’s precious blood paid as the Ransom price to free all mankind from the prison house of death.

The assurance that God and Jesus are with us (**Matthew 9:2; Hebrews 13:5**).

That situations of stress (from which such murmuring would emerge) are actually THE TESTS we are wanting to pass to develop CHEERFUL patient endurance in ALL things. (**Colossians 1:11**,

Romans 5:4 & 12:12). The sooner we do this, the greater shall be our joy, in turn, in doing the Father's will (**John 4:34, John 15:11, 1 Thessalonians 2:19, John 6:38**).

Don't wish to trade your difficult experiences for anything as this is where all the effects happen — the positive changes in character, in the face of adversity, by God's help, developing the New Creature in Christ to be fully surrendered to God's will and delighting in fulfilling God's will to bring the Heavenly Father greatest joy through cheerful, willing self-denial and self-sacrifice.

Here is a helpful prayer starter:

“Almighty Heavenly Father, could Your will be done in (E.g.) my life concerning ... in this experience... in my relationship with ...”

“Heavenly Father, I do not know what to say ... what to do Could You please show me. I trust in You. Please put the words in my mouth... Please direct my steps... Please put a seal on my tongue ... Please let me not fail you ... Please let me be like your Son in character ...

Have the DISCIPLINE to NOT COMPLAIN! Pray for this DISCIPLINE of CHARACTER.

5. BE OF GOOD CHEER, BE CHEERFUL

“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33, KJV)

Cheerfulness comes from COURAGE which comes from implicit TRUST in God. TRUST comes from firm FAITH in God – which develops from a life where one ‘walks and talks’ with God. (Proverbs 3:5, Psalm 37:4-6, Romans 8:28, Proverbs 3:6, Joshua 1:9)

Being of good cheer is contagious and in Proverbs 17:22, we are told it is “good medicine”.

6. BE GRATEFUL & CONTENT – for God gives us what we NEED not necessarily what the flesh would at times want, as He knows best what would develop in us greater love towards doing His will, and thus, what would help us BE RIGHTEOUS – without which no one can please God. (Hebrews 12:14)

Hebrews 13:5-6 (KJV) – “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”

Other tips for how to be grateful:

Begin your prayers with all the “thank you’s” to God.

Each morning/day think about (or write out) all the things you are grateful for.

Lower your expectations of others, and rather, have implicit TRUST in the Heavenly Father’s precision and perfection of ALL details in your life!

Accept the circumstances.

Don’t take things personally.

Deal with the circumstances by relying upon God’s help through Christ.

Do your best.

CONCLUSION

Let us, then, “**fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith**” (Hebrews 12:2) and follow him all the way to the Heavenly City with singing. Let us give thanks in everything, knowing our Redeemer is with us to keep us from falling. He to whom all authority in heaven and on earth has been given is telling us, “Go into the world of trouble, and I will be with you always, even unto the end of the ages.”

Take encouragement from Paul's message in Romans 8:35-39:

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. We are saved, we are being saved, and we will be saved.”

May God help us not to murmur, but to pray and praise him in the midst of our problems, knowing there is divine design in every trouble he has ordained for us. May we rejoice, knowing that trouble is for our good, to humble us and test us, and may we believe in God's promises and render him complete obedience, that it may be good for us in the end. Amen.

STORIES TWICE TOLD

Arrows on the Head

We have read of Caesar having prepared a great feast for his nobles and friends. It happened that the day appointed was so extremely foul that nothing could be done to the honor of the meeting, whereupon he was so displeased and enraged that he commanded all who had bows to shoot up their arrows at Jupiter, their chief god, as if in defiance of him for that rainy weather. When they did this their arrows fell short of heaven and struck their own heads, so that many of them were sorely wounded. So our murmurings, which are so many arrows shot at God, will return upon our own heads; they hurt not Him, but will would us.

‘Cyclopedia of Religious Anecdotes’ -- Compiled by James G.
Lawson.

AMEN, AMEN.

I CANNOT say,
Beneath the pressure of life's cares today,
I joy in these;
But I can say
That I would rather walk this rugged way,
If Him it please.

I cannot feel
That all is well when dark'ning clouds conceal
The shining sun;
But then I know
God lives and loves; and say, since it is so,
"Thy will be done."

I cannot speak
In happy tones; the tear-drops on my cheek
Show I am sad;
But I can speak
Of grace to suffer with submission meek,
Until made glad.

I do not see
Why God should e'en permit some things to be,
When He is love;
But I can see,
Though often dimly, through the mystery,
His hand above.

I may not try
To keep the hot tears back; but hush that sigh,
"It might have been;"
And try to still
Each rising murmur, and to God's sweet will
Respond--"AMEN."

Transforming Truths

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