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

**ISAIAH-043. WHERE TO CARRY TROUBLES by ALEXANDER MACLAREN**

*"And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up unto the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord."*

*Isaiah 37:14*

When Hezekiah heard the threatenings of Sennacherib's servants, he rent his clothes and went into the house of the Lord, and sent to Isaiah entreating his prayers. When he received the menacing letter, his faith was greater, having been heartened by Isaiah's assurances. So he then himself appealed to Jehovah, spreading the letter before Him, and himself prayed God to guard His own honour, and answer the challenge flung down by the insolent Assyrian. It is noble when faith increases as dangers increase.

**I. We have here an example of what to do with troubles and difficulties.**

We are to lay them out before God, as we can do by praying about them. Hezekiah's trouble was great. His kingdom could be crushed like an eggshell by the grasp of Sennacherib's hand. But little troubles as well as great ones are best dealt with by being spread before the Lord. Whatever is important enough to disturb me is important enough for me to speak to God about it. Whether the poison inflaming our blood be from a gnat's bite, or a cobra's sting, the best antidote is--pray about it.

How much more real and fervid our prayers would be, if we habitually turned all our affairs into materials for petition! That is a very empty dispute as to whether we ought to pray for deliverance from outward sorrows. If we are living in touch with God, we cannot but take Him into our confidence, if we may so say, as to everything that affects us. And we should as soon think of hiding any matter from our dearest on earth as from our Friend in heaven. In everything, by prayer and supplication is the commandment, and will be the instinct of the devout heart.

Note Hezekiah's assurance that God cares about him.

Note his clear perception that God is his only help.

Note his identification of his own deliverance with God's honour. We cannot identify our welfare, or deliverance in small matters, with God's fair fame, in such a fashion. But we ought to be quite sure that He will not let us sink or perish, and will never desert us. And we can be quite sure that, if we identify ourselves and our work with Him, He will identify Himself with us and it. His treatment of His servants will tell the world (and not one world only) what He is, how faithful, how loving, how strong.

**II. We have here an example of how God answers His servants prayers.**

It was by terrible things in righteousness that Hezekiah's answer came. His prayer was at one end of the chain, and at the other was a camp full of corpses. One poor man's cry can set in motion tremendous powers, as a low whisper can start an avalanche. That magnificent theophany in Psalm xviii., with all its majesty and terror of flashing lightnings and a rocking earth, was brought about by nothing more than In my distress I called upon the Lord, and its purpose was nothing more than to draw the suppliant out of many waters and deliver him from his strong enemy.

That army swept off the earth may teach us how much God will do for a praying child of His. His people's deliverance is cheaply purchased at such a price. He reproved kings for their sake.

One man with God beside him is stronger than all the world. As the psalmist learned in his hour of peril, Thou, Lord, makest me to dwell in safety, thou alone!