Psalms - Commentaries by Hugh Henry Snell

Crumbs for the Lord's Little Ones: Volume 4 (1856), One Thing.

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“One thing is needful” Luke 10:42.

“One thing have I desired.” Ps. 27:4.

“One thing I do.” Phil. 3:13.

WE see singleness of eye, in perfection, only in the Lord Jesus. He was at all times full of light, having no part dark. He did always those things that pleased the Father. Self-will never had a place in His heart; it was His meat to do the will of Hun that sent Him. He knew no sin. Rebellion was very far from His mind. He never “turned away back.” He gave His back to the miters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; He hid not His face from shame and spitting. (Isa. 1.) The one object that pervaded the soul of Jesus was the Father’s glory. He was, emphatically, Jehovah’s “Righteous Servant,” “The Faithful Witness,” the “Beloved Son,” in whom the Father was well pleased. We never find that Christ was occupied in seeking anything for Himself. When His soul was sorely troubled, His one desire was, “Father, glorify Thy name.” (John 12) And when the bitterest of all sorrows was in immediate prospect, and the cup of unutterable anguish before Him, still it was “Not My will, but Thine, be done;” “The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?” (Luke 22:42; John 18:11.) In singleness of heart too, the “one thing” with Jesus was, not seeking His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him; so that even the words that He spike were always for the glory of the Father— “The word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father’s which sent Me.... I have not spoken of Myself, but the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak.” (John 5:30; 14:24; 12:49.)

It is in the same path that the Spirit of God leads us. We are not our own, but bought with a price. Our members must be “instruments of righteousness unto God,” for we are His, redeemed by the blood of His beloved Son. We are liable to forget this, and, therefore, to live unto ourselves; but if we walk in the Spirit, we shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Much of our unhappiness and weakness arise from forgetting that we are redeemed, and also the cost of our redemption, hence double-mindedness, instability, seeking our own things, and being careful and troubled about many things, not considering that “one thing is needful.”

When the children of Israel were secure within the blood-sprinkled lintel and door-posts, there was “one thing” which was to occupy them, before their deliverance from Egypt actually came. They were to “eat” the flesh of the Lamb, “roast with fire,” with unleavened bread. Not that this would make their deliverance more certain, but this was the obedient and God-glorifying service they were called to. Their safety was in the sprinkled blood— “When I see the blood I will pass over you;” but they were to obey God in eating the roasted Lamb.

There is also “one thing” now set before us, it is to “glorify God”— “to live not unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us, and rose again.” Present temporal blessing is remarkably connected in the Scriptures with this spiritual path— “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” (Matt. 6:33.) It is important to notice this. Our temptation is to attempt to serve two masters, but this cannot be. We have often tried to please ourselves and to please God, but in such a course, the one or the other is despised. If we do not hate self-will, we shall despise God. To trifle on this point is the backsliding path, and is sure to bring darkness—great darkness—into our souls. “If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!”

To be “careful and troubled about many things,” is a sure indication that our hearts are not fully taken up with Christ. Hence the “one thing” needful for us, at all times, is to be in entire dependence on Him, sitting at His feet and hearing His word, having all our springs in Him. When this is the case, we shall know Him, not only as the Maker of all things, and Heir of all things, but also as the Upholder of all things, and that by Him all things consist; we shall, therefore, take all things that befall us, whether painful or pleasant, from His hands, learn in everything to give thanks, being assured that, while He works all things after the counsel of His own will, He also makes “all things work together for our good;” for He is the Head of all principality and power, having all power in heaven and in earth. How “needful” then is it that we should take our proper place before the Lord as receivers—helpless, ignorant, and unworthy, so as to learn of Him, wait upon Him, and glory in Him.

We may be well assured, that we are no losers by seeking the glory of God. He is able to do for us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. Them that honor Him, He will be sure to honor. When the Lord proposed this question to Solomon, “Ask what I shall give thee?” he did not reply, long life, or riches, but he desired “one thing:” “Give Thy servant,” said he, “an understanding heart, to judge Thy people, that I may discern between good and bad... And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself ... behold, I have done according to thy word, and have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honor; so that there shall not be any among the kings lie unto thee all thy days.” (1 Kings 3:5-13.)

It is well also to notice what abundant honor and blessing God bestowed upon Elisha, after he also had chosen “one thing.” The prophet Elijah said unto him, “Ask what I shall do for thee,” and he replied, “Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.” (2 Kings 2:9.) The sequel tells us the blessed result. May we be delivered from all the miserable influences of self, and seek honestly to live unto God!

The Psalmist desired “one thing” of the Lord, and that, said he, “will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.” (Psa. 27:4.) This is blessed. There is no fruit of nature’s barren soil here. It surely is the breathing of the Holy Spirit in the soul, and had its full utterance in the heart of Jesus. But it is written for our learning, and we may well ponder the lesson. It seems with the deepest emotions of affection; we may say, it is one of the finest specimens of “singleness of heart.” And, beloved, do not our souls sympathize with the desire for this “one thing,” this thirst for fellowship and joy in the Lord? Or, are the things of earth so earnestly sought after by us, as to hinder our saying, “One thing have I desired of the Lord?” The Apostle Paul wept over

those who were minding earthly things in his day, and spoke of them as “enemies of the cross of Christ.” Surely, “the beauty of the Lord” is above all created excellence, whether visible or invisible; it is both unchangeable and eternal; and the soul anticipates no higher delight than “seeing Him as He is:” it is the consummation of the saint’s desire, and also of the desire of Christ concerning us. “Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory.” (John 17:24.) The fervent utterance of the heart of Paul was, “that I may know Him;” and so the souls of those who have beheld “the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,” who know their standing in grace, and have proved the vanity of the world and themselves, find that the one object of their desire and affection is CHRIST HIMSELF. They search the sacred oracles, and thirst for closer, happier, deeper fellowship with Him of whom they testify. This “one thing” they seek after, never being weary of considering the “beauty of the Lord,” never aspiring to a higher position than that of enquirers and learners at His feet. The more believers learn of Jesus, the more earnestly they “follow on” to know Him. They find increasingly, that His flesh is bread to strengthen, and His blood wine to cheer; and the droppings of the anointing of the true Aaron coming down to the skirts of His garments, they find to be the oil that makes their face to shine. (Ps. 104:15.) They call upon all that is within them to bless His holy name, and feel, if they had ten thousand crowns, they would count it their highest honor to cast them all at His feet. If our souls are not desiring and seeking after this “one thing,” it is because we have forgotten Him who did, by Himself, purge our sins.

