

Thus the light of God's countenance ought to frighten us, and yet—it does not. And it can not do this, because it lays bare to us the fulness of grace which is alive in the Father-heart of God. When anyone does not believe in the entire forgiveness of sin, God hides his face from him. Only when faith in the atonement operates in full does the light of the Divine countenance shine upon, compass and penetrate us.

And then comes the "walking in that light." Walking here implies that not only occasionally we catch a beam of the light of the Divine countenance, but that it has become permanent for us. That is, it is there for our good, even when we do not think of it, and that we regain it every time our soul longs for it. And so we continue to walk the pathway of our life, from day to day, in the light of the Divine countenance. No longer inspired by our own phantasies, no more spurred on by the ideals of the world, which have shown themselves deceptive, and no longer with a dark heaven above us, in which at most a single star still glitters, but we go on by the light which is above the light of the sun and by the outshining of ever fuller grace in the light of the countenance of God.

### SEEK THY SERVANT.

The searchlight, projected from the tower across city and plain, is a striking image of the flashing of the All-seeing Eye. A bundle of white, soft, clear light darts out into the darkness, with the velocity of the twinkling of an eye, from a single

point as its source, spreads itself over an ever-widening surface across the country below, and at once every object in the track of that light comes out in clear sight. Nothing remains hidden. And so the heart- and soul-searching light from the All-seeing Eye above shines forth into the deepest folds of the conscience.

But the Psalmist does not mean this seeking and searching when he prays, "Seek, Lord, thy Servant." The figure which the Scripture here uses is that of the shepherd, wandering among the hills and seeking the lamb that strayed from the flock and is lost. Thus the Psalmist himself explains it (119:176): "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments." And this figure from the country-life stands much higher than that which is borrowed from the searchlight. Here love is the appreciation of having again what was lost, the impotence to let go what belongs to the flock, and the motive of the search, or rather the stimulating, impelling passion of the heart.

And here is reciprocity. The lost sheep bleats helplessly for the shepherd, and the shepherd scans the mountain path to find it. The lost sheep wants to be found and the shepherd wants to find it. Its bleating is a call: "Seek me, O shepherd," and by bleating it co-operates in the finding. Such is the Psalmist's cry: "Seek thy Servant;" a prayer that he might be found, which is at the same time an utterance of the soul that makes the finding possible.

No child of the world prays this prayer, neither the man who, far distant from God, is engrossed in the pursuit of wealth, nor he who worships him-

self in his heart as his own idol. There is no reference here to the unconverted. He who here prays knows that he has become God's servant, that he has entered into the service of the Almighty; that he has been with God, and that he has strayed away from him. This is clearly expressed in the image of the shepherd with the lamb. That which has wandered away from the flock has been with it. That which calls for the shepherd has known him. "Seek thy servant," is the direct prayer of the child of God who has known his Heavenly Father in his love, and who now for want of this love feels himself deserted and sick at heart and longs again for the tender enjoyment which he has tasted in the presence of his God.

Do not misunderstand therefore the real meaning of this cry of distress. It is not a call for conversion, but for return. No unconverted soul can do this. He who so calls fell away from a love that had once been found and with all the tender yearnings of that lost love he wants it back.

This is of frequent occurrence. A man had entered in through the narrow gate. He saw his path sown with higher light. The feeling of the new life filled his heart. Powers of the Kingdom coursed through the arteries of the soul. He understood what he lived for. The cup of reconciliation was handed him full to the brim. He rejoiced in his Savior. And in a most blessed way the holy intimate life of fellowship with God in Christ, unfolded itself within. But this did not continue. Fog rose across the inner sky. From following the right way it came to wandering, and

from wandering to wandering away. And then everything became uncertain, restless and comfortless. Influences from beneath repressed holy influences from above. God seemed far removed from him. The tie of faith in Christ which was once so firmly strung, was weak. It was dark for the soul and in this darkness the heart began to feel lonely and forsaken, till it could endure it no longer and longed after God again and tried to seek him back.

But seeking was not followed by finding. No signs marked off the path. Going this way and now that the soul remained equally far removed from God, or wandered at length still farther away from him. When once we have been enriched with the love of God it is not given us to play with it; first to win it, then to let it go, and then to take it back again at pleasure. He who has known the Lord and afterward has forsaken him does not of himself find him again. And so we learn to know our lack of saving power. We can not save ourselves. But we retain the deep consciousness that we can not do without God; that the want of his love creates an aching void in the heart, until finally it becomes a matter of conviction: I can not seek God back, but God can seek me again. And then follows the anxious bleating of the wandering sheep. A call from the depth of the soul upon God whom he has lost, the prayer, the supplication: O God, seek thy servant.

This longing desire to find God back takes a wonderful hold sometimes upon the human heart. There are those whom God allowed, while they were yet children, and thus but partly known to

themselves, to feel his love; that He regenerated them, but that conscious faith did not reach the fuller knowledge of his name. This led to the unusual condition that God worked inwardly with his power, but that in spite of it doubt filled the heart and mind. We have all known certain people who were not able to believe, but whose noble qualities of mind and heart were both interesting and refreshing. They were frequently far more attractive than many confessed believers. They were flowers in the bud, which could not come to bloom, but even then the half-opened bud exhaled sweet fragrance. Inwardly they were consumed with longing after God, but they did not understand their own desires. They did not know that they already belonged to God, though at times they were conscious of nameless drawings after him. And they do not pray, but others who can, pray for them: Lord, seek this thy servant, seek this thine handmaid. For every utterance of their lives proves that they are thy servants. They are children of the family of faith. Only they have not as yet discovered their Father. And as long as this is not a prayer from the lips alone, but from the heart, it is heard both in behalf of ourselves and of those the burden of whose salvation the Lord has laid upon us. For then God seeks them, and finds them, and gives himself to be found of them.

How this takes place no one can tell. To this end God uses at one time a man's natural lot in life; at another time a written thought which he drives home, or some striking word which he makes us hear. To this end he works by means of affliction that heavily burden the heart; by

means of hard and perilous times, which try us to the utmost; by contact with different people who are met by the way; by impressions of angels that hover about us at his command, and by his secret workings in the heart. It is an embroidering which God works upon the soul in all sorts of colors and forms. But however different and inscrutable these operations may be, the outcome is assured. God seeks us. He finds us. And at length we discover that we have been found. For then God's presence in the heart is vitally enjoyed again.

In the seeking of our God let us not hinder the finding. Not merely doubt, but even the inclination to prefer doubt to assurance is sin against the love of God. When the Lord seeks you and lays his hand upon your shoulder, do not draw back. Kneel at his feet. Offer thanks to him and worship.

22

## STRENGTHENED WITH MIGHT.

It is no longer doubted that atmospheric conditions vitally affect health. Fresh air builds up and invigorates. They who breathe pure mountain air have iron in the blood, while they who live in low and marshy regions breathe air that is impregnated with poisons from the swamps, so that their strength is sapped and their vital forces are weakened. It can not be otherwise. With every breath we take in air with everything it contains, and through countless pores in the skin we absorb atmospheric elements which open the way to influences that affect the constitution. The pale and the anaemic are constantly advised there-