

rules, He guides, He controls, all that happens. There is no event but is foreseen by his Omniscience, and permitted or brought about by his power. Did God not endow Cyrus with all the prowess, the heroism, the talents, he possessed? Did he not direct his enterprise in this very quarter? Did he not bring him up from Persia against the Babylonian Empire? When there, did he not make all things conspire towards the desired and contemplated issue? Accordingly, in Scripture we have God predicting Cyrus and his conquests a hundred years before his birth, and a hundred and fifty years before the events foretold, calling Cyrus then even by name, and selecting him for the high enterprise and destiny of delivering his captive people, and restoring the ancient glory of Jerusalem.—Thus was God working even at that remote period for Israel, preparing the way for the very event which now happened. Surely the Lord did great things for his people. And, after Cyrus ascended the throne of Babylon, who was it that disposed his heart to act so favourably to the Jews? Who led him to think of God's ancient people, and decree their restoration to their own land? Was it not the same Being that selected him, called him by his name even when he knew him not, that girded him with power, that went before him, made the crooked places straight, broke in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in asunder the bars of iron? * Who else could it be? Under what other inspiration did Cyrus act?—Was he not the Lord's anointed for this very work? "For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name". And surely, then, after all that occurred to bring about this last event, in itself so extraordinary, so unexampled in the history of the conquered and their conquerors—when the favoured people retired from that city which was to witness their tears and listen to their cries and their plaintive strains no longer—when the sun lighted their early footsteps as they now bent their faces towards Zion, and awoke again, perhaps for the first time since their captivity, their native songs, which were as it were sealed on their lips before—well might the heathen say: "the Lord hath done great things for them"; and might they respond: "the Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

Israel's stone of remembrance may be ours: "the Lord hath done great things for us"

First, in his providence. We may not have our miracles to recount, like the Israelites, but we may be able to recall many wonderful interpositions of God's power in our behalf, marking our way for us, strewing our path with mercies, opening fountains of happiness in what would otherwise be a barren desert, rescuing us from dangers, shielding us on every side from innumerable calamities, making sometimes the depths a way for us to pass over, and bringing us out into a large place. The people of God can trace all these in their history; for they are accustomed to mark the hand of God where others might behold but the most ordinary occurrences. It makes no difference to them that the occurrence may be ordinary—ordinary as brought about by ordinary means. It is the ordination of God notwithstanding. It is a mercy from His hand. It is the exercise of His power. It is the exertion of His long-suffering compassion. It is the gift of His unfailing bounty. But there may be more signal instances of God's goodness and kindness towards them. Who is it that cannot refer to some more remarkable providence in his history—some occasion in which there seemed a special deliverance wrought, or a special boon imparted, where the lifted stroke was suspended, the messenger's course was diverted, the shaft of death, it may be, was sent awry, or the blessing especially desired, and especially needed was poured into the lap? Accordingly, it is often the song of God's children in this world: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies".

And the longer we are in the world we shall have the more of such interpositions and blessings to record. All our life-long we have been guided by a wisdom and upheld by a power; not our own, and had all our wants supplied from an exhaustless fountain of blessing and goodness. Some have had more remarkable histories than others; and whereas their trials were perhaps greater, their deliverances were the more signal and the more striking. But all will have to say: "the Lord hath done great things for me!" They will acknowledge the

* Isaiah 45. 1-7.