

Blessings Received, an Incentive.

ABSTRACT OF THE SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE WESTERN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION IN PINE GROVE, N. S., JUNE 17TH, 1878, BY REV. CHAS. TUPPER, D. D. (Published by request of the Association.)

Text. 1 Samuel xii. 24. "Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you."

These words were addressed by the prophet Samuel, in his advanced age, to the Israelites. They had requested to have a king, "like all the nations." This, like conformity to the world in general, was offensive to JEHOVAH. The prophet was, indeed, instructed to grant their request; but was directed to rebuke them. To convince them of the Divine displeasure, he prayed for a storm of thunder and rain in the time of wheat harvest; which was altogether out of the usual course in that country. The immediate and miraculous answer to this prayer, filled them with consternation, and led them, with confession of their sin, to entreat him to pray for them. Upon this he uttered words of encouragement saying, "The LORD will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people." He added, "Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way." Then follow the admonitory directions of the text, "Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you."

This plainly teaches:—

- 1. That God has done great things for His people.
2. That His people should consider this.
3. That they should gratefully fear Him, and serve Him in truth with all the heart.

1. God has done great things for His people. Under the Mosaic dispensation the descendants of Israel, though many of them were ungodly, were regarded in a national capacity as God's people. For them He had evidently done great things. When they were under cruel bondage in Egypt, He 'knew their sorrows,' heard their groaning, and having marvellously preserved Moses, sent him to be a deliverer, and by his hand 'brought them out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto Him a people' (Deut. iv. 20). When they were pursued by a mighty host of enraged foes, how marvellously did He interpose by miracle, opening a safe passage through the Red Sea, which overwhelmed and destroyed their pursuers. Through unbelief and disobedience they were subjected to long and tedious journeys in the wilderness; yet surely they had abundant cause of thankfulness for the favors conferred upon them by JEHOVAH, who graciously furnished them with food and drink, &c., and finally conducted them, or their children, into the promised land—a type of heavenly rest.

Here it may be remarked, that the admonition of Moses to Israel, a little before the land of Canaan was entered, is highly instructive. He says (Deut. ix. 5), "Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land; but for the wickedness of these nations (the Canaanites) the LORD thy God doth drive them out." So of those who obtain the heavenly rest, it is said, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us." "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." (Tit. iii. 5; Eph. ii. 8.) On the other hand, of those who are finally lost it is written, "God overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness." So Christ says to the unbelieving Jews, "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." And Paul speaks of "them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (Prov. xxi. 12; Jno. v. 40; 2 Thes. ii. 10).

The law had only a 'shadow of good things to come.' After the children of Israel had entered the promised land—a faint type of the rest that remains for the people of God—we find them frequently departing from the living God, and thereby subjecting themselves to the power of their enemies, and consequently to bondage and distress. And

yet when they humbly implored mercy, He repeatedly raised them up deliverers, gave them victories, and blessed them with prosperity. In many instances they might truly say, as Samuel did on the gaining of a great victory over invading Philistines, "Hitherto hath the LORD helped us" (1 Sam. vii. 12).

So in a time long subsequent, when the tribes of Judah and Benjamin had been chastised for their sins by captivity in Babylon, God was graciously pleased to afford them deliverance by means of Cyrus. It is written, "Then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them": and they are represented as responding, "The LORD hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad," (Ps. cxxvi. 2, 3).

Though our text was uttered long before the commencement of the Christian dispensation, and may be supposed to have referred primarily to temporal favors, yet doubtless it may be applied to the spiritual blessings conferred by the gospel of Christ. But, as Rev. Ralph Erskine says:—

"On so vast a subject who can find Words suiting the conceptions of the mind? Or, if his language with his thoughts could vie, What mortal thought could raise itself so high?"

