

THE LOOK OF LOVE.

BY MRS. REV. G. M. SMILEY.

Lord Jesus, look on me, my heart is cold,
I cannot love Thee as I know I ought;
And yet, good Shepherd, I am of thy fold,
Thy precious sprinkled blood my soul has bought.

I follow Thee, I often hear Thy voice,
I see Thee leading to the heights above;
And yet I sorrow, when I should rejoice;
Oh, melt my spirit by Thy look of love!

If ever by temptation overcome,
I should, almost, thy holy Name deny,
Lord, bid my heart be still, my lips be dumb,
By the mute sorrow of Thy pitying eye!

I follow on to know as I am known.
And when, at last, I gain Thy home above,
The joy of heaven will not be robe or throne;
My heaven, O Lord, will be Thy look of love!

Visitor Pulpit.

JEHOVAH HATH SPOKEN, WILL YE NOT HEAR?

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

"Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud: for the Lord hath spoken. . . . But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the Lord's flock is carried away captive."—Jer. 18:15-17.

In this chapter Jeremiah had proclaimed the judgment of God against his sinful people under two very striking figures. Israel had been to God what a girdle is to a man; the people had been bound closely about him in his great love and favor; but on account of their sin the Lord would put them away, and they should be hidden by the Euphrates till their beauty was marred: till in fact, like a rotten girdle, their whole state had become decayed. "Thus saith the Lord, After this manner will I mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem." Then he spoke to them by a second parable—"Every bottle shall be filled with wine;" and he showed how God's wrath would come upon the people to fill them with a judicial drunkenness, so that they should become besotted, and in their delirium should strive one with another to their mutual undoing. The Lord declared that thus he would "dash them one against another, even the fathers and the sons together."

THUNDER-CLAPS OF JUDGMENT.

Under the gospel "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God;" and so Jeremiah doth, as it were, in these verses preach the gospel to the backsliding house of Judah. This is ever God's design in threatening judgment; he desires to prepare the people for his grace. I would take up the prophet's strain by the help of the Lord, praying to be a partaker of his earnest and tender Spirit. O that to-day those who have never heard the voice of the Lord in the inward parts of their being may hear it and live! O Holy Spirit, work thou to that end.

I. We will enter upon our subject at once, for there is much to speak of. The first head will be this: listen, O my hearers, with deep attention, for

THERE IS A REVELATION.

Read the text—"Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud: for the Lord hath spoken." If the Lord had not spoken, the silence would have deepened and established your natural darkness, and if you had been inquiring after God your heart would have cried, "O, that he would break this dreadful silence!" But here you have the great source of comfort and instruction—"Jehovah hath spoken." Is not this a just call for the attention of all his creatures?

The voice which we are bidden to hear is a divine voice, it is the voice of him that made the heavens and the earth, whose creatures we are. Jehovah hath spoken! If it were but the voice of prophets apart from their Master, it might be but a slight sin to refuse what they say: but since Jehovah hath spoken, shall men dare to be deaf to him? The sacred Scriptures are the record of what God hath spoken: receive them with the reverence which they deserve as coming from God only, and as being, therefore, pure truth, fixed certainty, and unerring right.

It is a word most clear and plain, for Jehovah hath spoken. He might have taught us only by the works of his hands, in which the invisible things of God, even his eternal power and Godhead are clearly seen. What is all creation but a hieroglyphic scroll, in which the Lord has

written out his character as Creator and Provider? But since he knew that we were dim of sight and dull of comprehension, the Lord has gone beyond the symbols and hieroglyphics and used articulate speech, such as a man useth with his fellow: Jehovah hath spoken!

II. Since there is a revelation, it should be suitably received. If Jehovah hath spoken, then all attention should be given; yea double attention, even as the text hath it. "Hear ye, and give ear." O, brothers, I fear that we give far more attention to the distracting voices of the world than to the soul satisfying voice of the God of all grace. How eager men are after the treasure which melts before their eyes—how they will drink of every syllable by which they may learn how to be rich, but when God speaketh who brings in both his hands eternal and abiding riches, men are deaf as the adder, careless as the beasts of the field. He saith, "I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded." Is this right or wise? Surely, if Jehovah speaks we are bound by all that is just, and good, and grateful to wait in reverent silence till we know his mind. Let a general hush go through the universe, and let all ears with solemn reverence await the sound of the voice of the Lord.

Stand thou still, and hear the voice of the Lord. Glorify the Lord by accepting whatsoever he saith unto thee as being infallibly true. Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper. Know what the Lord has said, and let it stand to the as sure and steadfast truth. Seek for no other reasons to sustain thy faith; but let "Thus saith the Lord" stand to thee in the stead of all arguments. In these days this virtue is lightly esteemed, for the Savior's words are still true—"He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings." In all its length and breadth, whatsoever the Lord saith we believe; and we desire to know neither less nor more than he has spoken.

We must receive the word, however, in a hearty and honest manner so as to act upon it. We must therefore repent of the sin which the Lord condemns, and turn from the way which he abhors; we must loathe the vice which he forbids us, and seek after the virtue which he commands.