The Apostle Paul, when writing to the saints at Philippi, felt his heart so fired with the love of God in Christ, that he tells us that the “one thing” prevailing in his soul, was to hasten onward to the possession of the promised glory. “This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 3:13, 14.) He had experimentally proved while feeling “less than the least of all saints,” that he possessed in Christ an all-sufficiency of strength and wisdom to glorify God. He had also so experienced the vanity of things here, and the inestimable value and preciousness of Christ, as to “desire to depart, and to be with Him.” To be with Christ in resurrection life, was the “one thing” on which his heart was set; for this he fervently longed, and his soul earnestly pressed onward to this fullness of joy.

Had we, beloved, more perfect knowledge of Christ, and the power of His resurrection, there would be more of this energy of life, and intensity of love, working in our hearts. The Divine assurance, that there is the most “perfect peace” between God and our own souls, that we are in Christ, that He who went down into death, under the full weight of God’s wrath for our sins, is alive again, and exalted “far above all heavens,” that “our life is hid with Christ in God,” that “as He is, so are we in this world,” that “we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones,” so “joined to the Lord,” that nothing can possibly separate us from the love of God, will alone enable us to count all things but loss for Christ, to forget the things that are behind, and to find one thing animating our hearts. The enjoyment of our standing “complete in Him,” practically separates us unto God.

HEART-TROUBLE. —When our Lord said to Peter, “Let not your heart be troubled” (John 14:1), He did not mean, do not be troubled about your sin of denying Me with oaths and curses, but do not be troubled about your salvation; for “ye believe in God, believe also in Me.” He knew that Peter would be troubled about his sin, and it was well that he should be; for we afterward see that “the Lord turned and looked upon Peter, and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice. And Peter went out and wept bitterly.” (Luke 22:61, 62.) May we know much of heart-trouble and weeping before the Lord over our sins and failures as disciples, while we experience the reality of His everlasting salvation of our souls!

Crumbs for the Lord's Little Ones: Volume 4 (1856), No. 1. The Sorrows of the Lamb of God.

“My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” Psalm 22:1.

WHAT unutterable agony was that which the Son of God was called to endure, when He cried, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” There never was before, and never will be again, such a cry. The blessed Lord Jesus could always say to Jehovah, “My God;” for though He was equal with God, He took upon Him the form of a servant; and as the perfect Servant, worshipped, served, and loved the Lord His God with all His heart, and mind, and soul, and strength. Not only did the Son of God abide in the Father’s love, and say, “Father....I know that Thou hearest Me always;” but He also, in the perfection of love and confidence, said, “O God, Thou art My God; early will I seek Thee: My soul thirsteth for Thee, My flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is,” &c. (Psa. 63:1.) “Thou art My God from My mother’s belly.” (Psa. 22:10.)

Obedience led Jesus to death, even the death of the cross; but though in that dreadful hour His soul was “full of troubles,” “His strength dried up like a potsherd,” and His “heart like wax melted in the midst of His bowels,” still it was “My God, my God!” When God had made Him to be sin for us, His unsparing wrath and fierce anger fell upon His own Son. His heart was broken, His hands and feet pierced, all His bones out of joint, His back smitten, His soul poured out unto death, the earth darkened, the multitude mocking and deriding, the hand of Jehovah bruising, still it was “My God, my God!” still He justifies Jehovah, and worships— “Thou art holy:” whilst in the perfection of lowliness He says, as regards Himself, “I am a worm, and no man.”

No one but God’s equal could so humble Himself. No one but the Fellow of the Lord of Hosts could sheathe in His own heart the glittering sword of Almighty vengeance. No one but He who had infinite capacities could drink up to the very dregs the sup of the wrath of God. No rock but the Rock of Ages could endure such waves and billows. The Holy One of God alone could be “made a curse for us:” He only could be our “Surety.” The Great Shepherd of the sheep could ransom us only by His own blood—the blood of, the everlasting covenant; and, blessed be His name, He endured the cross, despising the shame.

But, how wonderful the mystery that the Creator of all things should bear “our sins in His own body on the tree!” that the Prince of Life” should be “killed;” that the “Just One” should be numbered with transgressors, and yet make “intercession for the transgressors;” that “the Son of the Highest” should be laid “in the lowest pit” (Psa. 88:6); that the “only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father,” should be taken by wicked hands, crucified, and slain; that the Light of the world should be laid “is darkness, in the deeps;” that Jehovah’s righteous Servant, His elect in whom His soul delighted, who finished the work the Father gave Him to do, should have such an experience of the hiding of God’s countenance as should draw from His lips, in his extremity of anguish, the bitter cry, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” What depths of grace and holiness, righteousness and peace, are here!

What distress, what terror, what amazing woe did our adorable Emmanuel endure when the fierce wrath of God thus lay upon Him! What creature in heaven or earth could grasp or utter the full meaning of these searchable realities! The long anticipated waters now came into His soul. He sank in deep mire where there was no standing. The full cup of unmingled sorrow was now drunk. If the immediate contemplation of the cross caused Him to “sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground,” what must have been His grief and suffering when “it pleased the Lord to bruise Him, to make His soul an offering for sin?” Surely, the prophet was led by the Holy Ghost to this wondrous subject when He said, “Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow, which is done unto Me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted Me in the day of His fierce anger. From above hath He sent fire into My bones, and it prevaileth against them: He hath spread a net for My feet, He hath turned Me back: He hath made Me desolate and faint all the day. The yoke of My transgressions is bound by His hand: they are wreathed and come up to My neck,” &c. (Lam. 1:12-14.)

