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*"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning."—Psalm 137, 45.*

SERMON BY REV. WILLIAM M. TAYLOR, D.D.

**GOD'S MESSAGE TO THE DESPONDING.**

"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 upon his GOD."—Isaiah l. 10.

It is not, as you see from these words, anything unheard of or impossible, that a child of GOD should "walk in darkness and have no light." And when the sadness of such an experience comes upon the saint, it will not be always safe to say that it is the shadow of some special sin. No doubt, when we hear DAVID cry, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation," we are right in concluding that if he had not committed that great transgression which stains his name, he would not, at that time at least, have needed to present such a petition. So, also, when we see ELIJAH "under the juniper tree," and hear his pitiful wail, "O LORD, take away my life now," we can, not but feel that his flight from the place of my duty is bearing its appropriate fruit: But the case described in my text is different from these. It is that of one who even at the moment "feareth the LORD, and obeyeth the voice of his servant," while yet he has lost the radiant happiness of the new life, and is bending under the weight of spiritual

despondency. Many would say flippantly that a Christian must be very feeble indeed if he is ever in such a state; and some would say cruelly, that he who permits himself thus to be "in heaviness," cannot be a Christian at all. But all such unqualified assertions spring out of a shallow philosophy, and a superficial experience. For GOD does not change toward us with the mutations of our frames and feelings. Our salvation depends on CHRIST, and not on our emotions regarding it. They may rise and fall like the waves of ocean, but He and the salvation which is in Him are as stable as the stars. The security of the saint is rooted in the fact that GOD has a hold of him, and not at all in his consciousness that he has a hold of GOD. His comfort may be affected by the latter, but his safety is due entirely to the former. Hence they who roundly affirm that if a man be walking in darkness and finding no light he cannot be a Christian, are making salvation depend, not on GOD's work for a man and in him, but simply and entirely on his own emotions. Moreover, they are strangely oblivious of some of the best known passages in the history even of the most eminent saints. Out of what other experience than that of despondency was such a Psalm as the Forty-second born? Yet who will say that its author, even at the