**Isa 49:23**  And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with *their* face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I *am* the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.

**Isaiah 49:10-26**

They shall not hunger nor thirst

Promise of Christ to His people

The people of God are represented as a flock of sheep travelling under the care of their good shepherd, in the heat of summer, through a barren and dry wilderness, towards a land of plenty, security, and everlasting rest.  
Under such circumstances, what would this flock require? What might they expect from the hand of a faithful shepherd? There are doubtless three things which they would want and might look for—provision, protection, and refreshment. Such are the blessings promised by Christ in the text.

I. PROVISION. “They shall not hunger nor thirst.” Christ will furnish them with all things necessary both for life and godliness; that is, with a sufficiency of all temporal and spiritual blessings.

II. PROTECTION. “Neither shall the heat nor the sun smite them.” His people are exposed to the fire of persecution; but by His almighty power, by providential interpositions, He defeats the purposes, restrains the malice, and wards off the stroke of their persecutors. They are exposed, also, to the fiery darts of the wicked one; but here, again, the Lord protects His people.

III. REFRESHMENT. “Even by the springs of water shall He guide them.” Springs of water would be peculiarly refreshing in the sultry deserts, both as allaying the thirst of the flock, and as also furnishing on their banks fresh and verdant pasture, in which the sheep might repose and renew their wearied strength. Such and similar is the refreshment which Christ vouchsafes to His people. (E. Cooper.)

The love that will not let us go

This chapter is strewn with assurances to the chosen people on the eve of their return from Babylon. Jehovah’s voice takes on a tone of unusual tenderness, and speaks as He only can. Let us heed His successive assurances of comfort and compassion.

I. HE WILL LEAD WITH A SHEPHERD’S CARE.

II. HE WILL MAKE OBSTACLES SERVE HIS PURPOSE. “I will make all My mountains a way” (Isa\_49:11). Mountains are prohibitory. The student of the geography of Palestine cannot fail to be impressed with the strong barricade of mountains with which God fenced in the Land of Promise on its southern frontier. Similarly, the mountains of Switzerland have sheltered liberty and those of Afghanistan have made conquest difficult to impossibility. There were great mountains between Israel and home, yet God does not say that He would remove them; but that they should form a pathway, as though contributing to the ease and speed of the return. “I will make all My mountains a way.” We all have mountains in our lives. There are people and things that threaten to bar our progress in the Divine life. Patience can only be acquired through just such trials as now seem unbearable. Submit thyself. Claim to be a par taker in the patience of Jesus. Meet thy trials in Him. Thus shall the mountains that stand between thee and thy promised land become thy way to it. Note the comprehensiveness of this promise. “I will make all My mountains a way.” The promise is in the future tense. When we come to the foot of the mountains we shall find the way.

III. GOD’S LOVE IS MORE THAN MOTHERHOOD (Isa\_49:15). Many devout but misguided souls have placed the Virgin Mother on a level with God, and worship her, because they think that woman is more tender, more patient, more forgiving than man. “The love of woman” was David’s high-water-mark of love. And of woman’s love, none is so pure, so unselfish, so full of patient brooding pity, as a mother’s. Such love is God’s. Indeed it is a ray from His heart. Ira mother’s love is but the ray, what must His heart be! But there is sometimes a failure in motherhood. “They may forget.” But God can never so forget.

IV. GOD TREASURES THE THOUGHT OF HIS OWN (Isa\_49:16). The Orientals had a custom of tattooing the name of beloved friends on the hand. That is the reference here. Thou art photographed where God must ever behold thee, on His hands, on His heart. Not on one hand only, but on both. Not tattooed or photographed, the marks of which might be obliterated and obscured; but graven. The graving tool was the spear, the nail, the cross. Glass will not give up its inscriptions, nor the onyx stone its seal, nor the cameo its profile; but sooner might they renounce their trust, than the hands of Christ. Not Zion’s ruins, but Zion’s “walls” were ever before Him. Our ideal self; what we are in Jesus; what we long to be in our best moments; what we will be when grace has perfected its work and we are comely in the comeliness He shall put upon us—this is the ineffaceable conception of us that is ever before God. What a contrast between Zion’s wail about being forsaken and forgotten, and God’s tender regard!

V. GOD’S LOVE IS STRONG ENOUGH TO CARRY OUT ITS PURPOSE (Isa\_49:24). Such is the question of despondency, asked by Israel, from the heart of the mighty empire, in which she was a helpless captive But Jehovah had well calculated his resources (Isa\_49:25).

VI. GOD’S LOVE WILL NOT PUT AWAY (Isa\_50:1). (F. B.Meyer, B. A.)

**Isaiah 49:18-23**

Lift up thine eyes round about—

Promises for the Church

I.  
THE PROMISED INCREASE OF THE CHURCH.

1. In number.

2. In honour.

3. In triumph.

II. THE ENCOURAGEMENT IT AFFORDS US FOR MISSIONARY EXERTIONS.

1. God is able to effect this great thing.

2. He has engaged to effect it.

3. The beginnings are already visible before our eyes. Application—

(1) Let our expectations of it be enlarged.