There is no part of God's word at which the human mind should kick. If our hearts were in a right state we should fling open all the doors of our mind, and say, "Come in, O sacred truth, come in! Thou art welcome to my heart of hearts since thou comest from my God." If Jehovah speaks ought we not, instead of caviling, and questioning, and disputing, and raising difficulties, just to say, "Speak Lord, for Thy servant heareth?" When the Lord says to us, "Seek ye my face," our heart should at once reply, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek." I think that point is clear. There is a revelation, and that revelation ought to be suitably received.

THE OBSTACLE.

III. But thirdly, pride in the human heart prevents such a reception. The text runs, "Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud; for the Lord hath spoken." And further on the prophet says—"If ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride." The prophet here puts his finger upon the blot. Why is it, my dear hearers, that there are any among you this day who have heard God's word year after year and yet have not received it? The secret reason is your pride. Perhaps pride prompts you indignantly to deny the accusation.

In some it is the pride of intellect. They do not wish to be treated like children; they are not content to receive the kingdom of God as a little child, and so when Jesus says, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven," they reply that they intend to think out a gospel for themselves. To lay the inventiveness of thought on one side, and simply to believe what Jesus teaches, is not to their mind; they will not humble themselves to a fact so little self-exalting. Well, sirs, if you shut the door of the kingdom against yourselves because you are

too wise to enter, be this known unto you, that the poor have the gospel preached to them, and that they receive it. If you will destroy yourself to indulge your own conceit, well, so it must be; but the day shall come in which your regret shall know neither measure nor end. O, let none of us be so proud as to lift up ourselves in opposition to that which Jehovah hath spoken!

In some others it is the pride of self-esteem. "No," say they, "this gospel which we have heard so often is too simple—we are capable of something more elaborate. We care not to be

SAVED LIKE PAUPERS;

we care not to be freely forgiven as those who have nothing to pay. That no composition will be accepted, not even a farthing in the pound of our own merit—is a doctrine too lowering to our dignity." They set the gospel on one side because it sets them on one side. They are too great to be saved. God save us from such folly. It may well make us weep to think that any man should be so far gone astray from right reason as to throw away eternal bliss in order to walk with haughty steps through this poor life.

Some have a pride of self-righteousness. They are good, they have kept the commandments from their youth up; they have attended to religion, they have seen to it that all rites and ceremonies have been duly performed upon them, and they thank God that they are not as other men are. This righteousness of theirs is a garment respectable enough for them to wear, and therefore they reject the righteousness of God. O ye proud, I would to God ye knew that ye are naked, and poor, and miserable. While sin ruins many in the outside world, I fear self-righteousness ruins more among those who attend places of worship. They say, "we see," and therefore their eyes are not opened; they cry "we are clean," and therefore they are not washed from their iniquity.

In some, too, it is the pride of self-love. They can not deny their lusts, to cut off right-hand sins, and pluck out right-eye iniquities, can not be endured by them. Their hearts are set upon a certain evil pleasure, and they can not give it up. The gospel of Jesus Christ demands of those who receive it that they shall be saved not in their sins, but from their sins; it comes to give us renewal as well as rest, purity as well as pardon, sanctity as well as safety; and there are many who, because of their foolish self-indulgence, can not deny themselves any seeming joy, but must needs fill themselves with the poisoned sweets which delight the flesh. O friend, I wish that this pride were taken from thee, and that it seemed wisdom to thee to deny thyself life itself for the present rather than miss the hope of life eternal.

IV. Hence there comes

AN EARNEST WARNING.

The prophet has put it—"Give glory to the Lord your God before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains." I desire to explain this with deep humiliation of spirit on my own part, and with much trembling lest any one of you should ever by experience know the truth of these words. Listen, my friends, thou who hast rejected God and his Christ till now. Thou art already out of the way, among the dark mountains. There is a King's highway of faith, and thou hast refused it; thou hast turned aside to the right hand or to the left, according to thine own imagination.

Being out of the way of safety, thou art in the path of danger even now. Though the sunlight shines about thee, and the flowers spring up profusely under thy feet, yet thou art in danger, for there is no safety out of the King's road. If thou wilt walk according to his bidding thou shalt be quiet from fear of danger, for no lion shall be there; but inasmuch as thou art now thine own keeper and thine own law, and thou followest in thine own ways, thou art in great peril. The unbeliever is condemned already, because he has not believed on the Son of God. Escape, I pray thee, while thou mayest, and enter upon that one road, which is strait

and narrow, but leadeth unto life eternal—the way of faith in Jesus.

If thou wilt still pursue thy headlong career, and choose a path for thyself, I pray thee remember that

DARKNESS IS LOWERING

around thee. The day is far spent! Around thy soul there are hanging mists and glooms already, and those will thicken into the nightdamps of bewilderment. Thinking but not believing, thou wilt soon think thyself into a horror of great darkness. Refusing to hear what Jehovah has spoken, thou wilt follow other voices, which shall allure thee into an Egyptian night of confusion. Thou wilt go on meditating and exhorting, or criticising and trifling, till thou art enveloped in a cloud of doubts, wrapped as in a dense smoke of speculation, and well-nigh smothered in exhalations of unbelief. Thou shalt not know what to do, nor what to think, nor what to say, nor whether to betake thyself, for thou wilt have renounced thy guide and quenched thy torch.

