

God's Love and Care

“God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary. There is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, . . . But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; . . . they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”
—Isaiah 40:28-31

THE APOSTLE PETER wrote, “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.” (I Pet. 5:7) How reassuring are the many texts of Scripture which affirm the fact that our loving Heavenly Father, the Creator of heaven and earth, is abundantly able to care for his people. He is all-powerful, and is never weary. He watches over us, and his ear is ever open to our cries for help in time of need. “No good thing will he withhold” from those who love him sincerely, and who have devoted themselves wholly to his service.—Ps. 84:11

We heartily claim these and many other promises of the Bible, knowing that they are surely true. Yet, amid

a hard experience or fiery trial, it is sometimes difficult to fully realize God's care, or seize upon his many promises. The mind of the flesh may entertain the thought that, for some reason, or by happenstance, our Heavenly Father is not altogether aware of what we are going through, or that he is not guiding the experience for our ultimate good. We may even feel, if only for a moment, that he has left us to our own devices in the experience. Such thoughts can be most disturbing to us, and will assuredly add much to the mental distress associated with the trial.

At such times, more than at any other, we are to realize that the opposite is the case. No matter what may appear to us on the surface as a lack of care or understanding on the part of God toward any experience, we know that such cannot be so. Quite the contrary, it is likely in these very moments that his guiding hand is closest to us, and that his loving care is bearing us up the most. It is most critical, therefore, that we come to a full appreciation of this, and lay hold of the promise, "The LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear."—Isa. 59:1

GOD SEES AND HEARS

Man was created in the image of God, but we do not understand this to refer to a bodily image. However, in order that we may grasp to some extent the unlimited capabilities of the Creator, the Scriptures refer to his various senses of sight, hearing, and smelling. By this use of language, we can understand that our Heavenly Father knows our feelings, and is sympathetic to all our needs, and

will, through his unlimited agencies, care for us. The psalmist inquired, “He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?”—Ps. 94:9

God does indeed see and hear his people. We quote again from the Psalms: “The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. . . . The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.” (Ps. 34:15,17-19) In verse 7 of this Psalm we are informed that “the angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.” This is an indication of one of the means God uses in the care of his people. Jesus spoke of the angels, and said that they “always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.” (Matt. 18:10) Thus, they have an accurate knowledge of the Heavenly Father’s will for each of his people, and can shape divine providences in their lives in exactly the right manner for the accomplishment of his will.

This, however, calls for a right attitude of heart and mind on our part. The Lord’s delivering power is exercised only on behalf of those who are of a “contrite spirit,” and of a “broken heart.” The proud of heart, and those who resist his providences in their lives, have no assurance that God’s ear is always open to their cry. We also should not expect that his power exercised on our behalf will necessarily deliver us from all our trials and difficulties. The Lord in his wisdom may see that certain hardships, whether

mental, physical, or both, are among the experiences we need in order to be more fully developed as New Creatures. While he may not remove these trials from us, we are assured that he will provide strength to bear them.—Ps. 29:11; Rom. 8:28

LONG-TERM PERSPECTIVE

On the other hand, God's faithful people are assured of ultimate deliverance from all their afflictions. This is the deliverance which will be theirs in the first resurrection. It is important, therefore, that in noting the Lord's providences in our lives we maintain this long-term perspective, which is his viewpoint. Our Heavenly Father is not working in us merely for the accomplishment of what might be his good pleasure for today or tomorrow. Rather, he is preparing us for the work of the future, when, if faithful, we will have the privilege of living and reigning with Christ.

The Apostle Paul presented the proper viewpoint in this connection when he wrote that our "light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." (II Cor. 4:17) If we are of a contrite spirit, and fully submissive to the manner in which God is working in us, then we will realize that whatever our trials may be, they are to be considered as momentary "light afflictions" in comparison with the eternal "weight" of glory which they are helping to work out in us. Moreover, the Lord knows exactly how to shape our schooling to accomplish his purpose in our lives as New Creatures.

In Psalm 101:6, we read, "Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with

me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.” Here again we are reminded that it is only those who faithfully serve the Heavenly Father who are the objects of his special care. These, he declares, “dwell with me.” How precious is the thought that if we are endeavoring with all our energy to know and do God’s will, it means that we are dwelling with him. This is where we should always delight to be. The psalmist, in another place, spoke of dwelling in “the secret place of the most High,” and of abiding “under the shadow of the Almighty.”—Ps. 91:1

GOD’S FOREKNOWLEDGE

God’s love for his people and his watch care over them can be seen in a more wonderful light when we take into consideration the exercise of his foreknowledge. We read, “Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.” (Ps. 139:16) Earlier in this Psalm, David declared that he was “fearfully and wonderfully made.” (vs. 14) It is quite possible that David is representative here of Jesus, the Head of his church, and that the “members” known even before they “were fashioned,” are the members of the body of Christ.