(2) Let our prayers for it be poured forth.

(3) Let our exertions be used. (C. Simeon, M. A.)

**Isaiah 49:23**

And kings shall be thy nursing fathers

Princes and rulers should promote the will of God

I.  
PRINCES, OR RULERS, AS SUCH, ARE THE POSITIVE SERVANTS OF GOD, AND THEREFORE ARE BOUND TO PROMOTE, ABOVE ALL THINGS, THE INTERESTS OF HIS REVEALED WORD, AND THE HONOUR OF HIS NAME, IN THE WELFARE OF HIS CHURCH AND PEOPLE. It must be a self-evident proposition, that all who are entrusted with the ruling authority are bound to promote the best interests of the people over whom they preside. But the question is, in what do the best interests of a people consist? Do they consist in the extension of territory; the multiplicity of resources; the advancement of the arts and sciences; of wealth and honour; business and trade? We deny the assertion. As our Lord speaks of a man, so we of a nation, prince, or ruler. What is either he or they profited if they gain the whole world and lose their own soul? Or what shall a man, or any number of men, give in exchange for their soul? The soul, then, in all its vast, interesting, immortal, and eternal concerns, is the chief business of man.

1. From whence does the kingly office, or ruling authority proceed? Does it proceed from the people? No. It proceeds from God.

2. We must not omit to notice the manner in which the Lord speaks of princes and rulers in His Word. They are always spoken of in reference to their accountability to Him, and as bound to the execution of His will, and the promotion of His glory.

3. It may be useful here to adduce what is the estimate of our own Church on this subject.

II. SUCH A DISCHARGE OR DISREGARD OF THIS OBLIGATION WILL ALWAYS YIELD A SURE TEST OF THEIR OWN STATE AND THE CHARACTER OF THEIR GOVERNMENT, AND WHERE IT PREVAILS IT WILL BE VISIBLE, MORE OR LESS, IN ALL THEIR WAYS AND WORKS. We are to judge of the character and condition of princes and rulers, as such, as we do of private individuals and professing Christians, as such, and of the character of their government as we do of the general tenor of a man’s life.

1. There will be deep humiliation before God, coupled with free and ingenuous confessions both of individual and national guilt (2Sa\_7:1-29).

2. There will also be a desire to seek the guidance and acknowledge the hand of God in everything.

3. There will also be a fixed determination to banish all wicked men from their presence, and to exclude them from their councils.

4. There will be an anxiety to fill all the offices of the Church and State with men that fear the Lord, love the truth, and who will labour with heart and hand in the same cause for the advancement of true godliness. If the foregoing statements are based on the authority of Divine truth, the following deductions will ensue as some of their most obvious results

(1) It is not an easy office to be exalted to a throne, or to be entrusted with the affairs of a kingdom!

(2) How obvious is the connection between the Church and State! An established religion, nationally considered, is nothing more than that “form of godliness,” according to God’s revealed will, which is selected, supported, and maintained by the State, for the general benefit of all.

(3) How great is the guilt of ungodly princes and rulers, and how earnestly should we pray for them that God may bless and direct them in all His ways! (R. Shittier.)

They shall not be ashamed that wait for Me

Waiting upon God

I. WAITING UPON GOD signifies—

1. A patient expectation of the fulfilment of His Word, whether it be prophecy or promise.

2. A regular attention to the means of grace.

II. THE RESULT OF WAITING UPON GOD. Not disappointment and humiliation, but prayers answered, and hopes fulfilled.

1. The penitent.

2. The Christian relying upon the providential help of a covenant-keeping God.

3. The believer waiting for the accomplishment of God’s purpose in his sanctification.

4. The Christian waiting for the coming of Christ. (T. Blackley, M. A.)

“Wait”

This is the one word which the Divine wisdom often seems to utter in rebuke of human impatience. Man is eager, hurried, impatient, but God is never in haste. The Divine proceedings are slow—everywhere slow.

I. We see it in the realms of NATURE AND PROVIDENCE.

1. The history of the earth.

2. The movement of the seasons. The changes of day and night, &c., how slow, how gradual, how imperceptible!

3. The history of all life and growth.

II. REVEALED RELIGION includes much in harmony with these facts.

1. The long interval between the promise of a Saviour and His advent.

2. The manner of His coming (Luk\_17:20).

3. The history of revealed religion since the advent.

4. The spiritual history of the individual believer.

5. The events which make up the story of a life. With regard to much in our history, we are expected to wait for the revelations of the world to come. (R. Vaughan, D. D.)