

A RADIANT CERTAINTY

"This I know, that God is for me." Psalm 56:9 (RV).

"What shall we say then to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?"
Romans 8:31.

Many voices are clamoring for our attention. Many offer a panacea for every ill today. Many others despair of any remedy at all. This confused clamor is heard also in the realm of religion. Many magnify the faults and weaknesses of the churches. Too few tell us what is right with God as He is revealed through Christ, and as they have found Him in their own experiences. Now, here is a voice to which we can afford to listen.

1. It is a voice of assurance.

Ringed conviction in his accent; speaks with quiet certainty; knows what he is talking about. An authority in any field is worthy of attention. Crowds thronged Jesus -- "He spake as one having authority." He was a man who knew.

2. He has knowledge of supreme importance.

"Knowledge is power" has a lot of truth in it, but it is not universally true. Knowledge of evil never makes for power. It does not enlighten or bring life. Strongest of men was He of Whom it is written, "He knew no sin." Then there is the type of knowledge that is practically worthless. Some have earned distinction of being good at playing bridge. Is that worthy of the devotion of a lifetime? Not a few of us major on minors. But, there is a kind of knowledge that is altogether practical and worthwhile. It falls short, however, in two respects:

(1) It does not meet our highest needs.

(2) It is not permanent.

Scientific theories of today are likely to be discredited tomorrow.

But the knowledge possessed by the Psalmist was a knowledge of supreme worth. What is this knowledge that is of such supreme and abiding worth? Text answers. Although this knowledge is supreme, it is within reach of every one of us. We get most of our knowledge second-hand. This we may have first-hand. An atheist in London sought to make sport of an unlettered Christian. He asked him, "When was Jesus Christ born?" Ignorant saint gave an incorrect answer. "How old was He when He died?" Answer incorrect. Finally the atheist said with a sneer, "See, you do not know so much about Jesus as you thought, do you?" He answered modestly, "I know all too little, but I know this: Three years ago I was one of the worst drunkards in the East End of London. Three years ago my wife was a brokenhearted woman, and my children were as afraid of me as if I had been a wild beast. To-day I have one of the happiest homes in London, and when I come home at the close of the day my wife and children are glad to see me. Jesus Christ has done that for me. This I know.

I. The Content Of This Knowledge.

How much does the psalmist really know?

1. He knows that God is real.

Doubtless, he was reared in a pious home, and had believed from childhood in the existence of God. That was not enough. As he grew in knowledge he began to see evidences of God in the world about him. For example, in the silence of the templed hills, in shimmering song of brook, in silver light of stars. But external evidences did not satisfy. He passed by evidences into a first-hand knowledge of God Himself.

2. He knows that God cares.

"This I know, that God is for me." He realized that God loved him individually; that He bestowed His personal care upon him. What a tremendous and transforming knowledge!

3. He knows that God is working in his behalf.
He is seeking to bring him to his finest self and to his highest possibilities. God did not coddle and pamper him. He did not protect him from every raw wind. At times his road was rough and rugged. He knew what it was to spend sleepless nights. He had an intimate and long acquaintance with tears. But he had become convinced that God was working for his enrichment, even through his difficulties. His losses were being transformed into glorious gains. Thus, in the face of disappointment and sorrow he could still sing, "God is for me."

II. The Consequences Of This Knowledge.

1. It gave him a fine high courage.
After confidently singing, "God is for me," he went on to say, "What time I am afraid I will trust in Thee." His life was beset with many haunting fears. There are so many foes that can harm us. We are open to attack in so many different quarters. We can suffer in such a multitude of ways. But this man, because he is so sure of God, has come to where he can look upon life with a fearless heart.
2. It enabled him to "Walk before God in the light of the living."
Moffatt translates this "To walk before God in the sunshine of life." That is, this knowledge enabled the psalmist to live his life in the sunshine. Too many of us live in the shadows. Our hopes have grown dim. Our expectations have withered. We are not joyful and radiant as we should be. What a contrast between ourselves and those we meet upon the pages of the New Testament. How wonderfully they dwelt in the sunshine! No adversity had power to dim their quenchless joy. If we will live in the sunshine, eager souls will be drawn to us by our radiance.