

"Now are we all here present before God."

Still another hindrance is a wrong *motive* which vitiates the whole spirit of worship. If our attendance is due to fashion to see and be seen, to minister to pride and vanity, or for the sake of the conventionalities, it carries with it no blessing. If it arises from a hope of eternal gain in the spirit of self-righteousness which endeavours to reach heaven through outward acts, it will be a barrier to true spiritual advancement.

A great help to spiritual worship is a *definite purpose* . Always have these objects before the mind—the honour due to God and the particular needs of your own soul. Prepare definitely for the service and look earnestly for the blessing. As the prophet said of old, and the application is not forced when we use the text of public worship, "Prepare to meet thy God."

VICTORY OVER DEATH.

"O death, where is thy sting?" "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory!"

Christ came to "deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage." In Phil. i. 21, the apostle tells us, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain"; and in the twenty-third verse, "having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better." So in II. Cor. v. 8, "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord."

These words are unequivocal and plain. At death, the happy spirit of the believer in Christ is with Christ in heaven. The same Lord Jesus, who was seen by the dying Stephen standing at the right hand of God when the heavens opened before him, and to whom he prayed, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit"! will reveal Himself and give dying grace to every one of His redeemed children; and their spirits shall rest with Him in conscious bliss in Paradise until the morning of the resurrection, when they shall come with Him again to earth to be rehabilitated with glorified bodies. "For

if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him" (I. Thess. iv. 14).

Death, to the believer, is but the swinging open of the door through which he passes into the presence of his loving Lord. "Aren't you afeared, John?" said the wife of a dying miner, as she bent over him in the last hour. "Afeared, lass?" said the man. "Why should I be afeared? I ken Jesus, and Jesus kens me."

And why should he fear? And why should any one who "kens" Jesus fear? "For he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee"; so that we may boldly say, "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear."

"I will never leave thee." Surely then, in the hour of death He is there; and this should be our comfort, as those whom we love receive from us the last good-by, and human affection and human care can go no farther. We simply resign our position that they may receive better care. The last pressure of our hand is quickly followed by the clasp of His hand, who whispers, "Fear not, I will uphold thee." The last look of love from us is mingled with the tide of love that flows in upon them in the consciousness that Jesus is near. The sight of earthly friends is quickly succeeded by the rapturous vision of their glorified Lord. And as with them, so shall it be with us, if the Lord tarry, and we, too, fall asleep in Jesus.

How often have we known of dying saints, when lost to all consciousness and memory of things below, revive and smile at the name of Jesus! One of whom the writer knew, who made no sign of life, as mother, husband, children came, and weeping said, "Do you know me?" whispered in reply to the question, "Do you know Jesus?" "Precious Jesus, I know him!"

What wonderful things have been suggested to us by the quick, strange, glad, awe-filled look of surprise that has come into the eyes of dying saints! Some on battle-fields of carnage and blood and some in homes of comfort and love, we have seen, as, lost to the sense of all earthly surroundings, they gave the far-away look at something unseen

by those around, and passed away. "Thanks be to God that gave them the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

Let the child of God just rest upon His unchanging Word for peace and comfort. If chosen to honour the Saviour by bearing long-continued and severe pain of body—then by "all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness," let it be made manifest in you what His grace can do. And if the closing hours of life are darkened by special assaults of the Adversary, even as were the last hours of our blessed Lord, and no gleams of glory seem to pierce the cloud, trust Him.

A dying saint who was passing through this experience at the close of a life that had been singularly free from doubt, and uniformly bright and happy in conscious fellowship with her Saviour, said: "My faith is being tried. The brightness you speak of I do not have; but I have given my soul to Jesus: and I have learned in these years to know Him well enough to trust Him to put me to bed in the dark, if it be His will." God-honouring words of faith! Surely, they were more to the glory of the Lord Jesus than could have been the relation of the happiest experience; for they honoured His word.—*D. W. Whittle, in Parish Visitor.*

APPEARANCES.

Sometimes we are told not to care for appearances. This advice must be understood before it can rightly be received and made a guide in life. The business man who pays no regard to appearances finds that very soon his customers begin to leave him. The farmer who in the presence of others not of his own occupation pays no regard to appearances often brings upon himself the ridicule and contempt of those who in true worth and character are far his inferiors. Appearances before men must be consulted to a certain extent. Most blameworthy, however, is the man who to keep up appearances will sacrifice Christian principle. We can hardly speak in strong enough terms our disapproval, and shall I say almost disgust, of the