Whether the reference be to the natural body, or to Christ and his body members, the lesson is the same in that it reveals the infinite wisdom of the Creator. He is always able to know in advance the outcome of the mighty works which he sets out to accomplish. This foreknowledge on God’s part does not in any way destroy our free will. Our finite

minds could not determine what another would do tomorrow unless we controlled his actions, and compelled him to take a certain course. God, however, can know what we will do without controlling our actions. This is because his mind is infinite, and discerns that which goes beyond our comprehension. The best we can do is understand the meaning of what is taking place in our lives today, and those experiences of the past. Many of the Lord's people can look back in their lives and note the wonderful way in which God was overruling their daily lives, even before they knew him. How much more abundantly is this true of his wonderful providences since we dedicated ourselves to the doing of his will.

God's wisdom was shaping our affairs, even as we were being drawn to him, when as yet we possibly had little knowledge of him, or of his plans and purposes for us or for the world. We can trace his leading which brought us in contact with the Word of truth, with Jesus and with the brethren. After we made a full consecration of ourselves to do his will, his providences in our lives became still more outstanding. To realize this is to strengthen our faith, for we should find it easy to believe that he who led and blessed us in the past will continue to do so. Thus, the darkness which may surround us today will, in his due time, be dispelled, and once again the sweet smile of his presence will be revealed, though, in truth, it was always there.

Proverbs 15:3 reads: "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." This is most comforting, for it assures us that no matter where we are, or what our circumstances

might be, God sees both the good and the evil. That is, he knows the circumstances which are favorable to us as New Creatures, and sees the evil influences which are arrayed against us. This means that God is always aware of the difficulties which confront us, and of any efforts which might be made by the Adversary to hinder our progress in the narrow way. We are assured in his Word that God will use his power so that no evil will befall us as New Creatures. —Ps. 91:10

DAVID AWARE OF GOD'S FOREKNOWLEDGE

In moments when our faith might not be as strong as it should be, we might temporarily wonder if the Lord really knows about the complexities of our trials, and is caring for us in each situation. However, we have the assurance of his Word that he sees in every place, understands every situation, and is abundantly able to care for us regardless of what the circumstances may be. David, a man after God's own heart, was assured that the Lord was with him in every event of his life. Let us consider his testimony in this regard.

“O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassedst my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into

heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell [Hebrew: "the grave"], behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee."—Ps. 139:1-12

David beautifully emphasizes the fact of God's love and care for us, regardless of what situation or place in which we might find ourselves. Even if we fear that our mistakes may have taken us away from our Heavenly Father and his care, we can still be assured that he leads us, and that he upholds us, when we ask for forgiveness and guidance. If conditions seem dark around us, and we are uncertain of the direction in which we should go, we can be assured that the darkness is as the light to our Heavenly Father. He is never confused by the situations in our lives which seem so complex, and which may baffle and perplex us.

God knows and understands all our needs. He is sympathetic to our every ache and pain, whether they be heartaches or bodily pains. We may not be able to see his hand immediately in every changing circumstance of life, but by faith we can know that his providences are directing us, his mighty power is sustaining us, and he will not permit us to be tested above that which we can bear. If our burdens become too great, he will provide a way of escape. —I Cor. 10:13

JOB'S EXPERIENCE

In Job's response to his experiences, we have a wonderful example of faith in God's love and care. Job did not know why the Lord had permitted such severe trials to come to him. Everything in his life which he treasured, and which he had accepted as having been given to him by God, was removed, even his health. Although he did not understand, Job continued to believe that the Lord knew all things, and would overrule his experiences for his good. While passing through these deep valleys of sorrow, Job explained his search for God, saying: "Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him: But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."—Job 23:8-10

This is a true description of trials which God permits to come to all those who are faithful to him. The purpose they serve is to test our fidelity to the Lord, and our faith in the fact that he knows exactly what is best for us as New Creatures. Indeed, we have all searched for our Heavenly Father in trials which have come upon us. Job says that he looked in every direction, symbolically describing his attempts to understand the meaning of the calamities which had come upon him, and why God, whom he trusted and had served faithfully, had permitted them.