What a matchless scene of sorrow and love! No comforters are here, none to assuage His bitter sorrow, none to sympathize, none to help: “Lover and friend hast Thou put far from Me.” (Psa. 88:18.) Not a drop of mercy is mingled with the cup of wrath, no compassionate hand stretched out to mitigate the agony— “He spared not His own Son.” Wondrous grace! Unutterable sorrow! The stern sword of the Lord of Hosts was handled by inflexible justice, and must be bathed in blood. The fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the flood gates [margin] of heaven were opened; deep called unto deep; the terrors of Sinai roared; and all the foaming waves and billows of offended justice rolled over the meek and lowly Jesus. He is forsaken of God; He dies for the ungodly. The Lamb without spot is slain to make as end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness—to perfect forever them that are sanctified. (Psa. 88:7, 16; Rom. 5:6; Dan. 9:24.)

The death of Christ was the opening of the all-cleansing fountain for sin and uncleanness. The Just died for the unjust; the Lord of glory was crucified for sinners; the Beloved Son was forsaken, and His offering accepted, that the returning prodigal might be welcomed to the Father’s house, and abide eternally there. Thus justice is satisfied, holiness vindicated, Divine wrath appeased, truth fulfilled, the law of God magnified, peace proclaimed, mercy flows out, the guilty are pardoned, and the lost saved; for “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.”

Do not our hearts, beloved brethren, adoringly worship, while thus we meditate on the sorrows of the Saviour crucified? Does it not humble us to think that our sins cost the blessed Lord such deep distress and pain? Does it not afresh inspire our hearts with confidence in God, that, when no less a sacrifice could avail, He gave His Beloved Son? And when we see the Beloved Son the willing victim, can we feel otherwise than that such grace is full of consolation, and binds the deepest obligations upon our hearts?

Farther. It was THE FATHER’S will that Jesus should lay down His life—He brought Him into “the dust of death.” (John 10:17,18; Psa. 22:15.) THE SON willingly died in our stead; “He gave Himself for our sins.” (Gal. 1:4.) “No man,” said He, “taketh it (My life) from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again” (John 10:18; 12:27; 18:7, 8, 11); and it was “through the ETERNAL SPIRIT” that “He offered Himself without spot to God.” But, as we have before noticed, in that dreadful hour it was “My God.” The slain One yet trusting in His God; Christ, the sin-bearer, forsaken, yet crying “My God,” “why castest Thou off My soul? why hidest Thou Thy face from Me?” (Psa. 88:14;) yea, pouring out His heart with all its sorrow and grief unto Him that smote Him. What lessons for us are here, beloved! Never were such prayers, such cries and tears, as the crucified Son of God put forth unto Him that was able to save Him from death. He trusted in God at all times, and poured out His heart before Him. If the cruel multitude gape upon Him with their mouths, laugh, shoot out the lip, compass Him about, or taunt Him, saving, “He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him;” does He not follow His God, who forsakes Him, with this sad tale of the wickedness of His foes, as well as put up “strong crying” to be saved from the waters of death? (Psa. 22:7, 8, 13, 16.) And He was heard in that He feared, even though it were from the horns of the unicorns. The loving heart, broken with reproach, cried and was heard. His soul was not left in hell, neither did His flesh see corruption. It was not possible that He should be holden of death. The vials of wrath due for the sins of His people had been emptied on Him. The wages of sin was paid to the full when Jesus died and made His grave with the wicked; and the debt being canceled, justice detains the prisoner no longer, death hath no more dominion over Him, for in that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. God hath accepted the death of Christ on our behalf, so that we are called to reckon ourselves to have died indeed unto sin, and to be alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. And as we saw all the persons of the Triune Jehovah concerned in the death of Christ, so do we find the same blessed instruction in reference to His resurrection from the dead. He was raised up from the dead by the glory of THE FATHER. (Rom. 6:4.) THE SON said, “Destroy this temple (His body), and in three days I will raise it up.” “I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” (John 2:19, 21; 10:18.) We are further told that He was “put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the SPIRIT.” (1 Peter 3:18.)

In the prophetic account of our Lord’s sufferings and death, it is blessed to see that the first thing that follows “Thou hast heard Me from the horns of the unicorns,” is the intimation of His desire for our participation in His resurrection joy— “I will declare Thy name unto My brethren; in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee.” (Psa. 22:22.) We find also that when Christ rose from the dead, and revealed Himself to Mary, He said, “Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father; and to My God and your God.” (John 20:17.)

Into this blessed fellowship, beloved, are we brought; in this marvelous grace we stand; Christ’s Father our Father; His God our God; through the sorrows and victory of the Lamb slain. But His sorrows are over. The path of humiliation has been perfectly trodden, with infinite satisfaction to God, and for our eternal welfare. Heaven welcomes and enthrones the earth-rejected Son, and declares Him worthy of all praise, honor, power, and glory.

All power in heaven and in earth is given unto Him. Angels and principalities are subject to Him. He still loves us as the Father hath loved Him, and hath sent down the Holy Ghost to comfort us during His absence, to teach, guide, bring Him to our remembrance, to testify of the crucified, risen, and glorified Son to our souls, until He comes again to receive us unto Himself. O for the anointed eye, and circumcised heart, to be able, with unshod feet, to search more deeply into the profound mysteries of the cross of Christ!

Death of the Cross, Death of the Cross: No. 1

"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Psalm 22:1

Who can describe the suffering of the Son of God when He poured out His soul unto death? when His sorrowing heart gave forth that bitter cry, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" One apostle had betrayed Him, another had denied Him, and all His disciples had forsaken Him and fled, and now God turned away from Him. Man had been mocking, deriding, spitting upon Him and scourging Him, and had degraded Him to be numbered with malefactors; darkness had covered the whole land for three hours, and now the spotless, perfect Man, Christ Jesus, is forsaken of God, so that He cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" There never was such a cry heard before, and never will be again. No one now who could truly say, my God, is ever forsaken of Him; and by-and-by, when the lost are forever forsaken, cast out from the presence of God, no one there will be able truthfully to say, my God. The marvel in this cry on Calvary is, that the One who could say, in the perfectness of faith, and love, and truth, u My God," was forsaken by Him. But so it was, and Spirit-taught souls learn the precious lessons of divine grace which it teaches, bringing present peace, and hope of eternal glory, to all who believe on His name.

