“Helps in Things Concerning Himself” — Vol. 4, 1894

Victory but not Communion

Genesis 32:30

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eye of faith simply and fully on Him where He is. Oh, that Himself in heaven may be more the one Object of the hearts of His own here below.

Peace -- Power -- Plenty
(Phil. 4:7, 9, 12, 13)

What an immense comfort it is to know that the word of God leads our souls on the one hand up to the most exalted thoughts of the revelation of God, on the other hand down to the commonest things a child of God has to pass through. We have a striking instance of it here; the close of chapter 3 sets before us most blessedly how that our body of humiliation shall be fashioned like unto the body of His glory. Then in the beginning of chapter 4 we see how the same grace can come down to the details of the pathway of two women, who were not walking evenly together! How blessed to see that there is no *forgetfulness* in grace of even the smallest thing, "Pray that your flight be not in the *winter*," shows us that the thought of the weather was present to His gracious mind. The word then is, "Rejoice in the Lord," and the fitting person to express this is a poor prisoner in Nero's dungeon. This shows how entirely it is *outside* and *beyond* all around us here. Again observe it is "*alway*" as well as "in the Lord," or perhaps it would be more true to say it is alway *because it is in the Lord*. Clearly then his song is "Rejoice in the Lord alway," and it furnishes us with a blessed illustration of 2 Chron. 29:27, "And when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began."

"Let your moderation be known unto all men." This will be the *proof* to all, that our *conversation* is in the heavens; if we are seen to stick up for ourselves, it is the very opposite of *yieldingness*: this, along with *subduedness* and *unresistingness* is our true pathway through present scenes. This brings us to the "Peace of God which passeth every understanding." What a blessed resource is this peace of God, and what a wonderful exchange for our cares! these it is our privilege to make known to Him, bringing all to Him and *leaving all with Him*. Alas! many try to keep the peace of God instead of its keeping them. Oh, that such of my readers may prove what a blessed sanctuary and retreat His peace brings us into.

But not only have we *peace* here, but also *power*; this flows from the occupation of the heart with *good*; what a mercy it is in a world of evil, that the heart may be free to find its delight and pleasure in what is good; we are not only living in a world of evil, but we have it in our own hearts, and must judge it where it is tolerated, yet to be ever occupied with it is a fruitful source of weakness. Even when we judge it, it defiles, it is soiling to the mind even as such. The real power is in taking delight in those things in which God delights, to be living now as with God in heaven, doing those things that please Him, and also being in that condition of mind in which He takes delight.

Here, then, is the true pathway of power,

> Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things . . . and the God of peace shall be with you.

May our hearts more and more know what it is to go in the blessed company of "the God of peace" through a restless scene.

But then further, we have also here *plenty* as well as *peace* and *power*, and so the apostle says he had learned it, learned to find in Christ both *competency* and *fulness*, it was a real state for Paul; it is not here, as we say, *an abstract proposition*: if *full*, he has preserved from all self-satisfaction and self-elation; if *hungry*, he was preserved from despondency and *dissatisfaction*; for him Christ was all embraced all in Himself. May we know and enjoy more fully this blessed *peace, power* and *plenty*.

Victory but not Communion
"I have seen God face to face"
(Gen. 32:30)

What a moment in one's life when it could be said by any of us, "I have seen God face to face"! Let us see how this came about with Jacob. An interval of considerable time had elapsed since he had said, "this is the gate of heaven," of the place where he is seen as a poor, weary wanderer at sundown with only the stones of the earth for his pillow. His *circumstances* have changed considerably since then. Now he is full, now he is rich, he has a stake in the world. While in Laban's country he has grown and increased, "oxen and asses, flocks and men servants and women servants," declare his wealth and possessions, but his faith is poor and his heart oppressed, "greatly afraid and distressed" tells the sad tale of him who dreads Esau's host, and how like us oftentimes when we look at him, *fearing* and *praying* and *calculating* and *settling* all with human skill and to the best of man's device.

It is well for us to remember that there is such a thing as an exercise of spirit, which is the product of *pure unbelief*; under its influence we are awake in nature's dread, and *we pray in unbelief and want of confidence*. Oh how often is it with us like the disciples in the storm, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?"

Now this state brings us under discipline, our God and Father is at issue with this, yet so wonderful is His grace that He makes that which calls forth the discipline the occasion of our blessing; such is His grace that all is laid under tribute, as it were, for *His own glory* and His children's blessing.

But to return to the history before us, so full of profit and instruction to the soul. It is well to observe that in poor Jacob's mind and thoughts it was quite otherwise to seeing God face to face. He was full of the dread and horror of meeting Esau; this, and this alone, engrossed his mind, hence it is he has recourse afresh to the *means of unbelief*. Wives and children are sent on before, and present upon present prepared for Esau: "I will appease him with the present that