At the time Job was passing through his severely difficult experiences, he did not comprehend their meaning, nor "perceive" God in them. However, his anchor of faith held secure. He remained assured

that while he could not see God in his experiences, the Lord could see him. His conclusion was, "He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." He knew that God was testing him and understood all about his trouble, and that if he maintained his faith and his integrity he would pass the test, and come forth as something of value.

Job trusted the Lord even though he could not understand why his providences seemed to harshly frown upon him. His faith enabled him to be convinced that God's love and care were being manifested in his life, even when his reasoning on the matter would lead him to believe otherwise. The Apostle Peter describes such a situation as "the trial of your faith," which, he explains, is "much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire."—I Pet. 1:7

The means by which we can trust in the Lord, as Job did, and know that he is caring for us, regardless of circumstances which might indicate otherwise, is our faith in his ability to see beyond the immediate present. God is shaping our experiences in a manner to accomplish the ultimate purpose he has in mind for us in his great plan of the ages. When we remember that his design for us is that we might attain "glory and honour and immortality," and a place of joint heirship with Christ in his kingdom, we will realize that the trials of the present are not worthy to be compared with the glories of the future. (Rom. 2:7; 8:17,18) The Lord is allowing these experiences to test our fidelity to him, and to develop in us the fruits of righteousness. Hence, we can rejoice in his love and wisdom

which permits them, and continue to believe that he is caring for us in every detail of life.

GOD'S CARE OVER US

The psalmist wrote: "The eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy; To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine." (Ps. 33:18,19) There is little in this "present evil world" that is favorable to the sustenance and growth of God's consecrated people. (Gal. 1:4) We could well say, as New Creatures in Christ Jesus, that we are surrounded with famine conditions which, apart from God's love and care, would lead to our death.

Our loving Heavenly Father watches over all our interests and makes every provision to deliver us from anything which might harm us as New Creatures. Among his provisions, he supplies spiritual food from his Word. He provides the fellowship and comfort of his people—our brethren. In his love, he permits only such experiences as will best serve to accomplish his divine purpose. He can even turn unfavorable circumstances into growth for the New Creature, if we put our trust in him, and allow him to work in us "to will and to do of his good pleasure." —Phil. 2:13

The fact that we may feel weak and inadequate for the tasks before us merely gives our Heavenly Father an opportunity to use his mighty power on our behalf. As our opening text declares, "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength." When Paul prayed for the removal of his "thorn in the flesh," and his request was not granted, he accepted God's will in the matter,

explaining that the Lord said unto him, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." To this Paul added, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."—II Cor. 12:7-9

It is indicated by our theme text that even those who by nature are usually strong, sometimes become faint and weary, and that even young men "shall utterly fall." This emphasizes that even those who might be inclined to think they are strong are not really so when it comes to walking in the narrow way. None can maintain their faithfulness to the Lord, and their zeal for his cause, without divine help. There are too many opposing forces arrayed against the children of God for any of his consecrated people to suppose that they can gain the victory except as they wait upon the Lord, and look to him always for "grace to help in time of need."—Heb. 4:16

How blessed is the assurance of our opening Scripture: "They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; . . . they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." It is to be counted a privilege to wait on the Lord, to know that in his own way and time he will provide strength, and to recognize his love and care in all the circumstances of life. Indeed, the circumstances of life which seem most difficult for us may, and usually are, evidences of his great love, for he knows our needs better than we do. He will see to it that when the need is for bitterness, it will be supplied, in proper measure. He will also provide sweetness in portions that fill our hearts and lives with joy.

The Apostle Paul admonished us to consider Jesus, who endured such "contradiction of sinners against

himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.” (Heb. 12:3) We know that our Heavenly Father loved his Son, Jesus. We also know that Jesus never displeased his Father—yet he did suffer. He was permitted to die on Calvary’s cross. The Father did not deliver him from these ordeals, but gave him strength to bear them. Thus, we are to think of Jesus, and remember his prayer in which he affirmed that the Father loves us even as he loved him. (John 17:23-26) Let us rejoice in the richness of the Father’s love, and not faint when his love permits trials which are difficult for the flesh to bear, for he knows just what is best for us.

“O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?” Jesus said to Peter when he became fearful of the storm which was swirling about them. How quickly that storm was calmed when the due time came. (Matt. 14:30-32) So it is with the storms in our lives. They cannot harm us as New Creatures, but will help to increase our faith as we note God’s power in bringing us through these tempests of the soul. May our faith continue to increase in our Father’s love and care, enabling us to trust him fully until he brings us all the way into that “desired haven” of perfect rest and peace beyond the veil.
—Ps. 107:28-30 ■