As man, He could always say to Jehovah, "Thou art my God" Though equal with God, the only-begotten Son, one with the Father, yet, being found in fashion as a Man, He took a servants form, and, as the perfect Servant, it was His meat to do the will of Him that sent Him, and to finish His work. In life, He so abode in communion with the Father, that He could say, "Father.... I knew that thou hearest me always;" but in the death of the cross it was, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

David wrote this cry by the Holy Ghost, and thus predicted, a thousand years before its fulfillment, that Messiah in His suffering would say these words; and we find in the gospels they were the very utterance of the Savior when hanging on the cross. Nor does the psalm contemplate them as the expression of any other than He who bare our sins in His own body on the tree. He said of Himself, what none other could say, " I was cast upon thee from the womb, thou art my God from my mother's belly." "Thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts."' Of what other babe than He could such be said, who was born in Bethlehem, of whom the angel Gabriel had said to Mary, "that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God?" (Luke 1:35.) Besides, as One who was specially connected with Israel, He said, "Our Fathers trusted in thee; they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.... but I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people." Thus He felt He had not the common privileges that those among the nation of Israel had been accustomed to have, for He cried, and was heard not. He was forsaken of God.

The Son, who was in the bosom of the Father "before the world was, when the fullness of time came, was sent forth, made of a woman; "He was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death.... that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man." He came to save, to redeem, and therefore to die for the ungodly. He glorified the Father on the earth. He finished the work which the Father gave Him to do. His death as a sacrifice for sin was for the glory of God. The good Shepherd, laying down His life for the sheep, was so infinitely perfect, that it was another motive for the Father loving Him; hence He said, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again.....This commandment have I received of my Father." (John 10:17, 18.)

The death of the cross stands perfectly alone. It never can be repeated, and, because of its eternal efficacy, will never need to be repeated. No creature can utter the sorrows, or describe the suffering of Golgotha, when Christ "bare the sins of many." In that dreadful hour His soul was "full of troubles" His strength was dried up like a potsherd. His tongue clave to His jaws; all His bones were out of joint, and His heart was like wax melted in the midst of His bowels. But oh! the deep sorrow of that unutterable agony when God, who sent His own Son, condemned sin in the flesh, so that the suffering One cried out, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? my God, I cry in the day-time, but thou hearest not, and in the night season, and am not silent." When reproach had broken His loving heart, and the Holy One had been smitten and scourged, His hands and feet pierced; when there was no angel sent to strengthen, no lover or friend to cheer; when the sun was forbidden to light up the scene; when man was mocking and deriding, and Jehovah bruising, putting Him to grief, and forsaking Him; still, it was in the perfectness of faith—"My God, my God." He also justifies Jehovah, and worships, saying, "But thou art holy, thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." (Psalm 22:3.)

The Son only could thus glorify God. No one but the Man that is the Fellow of Jehovah of hosts could thus sheath in His own heart the uplifted sword of divine vengeance. No one but He who had infinite capacities could drink to the very dregs the cup of God's just judgment of sin. No one but the Rock of ages could endure such waves and billows. Only the Holy One of God could be made sin and a curse for us. The spotless Son of man only could be our " Surety." None but the Good Shepherd could die for the sheep. None but Jesus, the Son of God, could or would save us. And what a sacrifice! What infinite, what eternal blessedness must flow from the accomplished work of the Son of God, "who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our evil Father." (Gal. 1:4.) Well hath it been said -

How wonderful, that the Son, by whom the worlds were made, should bear our sins in His own body on the tree; that the " Prince of life" should be "killed;" that the " Just One" should be "numbered with the transgressors," and yet make " intercession for the transgressors;" that "the Son of the Highest" should go " into the lower parts of the earth;" that " the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father" should be "taken by wicked hands, crucified, and slain;" that" the Lord of glory" should be found here on earth "nailed to a tree;" that Jehovah's righteous Servant, his elect, in whom his soul delighted, should be so abandoned in the extremity of bitterest anguish as to cause Him to cry out," My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" What infinite perfections are clustered together here! What profound lessons of grace, holiness, righteousness, truth, and peace are here given for our learning!

What distress, what pain, what ignominy, what woe, did our adorable Emmanuel pass through, when He suffered for our sins under the righteous judgment of God! What man, or angel, could grasp or utter the full meaning of such unsearchable sorrow and suffering! No line is long enough to sound its depths! No created space could hold the deep waters that came into His soul. No thought can reach what He must have passed through to satisfy forever divine justice as to our sins. We are told that " He bare our sins/' "suffered for sins," and " died for our sins according to the scriptures;" but what was involved in this sin-atoning work, we believe no creature ever will be able fully to enter into, any more than what is finite can comprehend what is infinite. But we know for our comfort that the cup of full, unmingled judgment due to sin was then drunk; and if the anticipation of it caused Him to " sweat as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground," what must have been His grief and suffering when " it pleased Jehovah to bruise him," and to " make his soul an offering for sin"? Again, we may inquire, what must have been the magnitude of the work of the cross, when we contemplate some of the results? Did He not love the church, and give Himself for it? Did He not, as Israel's King, die for that nation? Will not creation itself have all its groanings hushed, and be brought into the liberty of the glory of the children of God in virtue of His death on the cross? Did He not make peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven? And will not the new heaven and new earth, in which righteousness will dwell, be the everlasting witness that Jesus was the Lamb of God who bore away the sin of the world?

The death of the cross not only stands alone in its eternal efficacy, but it is matchless in the sorrow and love which met there. No comforters to soothe are in attendance, no hand stretched out to assuage His bitter grief, none to sympathize; and, as He said, "none to help." Not a drop of mercy is mingled with the cup of God's just judgment of sin. No compassionate friend relieved His sufferings. He knew all that should come upon Him. He endured the cross. He despised the shame. His whole heart's desire was that the Father might be glorified; for He loved the Father, and He also loved us. Wondrous love, yet unutterable sorrow! The stern sword of the Lord of hosts was lifted up with inflexible justice, and must be bathed in blood! The fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the floodgates of heaven were opened; deep called unto deep: the thunders of Sinai roared; and all the foaming waves of offended justice, all the righteous demands due to sin rolled over the meek, and loving, and obedient Jesus. He is forsaken of God. He dies for the ungodly. The Lamb without spot is slain, to "perfect forever them that are sanctified."