Surely it was an infinitely great thing which God did for guilty and perishing sinners, when "He so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Well may it be said, "Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift." How wondrous was the love of Christ, that led Him to lay aside the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, to become a man of sorrows, and to die an ignominious and excruciating death, in order that His enemies, might be raised to a state of endless bliss! How rich the grace of the Holy Spirit, who applies the benefits of redemption to guilty and polluted sinners, and makes them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light!

In noticing some of the great things which God has done for the Baptists of these Maritime Provinces, it is not intended to insinuate that He has not also done much for other denominations of Christians; but the preacher is, of course, most intimately acquainted with the body to which he belongs, and best prepared to give statistical accounts of their progress. Moreover, he can speak with most certainty with reference to events which have transpired since his entrance on the ministry, which was March 24th, 1816.

In the month of June that year he attended the Baptist Association, held in Nictaux, as a delegate and a Licentiate. There was at that time only one Baptist Association in these Provinces. The Minutes shew the number of churches embraced in 1816, namely 24—none then either on Cape Breton or Prince Edward Island. Including several not present at that time, there were 16 ordained ministers and 3 licentiates. The whole number of members was 993; and the number reported as added to the churches by baptism during the preceding year was 41. All our ministers then in these Provinces, and all the delegates who attended that Association, excepting the preacher of this discourse, have been called home; and the only survivor will undoubtedly soon follow them.

Our Baptist Year Book for 1877—61 years from the former date—shews the numbers of the associated Baptists in these Maritime Provinces, as follows:—6 Associations, namely, 3 in Nova Scotia (including Cape Breton), 2 in New Brunswick, and 1 on Prince Edward Island; 364 churches; 187 ordained ministers, and 57 licentiates; and 35,210 members. Of these, 1,540 were added by baptism during the preceding year. The increase, therefore, must have been more than 34 to 1 in the space of 61 years. Surely it may well be said, in view of these facts, "What hath God wrought! Let us give unto the LORD the glory due unto His name."

Toward the close of last century, and in the early part of the present, He was graciously pleased to raise up for the body faithful and zealous preachers, whom we are accustomed to call fathers, who, without the privileges of mental training now enjoyed by their successors, but possessing strong native talent, and

influenced by ardent love to God, and to the souls of their fellow men, cheerfully endured many privations and hardships, and, by the Divine blessing, labored very successfully. Of those brought into the fold of Christ, either directly or indirectly, through their ministry, numbers have been called to enter upon the same work; and their labors have been attended with similar blessings. We may therefore now with propriety adopt the language of the ancient Jews, "The LORD hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

In accordance with the wishes of the venerable fathers, fifty years ago incipient measures were adopted in Wolfville for the establishment of an Institution of learning, with a view to the imparting, under pious influence, secular and theological training, especially for the benefit of our rising ministry. Not only have many by this means been qualified to fill important stations in various other useful departments, but numbers of able ministers who received beneficial instruction there, either have been, or now are, laboring usefully in this Dominion, in the United States, or in the far distant East, among the perishing heathen. So graciously has the Divine blessing attended these Institutions, the Academy and College, that in revivals of religion, and by gradual increase, connected with them, not less than five hundred persons are believed to have experienced a work of saving grace.

Our Foreign Mission has not as yet been attended with such extensive and manifest results as may have been anticipated. But in the midst of trials—frequently attendant on such enterprises—some good has obviously been effected; and the prospect is now favorable. The labors of our departed and valued Brother Burpee, are said to be still producing fruit, through the efforts of some converted under his ministry, and baptized by him. It has also been our privilege to aid our brethren in the United States in their successful missions among the Burmans and Karens, with money, men, and women; and by supporting many native preachers, and sustaining schools. It is known that the blessing of God has rendered these various means effectual in the winning of many souls from heathenism to Christ.

The efforts put forth in connection with our Home Mission, both before the formation of a Society expressly for that object, and subsequently, have unquestionably, through Divine favor, been attended with widely extended and happy results. By these, multitudes have manifestly been savingly converted to God; of whom not a few have become fervent and successful ministers of Christ.

