**THE EXPOSITION OF HOLY SCRIPTURE BY ALEXANDER MACLAREN**

**ISAIAH-029. QUIETNESS AND CONFIDENCE by ALEXANDER MACLAREN**

*"In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength."*

*Isaiah 30:15*

ISRAEL always felt the difficulty of sustaining itself on the height of dependence on the unseen, spiritual power of God, and was ever oscillating between alliances with the Northern and Southern powers, linking itself with Assyria against Egypt, or with Egypt against Assyria. The effect was that whichever was victorious it suffered; it was the battleground for both, it was the prize of each in turn. The prophet's warnings were political wisdom as truly as religious.

Here Judah is exhorted to forsake the entangling dependence on Egypt, and to trust wholly to God. They had gone away from Him in their fears. They must come back by their faith. To them the great lesson was trust in God. Through them to us the same lesson is read. The principle is far wider than this one case. It is the one rule of life for us all.

The two clauses of the text convey substantially the same idea. They are in inverted parallelism. Returning and rest correspond to quietness and confidence, so as that rest answers to quietness and returning to confidence. In the former clause we have the action towards God and then its consequence. In the latter we have the consequence and then the action.

**I. The returning.**

Men depart from God by speculative thought or by anxious care, or by sin.

To return is just to trust.

The parallel helps us here--returning is parallel with confidence. This confidence is to be exercised especially in relation to one's own path in life and the outward trials and difficulties which we meet, but its sphere extends far beyond these. It is a disposition of mind which covers all things. The attitude of trust, the sense of dependence, the assurance of God's help and love are in all life the secrets of peace and power.

* Am I sinful? then trust.
* Am I bewildered and ignorant? then trust.
* Am I anxious and harassed? then trust.

Note the thought, that we come back to God by simple confidence, not by preparing ourselves, not by our expiation, but only by trusting in Him.

Of course the temptations to the opposite attitude are many and great.

Note, too, that every want of confidence is a departure from God. We go away from Him not only by open sin, not only by denial of Him, but by forgetfulness, by want of faith.

The ground of this confidence is laid in our knowledge of Him, especially in our knowledge of Jesus Christ.

The exercise of this confidence is treated as voluntary. Every man is responsible for his faith.

The elements of this confidence are, as regards ourselves, our sense of want in all its various aspects; and, as regards Him, our assurance of His love, of His nearness to help.

**II. Confiding nearness to God brings quiet rest.**

Rest and being quiet are treated here partly as consequences of faith, partly as duties which we are bound to strive to achieve.

**(a)** See how confidence in God stills and quiets the soul.

The very exercise of communion with Him brings peace and rest, inasmuch as all things are then possessed which we can desire. There is a still fruition which nothing can equal and nothing destroy.

* Trust in God brings rest from our own evil consciences.
* It brings rest from our own plans and purposes.
* Trust gives insight into the meaning of all this else unintelligible world.
* It brings the calming and subduing of desires, which in their eagerness torture, in their fruition trouble, and in their disappointment madden.
* It brings the gathering in of ourselves from all the disturbing diffusion of ourselves through earthly trifles.

**(b)** Notice what this rest is not.

* It does not mean the absence of causes of disturbance.
* It does not mean the abnegation of forethought.
* It does not mean an indolent passiveness.

**(c)** Notice the duty of being thus quiet and resting.

How much we fail in this respect.

We have faith, but there seems some obstruction which stops it from flowing refreshingly through our lives.

We are bound to seek for its increased continuity and power in our hearts and lives.

**III. Confidence and rest in God bring safety and strength.**

That is true in the lowest sense of saved, and not less true in the highest. The condition of all our salvation from temporal as well as spiritual evils lies thus in the same thing--that we trust God.

No harm comes to us when we trust, because then God is with us, and works for us, and cares for us. So all departments of life are bound together by the one law. Trust is the condition of being saved.

And not only so, but also trust is strength. God works for us; yes, but better than that, God works in us and fits us to work.

What powers we might be in the world! Trust should make us strong. To have confidence in God should bring us power to which all other power is as nothing. He who can feel that his foot is on the rock, how firm he should stand!

* Best gives strength. The rest of faith doubles our forces. To be freed from anxious care makes a man much more likely to act vigorously and to judge wisely.
* Stillness of soul, born of communion with God, makes us strong.
* Stillness of soul, born of deliverance from our fears, makes us strong.

Here then is a golden chain--or shall we rather say a live wire?-- whereof one end is bound to the Throne and the other encircles our poor hearts. Trust, so shall we be at rest and safe. Being at rest and safe, we shall be strong. If we link ourselves with God by faith, God will flash into us His mysterious energy, and His strength will be made perfect in our weakness.