

[For OUR MISSION.]

The Power of the Believer's Position.

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4.—FOR UNDERSTANDING THE SCRIPTURES.

"UNDERSTANDEST thou what thou readest?" was Philip's question to the Ethiopian Eunuch as he diligently read the Holy Word. He was desirous of understanding, and he had much in his favor. He believed the Word, he thought earnestly upon it, he strove and no doubt prayed, to have light upon its teachings and all these were most hopeful elements in his case. Yet he acknowledged his need of assistance. "How can I, except some man should guide me? and he desired that Philip would come up and sit with him." Philip therefore became under the lead of the Holy Spirit his teacher, and the Word enlightened him. The Word of God shines with its own light. Our position however, has very much to do with our apprehension of it. If we are far off or nigh to God, that shall affect our understanding of the truth. The atmosphere about us has an effect upon our vision. Many cannot see truths which others see clearly, because the air is full of fog about them, which is hard to see through. It is as we come into the Light of God that everything grows clear. In His light we see light. Here then, we see the transcendent advantage we have in our position as "made nigh." With purged heart and conscience, and with peace with God, we are able to listen to the Word as to the voice of a dear friend, one who seeks our highest good, and who would instruct us in righteousness, and bring us into the largest possible experience of blessing. In these circumstances the Word takes on a new meaning. It comes charged with infinite suggestiveness; it sweeps heavenward, amid the clear ether, and downward into the deep profound: it is throbbing with divine sympathy and love. It is a new Word. God is speaking in it as never before. We are so near to Him that the printed page does not intervene and impress us as that we need to give heed unto. The letter dissolves as the Life discloses itself. The word is lost as the wisdom it ministers makes itself felt. We realize under the searching light of the truth that we are alone with God, and that new horizons spread around us. We are no longer cooped in by the sense-curtains of the scriptures; these lift, and the wide spiritual realm lies exposed to view.

In our position, how many difficulties vanish. Given God as our Father, wonder ceases in respect to all that He promises. It is only in keeping with the nature of things that the promises should be "exceeding great and precious." We could look for nothing else from God. It is only in harmony with His character that His working should be miraculous, on our behalf. God's work must ever be miraculous

to man: but it is bereft of all that surprizes us as we see Him as the great worker. With Him nothing is impossible. Hence, all the unbelief and discredit of God's Word which springs up in the minds of those who are not holding this position, does not trouble us even for a moment. It is God who speaks, who promises, who keeps, and that is enough. That settles everything: that makes everything plain. Taking God as the Father of all; then His revelations of Himself down here in time and space among men is to be expected. Everything He has made and everything He has created is of interest to His heart. He is the God of the little as well as of the great, the lowly as well as of the lofty, the mean as well as of the mighty: hence all the minute things in the scriptures are in perfect consistency with His character. Indeed, the difficulties many find in the Scriptures, arise very largely out of feeble or false conceptions of God. Near Him in Christ Jesus, adoring in our love, and grateful in our praise, we can appreciate Him in the whole range of His character, and therefore His word becomes more precious to us, and its power over us is proportionately increased. It is a revelation indeed. We discern Him in it and uttering His mind to us through it. Hence, we come here to His "Holy Oracle" to commune with Him, and to learn His will. And He speaks to us not from a great way off, but near to us, directly and powerfully. He speaks to us in words whose inward meaning we take in. Our love to Him and in Him are the keys that fit the lock of His communications, and enable us to turn the lock and enter in. And in doing this the blessedness of which David in the first Psalm sings is ours: and the word becomes a lamp for light, a sword of conflict, a girdle of strength, a councillor, wise and faithful in all seasons of trying perplexity. Reading it and meditating upon it, and praying over it, it unfolds itself unto us in our position of Sonship far more grandly than ever it did before, so that we are constrained to cry out with one of the early Church fathers: "I adore the plenitude of the Scriptures."

Giving and Keeping.

THINGS TO GIVE:

Our hearts to God—Prov. 23: 26.
Praise to Him—Psalm 96: 7, 8.
Thanks to Him—1 Thess. 5: 18.
Ourselves a living sacrifice—Rom. 12: 1.
Our money to the poor—Luke 6: 38.

THINGS TO KEEP:

Our hearts with diligence—Prov. 4: 23,
A good conscience—1 Tim. 1: 19.
The commands of God—1 John 3: 24.
The Sabbath Day—Exodus 22: 3.
The truth—Prov. 13: 23.
The tongue from evil—Psalm 34: 13.