

it into every interest of life, so we should allow the thought of God, the lifting up of the soul to God, the faith on, and the love for, God unceasingly to operate in and with everything. . . This prevents estrangement, and straying away, and accustoms the soul to be continually "near unto God." This is shown most forcibly by the fact that he who so lives is at once aware of an aching void within, the moment he wanders away from God, which allows him no rest till fellowship with God is restored.

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"I HIDE ME WITH THEE."

The hen allows her chickens to run about freely within her sight until danger threatens, and then at once with raised wings, she clucks her brood towards herself, and does not rest until the last little one has crowded itself beneath her wings, and animal-mother faithfulness covers all the young innocents. But then the chickens do not hide themselves yet with the mother hen. They only do this when, seeing the approach of danger, of themselves, and of their own initiative, they flee to the mother hen in order to seek protection beneath her wings.

The "Jerusalem, Jerusalem," which Jesus declaimed against Zion was doubly upbraiding in its touching pathos, because it reproached Israel either for not surmising danger, or in case it did, for seeking defense and cover with men and not with God. In time of danger the people should have called upon God, and should have poured out their supplication for help and deliverance unto the God of their fathers, and as soon as

the waters in the flood of destruction that came upon the people began to rise, without waiting for an answer to their cry, they should have sought refuge with God. The people did not do this. They trusted in their own strength and underestimated the danger. And then instead of the people calling upon God, God called upon the people, saying "O Israel, flee unto Me, and let Me be your shield." In this way God called, not once but "many times." And Israel heard that calling and clucking of its God, but hardened the heart, and would not. And then the abandonment became a judgment: "How often would I have gathered thee, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not; behold, your house is left unto you desolate." And at this judgment Israel did not weep with shame, and self-reproach, but planted the cross of Golgotha; and he who wept over his people, was the Lord.

We are here confronted with all sorts of spiritual conditions. One will be in danger, but as it threatens he neither knows God, nor is known of him. Yet in the face of shipwreck he will cry: "O God, help me," though his voice is lost in the storm. While another in the face of danger will brave it without a thought of God. Still another in time of stress will hear the warning call of God, but will not heed it. But there will also be those who, in the hour of grave need, of themselves will flee to God, will call upon him and hear his call, and who, before the soul is delivered, find themselves safely hidden with their God, shadowed by his wings and covered by his faithfulness. And these are they from whose

soul in truth the call of confidence goes forth: "I hide me Lord. with thee." (Ps. 143:9 marg. reading).

Hiding with God is not dwelling in his tent, or knowing the secret grace of the hidden walk. Hiding never indicates a fixed condition, but always something transient. We seek shelter from a thunderstorm, in order presently, when the sun shines again, to step out from our hiding-place, and continue on our way. Little chickens hide with the mother hen, when a water-rat is around; but when it is gone, they run out again. And the soul of him who knows God, hides with his Father, as long as trouble lasts; but when it is overpassed, there is no more need of hiding. Hiding in God is not the ordinary, but the extraordinary condition of a single moment "Until these calamities be overpast" (Ps. 57:1), or as said in Is. 26:20. "Until the indignation be overpast"

But even he who fears God, does not hide with him in everytime of need. Trouble and care are upon us all the days of our life. The cross must be taken up each day anew. But as a rule the child of God calmly pursues his way in the assured confidence of Divine protection. He knows that God fights for him, that God is his shadow, that as his good shepherd he leads him, and that when too violent an assault threatens, God covers him with his shield. He then dwells with God, and God does not leave him to himself. All this is the daily, ordinary activity of faith, the operation of God's faithfulness, and of the trust of his child.

But hiding it still something else. It is something

connected with the hour of terror; when the water has risen to the lips, when dark dread has suddenly overtaken the soul, when there is no way of escape, when dark night settles on the heart, when faith no longer trusts itself. Then there is an heroic taking hold of self, and as in the moment of danger the child runs to mother, and hides himself in her dress, so does the soul fly to God, crowds close up to him and hides with him. And in doing this the soul has no thought of anything, nor time for making plans, save only and alone to hide with God, to be safe with him, to find deliverance with him.