And why was all this suffering? Because Jesus was the Sin-bearer. The glory of God demanded that our sins should be judged. Yes, God must judge sin. He has no other way of dealing with it; nor could He save us unless our sins were judged, for God is just. The righteous God loveth righteousness. Jesus only could bear our sins, because He was perfect man, and without sin. God sent Him to save us, and He willingly came, saying, "Lo, I come to do thy will, God." Having glorified God as man on the earth for more than thirty years, the time came for Him, according to the counsels and grace of God, to be a sacrifice for sin; so God laid upon Him the iniquity of us all. Therefore "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities," that by His stripes we might be healed. This is why the perfect, loving Savior was forsaken of God, and this is why He died; for the wages of sin is death, and He died for our sins according to the scriptures. But God raised Him from among the dead, and set Him at His own right hand, where He now is, crowned with glory and honor.

How the contemplation of this unutterable suffering melts our souls! We think of the love, the sorrow, the pain, the shame, the bruising and forsaking, until the language of our hearts is -

"In His spotless soul's distress,

I perceive my guiltiness;

how vile my lost estate,

Since my ransom was so great!'

Dear reader, Is all this tale of unparalleled love and sorrow nothing to you? Is such grace to sinners of no moment? Does the dolorous cry of the sinner-loving Jesus, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" fail to melt your heart? What! Can you read and hear of such matchless love, and be unmoved? Do you not know, that if you refuse this precious Savior, and His atoning work upon the cross, you will have to be forever forsaken of God, forever banished from His blessed presence, forever under the wrath of God? Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die? for He died to save sinners. He lives in glory, and receives and saves sinners. God waiteth to be gracious. He delighteth in mercy; and, in virtue of the blood of His Son, can righteously save; and every soul that comes to God by Him He will save. Dear reader, why not come now, for He is a just God and a Savior?

Death of the Cross, Death of the Cross: No. 3

Among the many precious lessons which the death of the cross sets before us is the perfectness of Christ's love to the Father. He fully carried out the Father's will, glorified Him on the earth in a scene of unparalleled trial, temptation, and rejection; and in this He found delight. So unmoved was the purpose of His heart as to this,, that, in the immediate prospect of the cross, He said, " Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name!" And again, "That the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do." (John 12:27, 28; 14:31.) There was perfect obedience in the face of the most terrible pressure of suffering and shame. He went straight on in obedience to the will of Him that sent Him. He surrendered Himself entirely to God. As to His words, He could say, "I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak." In the face of everything hostile, and at all cost, with the loss of everything, even life itself, He was always the obedient One, so that He truly said, " I do always those things that please him." It is also said of Him, "Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the-death of the cross." In such a world as this, and such a path, ending in such a death of ignominy, suffering, and judgment of sin, we see perfect obedience. (John 12:49; 8:29. Phil. 2:8.)

His faith too was perfect; for, though forsaken of God, not even heard when He cried, not having the privileges of a common Israelite, but "a worm and no man," He could still say, " My God." From the first to the last of the path of dependence He was pleased to take, when He humbled Himself and took upon Him the form of a servant, He was the Beginner and Finisher of faith. Under the most trying circumstances of suffering, both of soul and body, forsaken by His own disciples, the Object of men's scorn and hatred, and, more distressing than all to His loving heart, forsaken of His God, whom He had always pleased, still it was " My God." What profoundly solemn lessons a glance at the perfect ways of Jesus, His entire self-surrender, whole-hearted subjection, perfect love to the Father, perfect obedience to His will, as well as His perfect faith, read to our souls!

Though He made intercession for the transgressors, yet He was not the less sensitive of their scorn and hatred; but about it all, He poured out His heart to God. Not a disdainful shake of the head but He keenly felt, not a word of mockery but fell painfully on His ear; but in the perfectness of faith He told all out to His God. "When he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not; but committed himself to him who judgeth righteously." (1 Pet. 2:23.) Hence we find among the utterances of His heart when lifted up upon the tree, "All they that see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head."…. "Thou art my God from my mother's belly. Be not far from me, for trouble is near; for there is none to help. Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd…. for dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me, they pierced my hands and my feet…. they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." (Psalm 22:7-18.) Thus He committed Himself in everything to God. Even the cup, though in drinking it, it might come through

men's wicked hands, and Satan's bruising of His heel, He took from the Father's hand; for He said, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" And so all through the sorrows of the cross, and suffering of death, His faith, His obedience, His love, all was perfect. Surely He hath left us an example that we should follow His steps. Is it not well to ponder this scene so melting to our hearts, until we are so taken up with Himself now glorified, that we are constrained to live only to serve and honor Him in ways of love, obedience, and faith?

Before God all was perfect. By the death of the cross, the atoning work was done. The Holy One having been made sin for us, and having suffered for sins all the demands of divine judgment, He was righteously raised from the dead, and exalted to the right hand of God. So perfectly was the work done, that God could send glad-tidings to every creature to proclaim forgiveness of sins and justification from all things to everyone that believeth on Him.

In the death of the cross, then, we see man's dreadful hatred to Christ, his enmity against God, and God's abundant grace to man. Sin is there beheld in all its dire malignity, meeting with the expression of God's perfect abhorrence of it in turning away from His perfect and well-beloved Son, because He was bearing our sins. The righteousness of God is there manifested, not in cutting off the sinner in his sins, but in pouring out the just judgment they deserved on His own spotless Son. The truth of God is established, and all done that the scriptures might be fulfilled. There God was glorified. His holiness, righteousness, love, truth, majesty, all are seen in the Cross in uncompromising excellence. Thus sins are purged, peace made, and man saved.

