

## "Bless the Lord at All Times."

Psalm 34.

Hamilton Smith.

(Extracted from Scripture Truth Vol. 43, 1968, pages 23-4.)

(Verse 1). The thirty-fourth Psalm presents the experience by which a godly man learnt to bless the LORD at **all times**. It is easy to bless the Lord sometimes, when circumstances are favourable, but only faith, that that has proved His goodness and faithfulness, can bless the Lord at all times. Thus lifted above all circumstances the Lord is praised "continually."

(Verse 2). This spirit, that can praise the Lord at all times, will only be found in one who has unshaken confidence in the Lord. So the Psalmist can say, "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord." Wealth, social position, human ability, may fail us; but the Lord can be trusted at all times. Moreover, to glory in the Lord is to take ground on which all the saints can be together. At once, therefore, we read, "the humble shall hear thereof and be glad." An ignorant and unlearned man, like Peter, and a well-born and learned man, like Paul, find themselves on common ground, and on the highest ground, when both can say, "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord." To boast in poverty or ignorance would be mere affectation; to boast in wealth or learning would be mere vanity. It was not Peter that said he was "unlearned and ignorant"; nor was it Paul who said he had "much learning." Others said these things of these believers. Forgetting the things that are behind, they could say, "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord," and, so doing they found themselves together on common ground and are both taken up by the Lord for the highest form of service as Apostles.

(Verse 3.) It is this lowly spirit, that glories only in the Lord, that draws the saints together. So at once the Psalmist adds, "Oh magnify the Lord **with me**, and let us exalt His name **together**." The believer who boasts in his wealth, or intellect, or birth, is seeking to magnify himself, and in that measure divides the Lord's people. How often division amongst the people of God can be traced to vainglory that seeks to magnify self. The disciples of the Lord fell out by the way through disputing among themselves as to who should be the greatest (Mark 34).

We thus learn that the humble spirit, that blesses the at all times, boasts only in the Lord, and exalts His name, will draw the saints to one another with the Lord as their gathering centre and bond of fellowship

(Verses 4-7). Having presented the great theme of the Psalm in the first three verses, the Psalmist passes on to give the experience by which he learnt to bless the Lord at all times, and exalt His Name. This god-fearing man found himself in circumstances which filled him with foreboding fears (4); his way seemed dark (5); and troubles accumulated (6). Difficulties and wrongs pressed upon him. He was opposed by those whose hearts were filled with enmity (21), whose tongues spoke evil, and who sought to cover their evil with guile (13).

In these difficult circumstances he did not rise up in a spirit of pride and anger, and strive with his opponents. He did not seek to avenge himself, but, he says, "I sought the Lord." He confides all his exercises to the Lord, and spreads out his trials before Him.

He then tells us the result, for, he says, "The Lord delivered me from **all my fears**." The Lord gave him light for his path, and saved him out of "**all his troubles**." Moreover, he found that, though opposed by man, he was guarded by unseen angelic power. If then the Lord delivers this lowly man

from "all" his fears, and "all" his troubles, he may well bless the Lord at "all times."

(Verses 8-10) . Having experienced the goodness of the Lord the Psalmist calls his brethren to "taste and see that the Lord is good," and thus realise the blessedness of the man that trusts in the Lord, and walks in His fear. Such will find, in a world like this, that they may have many needs, but they will not want. The Psalmist had sought the Lord and had been blest; now he can say to others, "they that seek the Lord shall not want any good."

(Verses 11-14). In the verses that follow there is set before us the path of quietness and peace through a restless and hostile world. Would we find "life" in the midst of a world of death, and "see good" though passing through a world of evil, then let us so walk in the fear of God that we keep our tongues from the evil that would slander or injure others, and our lips from speaking guile in the attempt to excuse ourselves. Let us depart from evil and do good, and, instead of striving with our opponents, let us seek peace and pursue it.

(Verses 15-18). So walking we shall find that the eyes of the Lord are upon us and His ears are open to our cry. He is against them that do evil, but delivers the righteous out of all their troubles, and is nigh unto them of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. If our hearts are broken by all that is around, and our spirits contrite by reason of what we find in ourselves, we shall discover that it is still true that "the Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit."

(Verses 19, 20). Nevertheless, though there is a path of "life" and "good" for the godly, it is ever true that, in an evil world, the righteous will suffer. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous," but in their afflictions they will have the watchful care of the Lord. He delivers; He keeps His people from harm, for not one of their bones is broken. He will deal with all the wicked. He redeems the souls of His servants, and none that trust in Him will be left desolate. Thus learning the grace of the Lord in the midst of afflictions the soul may well say, "I WILL BLESS THE LORD AT ALL TIMES."