If despair of faith were possible, hiding might be said to be the act of despair. But though there never is despair in faith, in great anxiety of mind the child of God may despair of himself, of help and deliverance from without, of the working of the ordinary powers and gifts which at other times are at command, and now gives up every further attempt to resist because he feels that the fight is too unequal, that the opposing force is too strong and overwhelming, that he can not stand before it, and dares not run any more futile risks, and therefore throws pike and shield aside, and helplessly takes refuge with God with the cry: "O God, fight thou for me," and now hides with God. After the chickens have crept under the wings of the mother hen, the hawk that was after the chickens no longer sees them, but only the angry mother hen. When the child takes refuge with mother, and hides itself in her dress, the assailant has no longer to do with an helpless child, but with the mother who, like a lioness, fights for it. And when a child of God

hides with God the battle is no longer one between him and the world, but between the world and God. He who hides with God commits his cause to God. He withdraws himself from it. All his support and hope is the righteousness of his Lord. And only when this has openly been shown, he comes out from his hiding again in order to finish his course.

Hiding with God therefore is no ordinary act of the soul. It only takes place amid circumstances of utmost need and danger. Only when David's spirit was overwhelmed within him, and he was forced to exclaim: "My heart within me is desolate" (143:4), so that he lay "in darkness as those that have long been dead," was the cry for help forced from his heart, whereby he struck the key-note and found the word, which only in moments of like stress the soldiers of the cross have echoed and re-echoed from their own over-burdened spirit.

There is also a hiding with God in moments of anxiety and need, which are occasioned by ordinary events in life. For though as a rule believers are not called upon, like David, to fight the battle of the Lord, something of that battle announces itself in every family life, and in every individual career. The instances in worldly lives of great perturbation of mind, which lead to despair and suicide, are almost without number. And it is noteworthy that what brings the worldly-minded through despair to suicide, drives the believer to hide himself with God. The man of the world and the child of God both give up. But while the worldly man seeks surcease in self-destruction, just to get away from his troub-

les, the hope of eternal life dawns on the soul of the believer, and he also seeks to do away with self, but by expecting nothing more from his own strength and powers, and by resigning everything into the hand of God. Even as he who is incurably ill, suffers dreadfully, is no more able to endure it, and expects no more help from medicine, yet holds out unto death, because he can hide with God. So there can be despair in the family on account of consuming grief, bitter sin, endless adversities, and lack of bread. There can also be a grievance though scorn and slander, so deep and cruel, that restoration of honor is no more possible, and life becomes a burden. The cause of God may be involved in all this, but as a rule it is not, and all this dreadful darkness looms up from common life. But though the battle for God may have nothing to do with this, it is bound to have a part in this, because these grievous troubles make their wave-beats shake the faith in the heart of God's child. And then it can not help but become a battle of faith. A combat between the power of the world and that which reveals the faith. Fear would strike faith dumb, but faith will cry out for help against it.

And in all such cases faith first struggles against it, then tries to conjure the storm, then battles as long as it can. But when finally it is utterly disabled, and feels itself at the point of defeat, it performs the last heroic act which makes it triumph: it lets go, it gives up, in order to commit its all unto the Lord, and then the tempest-tossed and uncomforted soul hides with God, and God binds up his sorrow.

"THOU DOST NOT HEAR ME."

True prayer calls for an answer from God. But not all prayer is genuine. There is a great difference between formal prayer of the lips and earnest outpouring of soul in supplication. Formal prayer however should not be underestimated. It implies a power that maintains prayer. And though it tarries, a spark from above may suddenly come down into this dead formalism and ignite the flame of true prayer in it. But though it is unfair to say that he who prays in this mere, formal way, had better not pray at all, it remains true that cold and heartless prayer is infected prayer, in behalf of which the man of ardent prayer invokes the cleansing power of the atonement.

If we would examine the true character of prayer, we must distinguish it from the form, and direct the attention to real supplication of the soul; and then he who prays, awaits an answer; such as in olden times was given in a revelation, in a word spoken in the soul, in a vision, or appearance of an angel; and in our times in the hearing of our prayer, in an unexpected meeting, or in a motion worked by the Holy Ghost within. He who prays in a godly manner always awaits an answer; not only when he asks for something, but also when he worships, ascribes praise, or gives thanks. In these holy exercises he does not merely aim at reciting words in honor of God's name and majesty but he asks God, whom he worships, to accept his praises and thanksgivings. The scripture speaks of them as offerings, and