Jesus really died for our sins, according to the scriptures. This was necessary. Had He stopped a hair's breadth of actual death under the judgment of God for sin, no one could be saved. If He, the Com of wheat, had not died, He must have been alone. But He did die. He tasted death. Concerning the precious mystery of His death, we are told that He was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, and that He was taken by wicked hands, crucified and slain. And yet He truly said, "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down by myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." We also know that when He cried out in deepest sorrow on the tree, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He also could truly add "Thou hast brought me into the dust of death." Oh the matchless glory, and mystery of the death of the cross!

Crumbs for the Lord's Little Ones: Volume 3 (1855), God's Way and Our Way

“His way is perfect.” “He maketh my way perfect.”—Psa. 18:30, 32.

How good to know, that whatsoever way He has recourse to, to make my way perfect, His way is perfect in wisdom, grace, faithfulness, love unbounded. Sometimes, in the perfection of His way, He “gently leads;” sometimes “He speaks out of the whirlwind” but it is He who speaks; it is He who leads; and whether in storm or calm, He leads, He speaks whose “way is perfect.”

How perfect “His way” in our salvation! Could we have bettered it? We had nothing to do with it, and we know it is well we had not. We have nothing to do with the means of making our “way” perfect, save to wait on God for increase of faith and grace. We might, very probably, have mercy on our ways, when God, having mercy on us, has no mercy on our inventions. Were it not for the trials which God in His grace sends, who can tell what trials we should bring on ourselves?

I am a crooked one; and, to fit me for the Master’s use, I need crooked circumstances. They come, and He who makes my way perfect completes the dove-tail work, and He will plane and polish for His own glory. Ah, beloved! we hear it said, “How deeply the Lord is trying my faith.” A little self-searching before God’s all-searching eye would end in our saying, “How deeply I have been trying my Heavenly Father’s love.” What we all need is to wait on God for grace to look more to Jesus THROUGH THE WORD, to Jesus our blessed Lord and Exemplar whose way was perfect indeed, and yet who was dealt with as if He were the sinner. How He bore “the contradiction of sinners against Himself,” and the wrath of God! Let us dwell in the sunshine of “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,” and mark the manner of His submission to His heavenly Father’s will. Let us prayerfully meditate on Him as He is revealed in the WORD or LIFE, from the page which records His power in the creation of all things (see Gen. 1, John 1, Heb. 1,) through the records of the sorrows of His cross, and the glory of His resurrection and ascension; remembering His intercession until He come with clouds, according to His word, “Surely I come quickly!” (Rev. 22:20.)

Thus dealing with the Word, we may humbly and adoringly expect that THE COMFORTER, who is the Holy Ghost, will instruct our souls in the blessed truth, that all things work together for our good—that “tribulation worketh patience,” that “the God of patience and consolation” is our God, that patience is to “have its perfect work, that we may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” He will make our deepest, most enduring affliction “light affliction,” and show us that it is but “for a moment”—that it “worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

The Lord needed not our help before time dawned, to settle His decrees concerning us; and He needs not our help now as to means to bring His decrees about. His means may be, to our eye, crooked, or they may be straight; to our taste, bitter or sweet; His way to our feet may be rough or smooth;—but “His way is perfect;” and He says, “Walk before Me, and be thou perfect.” Happy he who by the Spirit of God has been taught, through the Word, not to strive against God, for that “God is greater than man” (Job 33:12, 13), that “God can do everything” (Job 42:2), that “without Him we can do nothing” (John 15:5); but that we “can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth us.”1

Let us, as the redeemed of the Lord—redeemed with “precious blood”—serve the Lord with gladness. Let our business be to walk before God. In His grace He will show us His way;2 He will make us to rejoice in it; He will teach us what grace through Jesus we have found in His sight, and we shall know something of the greatness of His power which worketh in us (Eph. 1:19, &c.; 3:20, 21; 6:10),3 both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Oh! may we then come to God as those who “believe that HE IS;” seek to please God, not ourselves; and get the testimony that Enoch got! (Heb. 11:5.)

Whatever be God’s way with us, our wisdom is to “rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him;” to “delight” ourselves “in the Lord;” to “commit our way” and “works” to Him (Ps. 37:5; Prov. 16:2, 3); to “trust in the Lord,” who “undertakes” for us—and in His own perfect way “performs” and “perfects” that which concerneth “those who trust in Him, and who desire to know and do His will.” “Teach me Thy way, O Lord!”

If by the Spirit of God we are given to meditate on Jesus in the “evening, morning, and at noonday;” and if we consider that Jesus Christ the Son of God—the Living and True God—is the Living Way to the Father, the gift of the Father to and for the Church, and that the Church is the gift of the Father to Jesus, shall we not also be assured that God will with Jesus freely give us all things? Things present are His gift, whatsoever be their form or color—painful or pleasant—as well as things to come. Whatever the “present things” may be in the way of circumstances from our heavenly Father to us-ward, for His glory and our blessing, if we are as well assured (well indeed we may be) of His infinite wisdom in the means He employs, as of the infinite wisdom of His eternal counsels, the word which it is impossible for flesh to utter, “Thy will be done,” will flow from the soul without effort, by the mighty operation of the Holy Ghost; who comforts us, while He proves to us that the will of God is “good, and acceptable, and perfect;” teaching our souls that it is impossible for God to err because “His way is perfect.” He is bold and strong in faith who says, “Thy will be done.”

Drink of the Wine of the Kingdom, “drink abundantly, O beloved,” saith the Lord; eat of the Living Bread, and God will give us, through the Bread and the Wine, all needful boldness and strength. It is true “His way is in the sea, and His path in the deep waters, and His footsteps are not known;” still, He leads His people “by the right way,” like a flock, with a shepherd’s hand and heart; and His sheep, who have redemption before their eyes, and the price thereof in their hearts, know that “His way is in the sanctuary;” and viewing the sea from the sanctuary, through, the rent veil, they know that waters that affright those who are on the wave without God, tend to the cleansing of those who are with Him in the sanctuary. They sing the song of adoration, “The waters saw Thee, O God, the waters saw Thee; they were afraid, the depths also were troubled;” but “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” The deep sea of our troubles (to the praise of the glory of His grace let it be said) becomes very shallow, when, by the Spirit, we contemplate the way of Jehovah with Jesus “in the sea;” the path which Jesus had to take “in the great waters,” in the “darkness,” “in the deeps;” when the “fierce wrath” of the Lord God of His salvation went over Him (Ps. 88); when He said, “Thou art holy”.... “I am a worm” (Ps. 22:3, 6); when His strong cry was, “Save Me, O God; for the waters are come in unto My soul....1 am come into deep waters where the floods overflow Me” (Ps. 69:1, 2).

