

heart is raised—the hitherto unseen hand of help instantly makes its appearance, and the perishing individual is drawn safely into the ship of rescue, ready at hand. Men oftentimes forget that God most graciously permits them at times to get into places of jeopardy, that they may raise this cry to Him for help, else they would never raise it, and, therefore, each of us cannot do better than constantly bear in mind the words of Jeremiah (17 : 14) and apply them to our own individual condition, “Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed : save me, and I shall be saved : for Thou art my praise.”

Let us now, in the next place, consider the particular case here mentioned, to which the Psalmist prays God to have respect unto the covenant, and it is, that He would have especial regard to the dark places of the earth, which are full of the habitations of cruelty,—one of the noblest ideas in which the mind of a christian can be interested. Here there is exhibited to us, by Him, all that holy glow of genuine love to heathen man, which can only exist in the regenerated heart and soul. An expression is here uttered, the spirit of which is the direct opposite to that which Cain made to God, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” Here we have warm feeling, earnest desire, lively hope, and strong faith, blended together, and these expressed in genuine devotion at the footstool of the throne of mercy and grace. The Psalmist thus prays for the reclaiming of the benighted heathen. He knew well the unspeakable advantage to man, both for time and eternity, in knowing the only living and true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has now sent; and that man, without this saving knowledge of God, was justly entitled to his commiseration and pity.

How valuable a lesson might many, calling themselves christians at the present time, learn thus from this inspired man ! for the fact must be told, that this object, the reclaiming of the heathen to christianity, does not engage so much of the attention, and receive the support of so many of those who call themselves by the name of Christ, as it ought to do. In this respect, many well-meaning persons often forget themselves, and that they have a duty of this kind to be performed. They often lose sight of the unspeakable blessings which the Gospel of Jesus Christ is conferring upon themselves, and therefore it is not to be wondered at that they cannot exclaim in the same spirit as Paul (1 Cor. 7 : 7) “I would that all men were even as I myself,” in regard to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

But assuming the lowest possible ground for our argument—the advantages for time, think only how much better, in every respect, is the christian world than the heathen world,—and this may be seen by comparing their respective states at the present day. Is it to the country of the untutored savage that we are to look for the comforts and conveniences of a civilized home ? Is it there that we are to look for the unspeakable advantages which a well organized and suitable government confers upon, and extends to, the poorest and humblest creature in the land ? Is it there that we are to find the busy centres of commerce sending the products of the country to the farthest ends of the earth, and receiving back again in exchange the riches of every clime ? Are there the inhabitants conveyed with eagle speed from one part of their country to another, and their ideas interchanged from far distances with almost the velocity of thought ? Do you there find well cultivated farms, and commodious dwellings, decently clad and intelligent people ? You would look in vain for all these, and such like blessings, comforts, and conveniences, in heathen lands, for they are not to be found. Their skies may be fairer than ours are, their soil may be more fertile, nature may have given them more of her treasure, but what avail is all this, when grace is not there—when man is still vile ? He knows not God, and therefore knows not how to use even the *temporal* mercies of God. Civilization to a certain extent may indeed exist without the Gospel—as we have instances of this in many of the ancient kingdoms of the world—but the Gospel cannot be known as it truly is, without civilization in its high-