Meanwhile, there shall overcloud thee a darkness bred of thine own sin and wilfulness. Thou shalt lose the brightness of thine intellect, the sharp clearness of thy thought shall depart from thee, professing thyself to be wise thou shalt become a fool. For after that darkness there comes a stumbling, as saith the text, "before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains." He who is going to think out his own way apart from revelation, will meet with mysteries which he cannot surmount. There are mysteries in revelation, but these rise before us like hills of light; while to those who trifle with the word of the Lord there shall arise mountains of gloom. I care not what philosophy you take, whether it be old or new, openly profane or faintly sprinkled with Christianity, you will never get rid of mystery—it is essential to the limited capacity of the human mind confronted by boundless truth.

There are also dark mountains of another kind which will block the way of the wanderer—mountains of dismay, of remorse, of despair. Woe to that man who finds himself travelling at midnight, without a guide, without a road, amid tremendous mountains, impassable to human feet. Ah, when a man comes into the land of doubt, which is a land of darkness, as darkness itself, and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness—how terrible his case! I may say no more—thank God, my hearers, you are not there yet! Therefore hearken to Jehovah's voice, and give glory to God ere he send a thick darkness over all your soul, even darkness that may be felt and your feet stumble, never to rise again.

After that stumbling there will come bitter disappointment. The man, finding that he cannot discover his way, sits down awhile, and says to himself, "I will wait till the moon rises, or the day dawns. Many before me have come to a pause; no doubt light will come." He looks, and looks, and looks again, but all in vain, for thus saith the prophet, "While ye look for light, he turns it into the shadow of death." Dread word—death! Terrible shade which death casts over men's minds! That shadow is coming on the man as years advance, and he has no light with which to dispel it. The physician can not remove the death shadow—the disease is incurable.

I do not know what may ever happen to me in this life; perhaps it shall come to pass that I may be visited with severe physical infirmities, and possibly these may cause me mental depression and anguish; but this one thing I know, I have committed my mind, my heart, my whole intellectual nature to his keeping who has promised to preserve his own. I desire to believe nothing but what he bids me, and to yield myself to no influence but that which he ordains for my direction; and, therefore, it seems to me that having done this for many a day I can with unstaggering confidence say at the last, "Father, into thy hand I commit my spirit." Believing in God, I am not fearful of the future. Neither dark mountains nor dark death can cause the believer to stumble, for he cries, "I know in whom I have believed, and

I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." But O, if God be true, what will become of you who will not hear him? If the Bible be true, what must be your portion who pretend to be wiser than the Holy Spirit? You must assuredly wander into that endless captivity from which there can be no redemption.

V. So now I have to close, but not till I have delivered my burdened heart once more. If the people would not submit to God, the prophet determined what he would do. There remains for the friends of the impenitent but one resort. The loving prophet cries, "If ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eyes shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the Lord's flock is carried away captive."

What a burden it is that so many should cause us this unnecessary sorrow, for if men turned to God our joy would exceed all bounds. O my hearers, why will you distress me? Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die? What excuse can you urge for your folly in choosing to perish? What motive can be strong enough to make you leap into the fire when Christ is waiting to be gracious to you? We have labor enough in preparing and delivering our weighty messages, without the added grief of seeing you reject them to your own destruction. Our throes of heart are sometimes grievous enough before we preach a sermon lost we should not preach aright; why must we be driven to this further misery? We exhaust ourselves while pleading with you; why should we have to sit down in sorrow because you will not believe our report? O blessed Spirit of God, touch all hearts this day, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

A HELPFUL DEACON.

BY DR. E. P. THWING.

He is in his eightieth year. He frequently walks six miles going to and returning from church, for he will not use the street cars on the Lord's day. He is always in the prayer-meeting. He wears a sunny face and is loved by the young as well as the old. He keeps young himself by his unceasing activity and preserving his interest in life about him fresh and healthful. He is a peace-maker and many times the oil of his love has removed the friction of church life that otherwise might have wrought harm to the church or to the pastor. One evening, last summer he met me at the door of the ante-room just before the weekly meeting. After cordial greeting, he said: "Let me see," taking out his watch, "I have ten minutes to spare. I will step over and see" mentioning two members who desired letters of dismissal, no reason being assigned for their withdrawal. His quick footsteps were soon lost to my ear in the roar of London streets. Punctually at the opening hour he was back again. He quietly told the church clerk that both requests for dismissal were withdrawn. So two members were retained. It cost ten minutes time. It saved not only to the church a definite amount of moral power that could be ill-spaced, but the good deacon's brief visit brought encouragement to members just then perplexed and disheartened by providential trial. Happy pastor, thought I, who had such care-takers about him, doing what he could not do so well, in his clerical and professional position. Happy the church favored with such Aarons and Hurs, whose alertness and adroitness give to their industry a value that cannot be estimated, and whose example add to their precepts a power that cannot be gainsaid. Their weighty words are like thunder because their luminous lives are lightning.

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MRS. MARY STUART.

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