When we drink of the cup which Wisdom has thus mingled, we are as giants refreshed with new wine (God makes us so)— “as a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine.” If we eat and drink more abundantly, shall we not be stronger in faith; able to subdue our inward corruptions, as well as wax valiant in the wrestle against the principalities, and powers, and wicked spirits in heavenly places? Shall we not escape the “edge of the sword,” and stand against their wiles, which deepen, greatly deepen, as “the coming of the Lord draweth nigh?” The song of praise on our journey to our heavenly city— “To Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood” turns to flight armies of aliens, who in their own land oppose us. “By Thee I have run through a troop, by my God I have leaped over a wall. As for God, His WAY IS PERFECT. (In the sea and in the sanctuary, His way is perfect!) THE WORD OF THE LORD Is TRIED (REFINED, see margin), He is a buckler to all them that trust in Him. For who is God save the Lord? or who is a rock save our God? It is God that girdeth me with strength, and MAKETH MY WAY PERFECT.” May the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in every good work to do His will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Crumbs for the Lord's Little Ones: Volume 4 (1856), Ways of God., The

“Stormy wind fulfilling His word.”—Ps. 148:8.

THERE is strength and power in the inanimate creature, before which the wisdom and strength of man are alike futile. But God has measured the strength and power of every creature, not only by His omnipotence, but by His love also. “I am persuaded,” says the apostle, “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.” Blessed thought! every creature may try to effeet this separation, but none shall prevail. But is not the thought, while equally blessed, yet more wonderful to conceive that every creature has its distinct mission, either in judgment or mercy, or in mercy on the one side and judgments on the other? “For thus saith the Lord God, How much more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence;” all these creatures have their distinct mission from the Lord to fulfill His word. So also the stormy wind, the most uncontrollable element, has its mission from the Lord to fulfill His word. Does Jonah fly from the presence of the Lord? God knows how to arrest him, and to get glory to His own name; and in the result to show mercy even to Jonah. “The Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken.” (Jonah 1:4.) But it was not broken; that was not the mission of the great wind; it had respect to Jonah, and to him alone, and it fulfilled the word of the Lord. But God had other creatures at His command in reference to Jonah. “Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah.” (vs. 17.) And again after Jonah’s disappointment, because that mercy rejoiced against judgment, and that the Ninevites were spared on their repentance, “the Lord God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief.” (Jonah 4:6.) Then again “God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered. And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted.” (vss. 7, 8.) “The great wind,” “the fish,” “the gourd,” “the worm,” “the vehement east wind,” had each of them a distinct mission from God, and fulfilled His word.

Does Jehoshaphat, after his signal deliverance, join himself with Ahaziah, king of Israel, who did very wickedly, and do they make ships in Ezion-gaber? “Then Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the Lord hath broken thy works. And the ships were broken, that they were not able to go to Tarshish.” (2 Chron. 20) The stormy wind fulfilled His word.

If “Euroclydon” rages in the Mediterranean, it fulfills its mission in bringing honor to the Lord’s prisoner, the only one calm and collected in the midst of danger, and for whose sake all that sailed with him in the ship were spared. (Acts 27:24.)

But if God “commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind, which Meth up the waves of the deep” (Pa. 107:26), “He also stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people” (Psa. 65:7): and intelligent creatures, in their passions and interests as uncontrollable by human power as the waves of the sea, have their mission. And God can say to the one or the other, “Hitherto shalt thou

come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." (Job 38:11.)

If it be marvelous in our eyes that things unintelligent and inanimate have not only their mission, but are made subservient to God's purpose of blessing His people, for "not even a sparrow falleth to the ground without our Father," our admiration becomes deeper when we find the opposition of human passions, and complication of human interests, made to serve a definite end, and to go straightforward to that end. Such appears to be the instruction to be drawn from the symbol of the Cherubim, as seen by the prophet Ezekiel. Such controlling and directing power is also presented to us in "the Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth" (Rev. 5:6)-full power of order and control under universal superintendence.

That God effectuates His purpose by means of moral and intelligent, and therefore responsible agents, who have nevertheless not the least conception of what they are thus doing, or the purpose they are subserving, is almost an overwhelming thought; yet it must be received as an axiom by those who bow to the authority or Scripture. The Lord sends the proud "Assyrian against an hypocritical nation; against the people of His wrath He gives him a charge. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so. It is in his heart to destroy and out of nations not a few." (Ise. 6-7.) Oaesar Augustus issues his decree for taking the census of the empire, for wise political reasons; little did he mean, neither did his heart think, thus to bring about the accomplishment of a remarkable prophecy concerning Him who is Lord of lords, and King of kings. The wisest men, the ablest politicians, the most renowned conquerors, whilst they are pursuing heartily and intelligently the object they have proposed to themselves, are ignorantly subserving another purpose which is not in their hearts. Religion prejudice and ignorance have their mission, as well as the stormy wind, or proud Assyrian. "And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers: but those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled." (Acts 3:17, 18.)

But the most interesting as well as the most wonderful power of order and control is found within the Church itself. Regarding the Church in its actual condition, it appears to us in hopeless disorder and confusion; yet, notwithstanding this appearance, the only-wise Master-builder is rearing a building of perfect symmetry and beauty, in due time to be manifested, without a single stone either wanting or out of place. (Rev. 21:9-27.)