Surely people so favored have abundant cause to 'thank God, and take courage.'

2. The people of God should consider this.

Due consideration is manifestly important. Moses, the man of God, says of the Israelites, "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" (Deut. xxxii. 29). It is said of the wicked, "They regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of His hands;" and the Psalmist says, as the consequence of this, "He shall destroy them, not build them up," (Isa. v. 12; Ps. xxviii. 5). Unquestionably, multitudes are ruined, both for time and eternity, through the neglect of consideration. The partakers of saving grace are obviously under peculiar obligation to consider the goodness of God exercised toward them, both as collective bodies, and as individuals. In times of affliction it is especially desirable and beneficial for the children of God to call to remembrance the favors received. So Job, in his deep distress composes himself to submission, with this thought, "What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" And Solomon says, "Consider the work of God; for who can make that straight which He hath made crooked? In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other," (Eccles. vii. 13, 14).

Many years ago the preacher read with profit a treatise written by Rev. Thomas Boston, founded on this text, with the quaint title, "The Crook in the

lot." The author noticed that amidst every person has some crook in his or her lot; there is some source of trouble of which the individual cannot obtain the removal. In every such case, quiet submission, with due consideration of the undeserved favors received, affords the best relief. Had we everything in accordance with our wishes, doubtless we would be more forgetful and neglectful of God and Divine things than we are. Let us, then, in the midst of all our straits and trials, both as individuals and as a people, thankfully consider the great things that God has done for us.

3. The LORD's people should gratefully fear Him, and serve Him in truth with all the heart.

The term fear is sometimes used in Scripture to denote a servile dread. In this sense it occurs when the Apostle John says, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment." But there is a filial or reverential fear of God which is perfectly compatible with ardent love to Him. In this sense it is said, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.—Happy is the man that feareth always." It is said with regard to the people by whom the land of Israel was inhabited after the Israelites were expelled from it, that "they feared the LORD," and that "they feared not the LORD," (2 Kings xvii. 32-34). Skeptics may allege that these statements are contradictory; but they are perfectly harmonious. The context plainly shews that when the people are said to 'fear the LORD,' the word denotes a slavish dread of Him; but when it is affirmed that they 'did not fear Him,' the meaning is, that they had no reverential awe of Him.

It is evident that all rational beings ought to possess and exercise "godly fear" toward JEHOVAH; but this is emphatically incumbent on those upon whom He has bestowed special favors.

Assuredly such persons are also under peculiar obligation to serve Him in truth with all the heart. Moral duties enjoined under the Mosaic dispensation ought to be perpetually observed. But obviously under the gospel dispensation believers are not bound to perpetuate Jewish rites; nor to substitute something else instead of any of them, (Gal. v. 1-4; Acts xv. 22-29, xxi. 25). The Lord Jesus Christ says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." As regards the ordinances of the gospel, Christians should be "buried with Him by baptism," emblematically setting forth their union with Him in his death, burial, and resurrection; and indicating their purpose, by Divine assistance, to "walk in newness of life," (Rom. vi. 3, 4). When believers have thus scripturally obeyed this command, which is manifestly first in order (Acts ii. 41, 42) it is their duty and privilege to come to the Lord's table and partake of the symbols of His broken body and shed blood, according to His injunction, "This do in remembrance of me." A lively and abiding sense of what the blessed Redeemer patiently endured for His people on account of their sins is well adapted to produce in them abhorrence of sin and careful avoidance of it, and to dispose them to endure all the afflictions allotted to them with Christ-like patience.

Assuredly a remembrance of the innumerable favors already received, with the assurance of the fulfilment of the exceeding great and precious promises given to the children of God, may well prompt them to 'serve Him in truth with all the heart.' His commandments are not grievous, but 'in the keeping of them there is great reward.' Let us then, dear brethren, diligently strive to imitate the gracious Saviour, who 'went about doing good.' Gratitude to God should be evinced, not only by strict obedience to His commands, the study of His word, upright conduct towards our fellow men, and by devotional exercises in secret, in the family, and in public, but also by diligent efforts to promote His declarative glory by the extension of the kingdom of Christ in the conversion and salvation of sinners at home and abroad.

