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GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS AS THE GREAT MOUNTAINS.*

The wicked flourish; all seems to go well with them. They have their hearts desire. God is not in their thoughts. "Our lips are our own: who is Lord over us?" We are an end to ourselves, and anything that interferes with us must be crushed out of existence. Thus unrighteousness insolently lifts its head and frowns darkly on the meek virtues that seem blighted with the all-encompassing gloom. Truth, love, peace, charity do not pay; they afford not the desired amount of pleasure,—they afford no pleasure at all, but rather the keenest pain. They are therefore thrust with violence out of sight, and all that bears their impress is hated with a deadly hate. "There is no God," saith the fool; "or if there is a God, he doth not heed, or know or see." So the fool pursues his own career, satisfied that self is of more consequence than aught else in the universe than God.

Such is the character of fallen man, in a fallen world. Hate takes the place of love; self the place of God; and an exterminating war is carried on against all that is gentle, unselfish, loving, and true. What in these circumstances, must be the fate of the good man, the Servant of Jehovah as David in this Psalm calls himself. We find in countless instances the foot of pride trampling the poor and the weak into the dust. Truth and right and love are crushed under the chariot wheels of godless power and ambition. Vice stalks abroad in gaudy

colours—rears her proud crest—devours her fat feasts—drinks her cup of pleasure, and intoxicated, shouts her song of triumph. The strong oppress the weak: the cunning prey upon the simple. Woe, woe to the conquered in such a strife as this!

Yet the servants of Jehovah need not fear; for God's Righteousness is as the Great Mountains—firm-seated, outstanding, bold and high, their summits piercing the blue of Heaven. Above the fields of deadly battle, above the quicksands of temptation and the pestilential quagmires of sin, these mountains rear their shining crests. In the plain below there may be pollution and death; in the bracing atmosphere above there is purity, there is health, there is loveliness. As the mountain towers above the plain so does God's righteousness stand forth above the iniquities of men. The more you explore it and the farther you ascend, the more impressively beautiful does it appear. Looking at that mountain from its base, from among the fogs, the heat, and the dust you may be able to see but a very small portion of it, and that not in its proper light or perspective. Clouds and thick darkness may shut it entirely from your view. You may be so intent upon the objects at your feet that you cannot look up and gaze upon the glory that excelleth. There are deep, lonely Alpine valleys, the inhabitants of which have never learnt to explore the heights above them and have no curiosity as to their names and no perception as to their beauty. Is it not so with the righteousness of God? It is manifest to those who seek to know, who

* Psalm xxxvi. 6.