In the rearing of this building He is now employing various workmen; yet these workmen are working by different plans of their own, often pulling down each other's building, because it is not wording to their fashion, and sometimes building again what they themselves have destroyed. In appearance the several workmen have no common plan, no rule, no compass, no plummet; rearing several detached buildings, and each one glorying in the work of his hands, as if they were destroying the Temple instead of building it. This must doubtless be to the damage of all. But under the superintendence of Him whose servants they are, they are all working for His end, although their passions, vanity, self-seeking, and littleness, may have an end of their own, or make them think that the Lord's end can only be attained by their way. It is truly blessed when the Lord. Himself is honored in His way as well as in His end. But notwithstanding the follies and bye-ways of His servants, He is working for His end through them; and we are able in some measure to understand how He is doing this.

"And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." (Mark 16:20.) Now it is only just so far as the Lord is working with His servants that they are working with and for Him. (2 Cor 6:1.) He will set aside and burn up "the wood, hay, and stubble;" that for which their energy, it may be, has been spent, and in which their chief interest has been occupied. But that for which He hath wrought mightily in them (and His very might to calm and patient, compared with human energy), "the gold, silver, and precious stones," He will preserve.

The point here is, not which of the servants is acting most according to the Lord's plan, or how much loss many of the Lord's servants will have to suffer; but how it is, that with such a miserable set of tools, the great Master-worker produces such exquisite workmanship, in due time to be manifested as that city which has the glory of God.

But if all the Lord's workmen are under Him working for a definite end exactly in proportion as He works with them, it necessarily follows, that in that in which the Lord works with His servants, they are co-workers one with another, they are really working for one end; howbeit in their hearts they may repudiate the thought of being associated in common labor. That for which they are working in their own hearts is one object; that for which the Lord is using them, and working with them, is another. Humbling indeed it is that it should be so; and that regard for Him, whose servants we are, should have so little power in setting self aside. Great was the comfort to the apostle to have a true yoke-fellow in Timothy or Titus; but although he had few likeminded with him in his singleness of eye to the service of the Lord, he nevertheless acknowledges others as his fellow-helpers unto the kingdom of God. "These only," says he, "are my fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort to me." (Col. 4:11.) Many of the servants of Christ might be wayward and self-seeking; some entangled in Jewish traditions, others in Gentile philosophy; they were no comfort to the apostle, and instead of strengthening were by their ways apparently weakening his hands; nevertheless, the apostle acknowledges them as servants of Christ, and his fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God. They must stand or fall to their own Master; but in fidelity to that Master, he must acknowledge them in whatever way the Master working with them was accrediting their work. If they really were ministers of Christ, they must, under the Master-worker's hand, be helping on His work.

Had not the apostle been able to take, fellowship in labor on another and higher ground, than that of ostensible co-operation, he had so few "like-minded" that he might almost have been driven to express himself, as the prophet, in felt desolation— "And I only am left;" or to adopt the ready human way of party making which he so strongly repudiates, "Who is Paul, or who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?"

"And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not; for he that is not against us is for us." (Luke 9:49, 50.)

PATIENCE—Our trials may sometimes appear both long and sharp. God tries our patience as well as faith. He exhorts us to "let patience have her perfect work," as well as to "cast not away our confidence which hath great recompence of reward." (James 1:4; Heb. 10:35.) We may well wait upon the Lord, and be of good courage, for He is faithful that promised.

Crumbs for the Lord's Little Ones: Volume 2 (1854), Stand in Awe of His Word.

“My heart standeth in awe of Thy Word.”—Ps. 119:101

THE skin of Moses’ face so shone when he came down from the presence of God, that Aaron and all the children of Israel were afraid to come nigh him (Ex. 34:30). When of old the God of glory descended upon Mount Sinai, there was a thick cloud, and fire, “and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.” Without one who should stand between them and God, the children of Israel could not endure the sight, nor the word spoken. Therefore “the law was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator” (Gal. 3:19).) They received the law by the disposition of angels (Acts 7). And now when Moses came down from “the place of the sight of the glory of the Lord,” a veil ministered between his brightness and the people. When Ezekiel saw the throne “in the visions of God by the river of Chebar,” between it, and the living creatures that bore it, was interposed the likeness of the firmament, and the appearance of fire, to mark the immeasurable distance between it and He who sat thereon, (who is the Head of all principality and power) and them. O child of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, brought nigh as thou art to Him by the shed blood of Christ, and perfected forever by that one offering, having also confidence to enter into the holiest of all, in fellowship with the Father and the Son, let thy heart stand in awe of His Word!

God dwelt between the cherubim, and none but Moses or Aaron could go before the veil to hear the voice of God speak from the mercy-seat and throne of grace—to hear and to receive the lively oracles. If, when of old, God at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake by the prophets, and they to whom the Word was thus brought were charged to circumcise their hearts and their ears, now that He hath spoken by His Son, are the gracious words which come forth from His lips less in majesty through their sweetness?

Moses’ slowness of speech veiled (as was indeed needful) the words which, in their depths to faith, were spirit and life. Moses’ veil covered that Truth which was from the beginning, and which waited for the fullness of time to be seen, heard, and handled (1 John 1) Yet to see, to hear, to handle, to taste, to perceive the fragrance thereof as thou shouldest and wouldest, O redeemed and reconciled child, let thy heart stand in awe of His Word!

Wouldest thou search into the things that are thine? Let Him who is the wisdom and power of God descend unto thee. Wouldest thou ascend whither He who is thine has entered in as thy Forerunner? Let the Father and the Son come and make their abode in a heart emptied of all things, purified through faith—a heart capable, by the Holy Ghost, of taking in as its own the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Though the darkness has passed away, and the True Light shineth, still thou halt that which is “enmity against God.” The flesh, which lusteth against the Spirit; the body of sin and death in which thou dolt groan, being burdened, turns away from, and refuses the manifestation of the glory of God in the person of Christ, as much as ever the uncircumcised heart of Israel of old did from the then appointed way of God’s drawing nigh unto them. They knew not the Cross, which is thy glory. There was no Cross presented openly to their gaze, as to ours; but to receive Christ into the heart in living power, to be able to say, “I know in whom I have believed, I know Him who is Holy and True, I know Him and the power of His resurrection: this is to stand in awe of His Word.

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