In conclusion, let me remind such as have hitherto rejected the kind and gracious calls of Heaven, that their obligations for favors conferred on them are strong; and if they continue to 'neglect the great salvation,' dreadful will be their condemnation. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." The door of mercy is now open, and you are compassionately invited and urged to enter in: while it is called to-day. Let me, then, affectionately and earnestly entreat you to embrace at once the lovely and loving Saviour, who laid down His life, the just for the unjust, in order to deliver guilty sinners from 'the wrath to come,' and to render them infinitely happy for ever. May God add His blessing! Amen.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

United States Correspondence.

WASHINGTON, D. C., July 9, 1878.

The 4th of July was only celebrated here by the "Oldest Inhabitants." That Society met in a Hall, orated, toasted, sang songs, ate, drank and were merry for the greater part of the day, which was too hot for younger people to enjoy themselves.

The use of fire-crackers in the city was prohibited, but was, of course, indulged in by numerous small boys as usual. The Fourth wouldn't be itself at all without fire-crackers. Altogether, Thursday was a quiet day at the Capital. The usual number of minor accidents occurred. Two boys had their faces blown full of powder; a small cannon exploded, tearing hands severely, and so on—but no serious ones were reported. One or two fires were started but extinguished before any buildings were burned down.

As soon as the sundry civil bill was passed with the \$5,000 for completing the restoration of models partially destroyed in the great Patent Office fire last Fall, the corridors of that office began to be thronged with applicants for appointments. The appropriation is small, the room where the necessary work is to be done is quite small and the models for the most part intricate, requiring skilled workmen and limited in number. For the 25 or 30 places to be filled there were several hundred seeking appointments, most of whom have been out of work for months. The city is full of such. From far and near they come. Every newly elected Congressman and Diplomat is followed here by dozens and scores of followers who dog and nag the comfort out of the politician's life—if there ever be any therein.

Senator Sargent is the good boy of the last session of Congress. He was not absent a single day, nor did he miss a roll call during the whole seven months' session. Senator Windom was absent only one day, and Senator Blaine only a part of two days. Senator Sharon was not here at all during the session. His salary and mileage, amounting to over \$8,000, lies awaiting him in the hands of the Senate's Disbursing Clerk, but his friends say he will not draw it.

MERRILL.

For the Christian Messenger.

An evening with John B. Gough.

Many of the readers of the Christian Messenger have listened to John B. Gough; and many others are acquainted with his life. It has been my privilege to hear him lecture several times. Recently I heard him make an address on the subject of Temperance in Mechanics' Hall, Worcester. The occasion and the man interested me so much that I have dared to assume that an account thereof would be read with pleasure by some in my native province.

Francis Murphy, who is winning golden opinions for himself, and, better yet, turning great numbers from their cups to sobriety, was spending a week in Worcester. Notice was given on Wednesday that Gough would be present on Thursday night and speak. I resolved to hear. The meeting was to begin at half past seven o'clock. At a quarter of seven the galleries and floor were crowded. By seven all the standing room was taken. It was stated that not less than 3,200 were within the hall, and hundreds were turned away. Promptly at 7.30 Murphy and Gough, with others, came upon the platform. They were greeted with enthusiastic applause. After singing and prayer, Murphy spoke briefly, introducing Gough, and, at the same time, paying a glowing tribute to his character and work. During this speech the veteran champion of total abstinence, betrayed extreme nervousness, and, seeing his restlessness, no one would have supposed that he had been one of the most popular speakers in the world for more than thirty years. When he rose the vast audience applauded again and again. Not until he had made the fourth attempt to speak did he succeed. His opening words produced another storm of applause. Then he entered into his speech. He swayed the people at will. Now they