

***"I am small and despised;
yet do not I forget thy precepts."***

Psalm 119:141

Evidently David did not *love the word* for selfish gain. *Small and despised* was his condition, when the Lord first looked on him. (1 Sam. xvi. 11.) It was also the reproach, which in the height of his glory he endured for the name of his God. (2 Sam. vi. 20.) *Yet--*stripped and destitute as he might be--*did he not forget his precepts.* The remembrance of his God was a cheering encouragement to his faith in his lowly condition (1 Sam. xvii. 34-36); and no less his support in the far greater trials of his prosperity. Thus habitually did he realize the unspeakable privilege of an ever-present God!

The objects of the Lord's sovereign choice (Exod. xix. 5), whom he has stamped as a "peculiar treasure unto him above all people," and whom at the day of his appearing he will bring forth as the "jewels" (Mal. iii. 17) of his crown--are most frequently in their worldly condition (1 Cor. i. 27-29. Jam. ii. 5)--always in the eyes of the world (1 Cor. iv. 9-13), and in their own estimation (Ps. xl. 17. 1 Cor. xv. 9. Eph. iii. 8)--*small and despised.* And yet pride and hypocrisy in the natural heart will sometimes assume this character for selfish ends. This language of humility is not unfrequently in the mouth of the professor, to enable him to maintain "a name to live" in the church of God. But are those who call themselves *small and despised* willing to be taken at their word? Are they content to be *despised* by those, whose esteem this "voluntary" spurious "humility" was meant to secure? Do they really believe themselves to be what they profess--false, vile, mean, deceitful creatures? Have they any experimental knowledge of the depth of inner wickedness, that God could open door after door in "the chamber of imagery" to confound them with the sight of greater, and yet "greater abominations!" (Ezek. viii. 5-15.) When, therefore, they "take the lowest place," do they feel it to be *their own place*? Or does not the language of self-abasement mean in the eyes of God--'*Come, see how humble I am?*'¹

Christian! think not these self-inquiries unnecessary for the cautious scrutiny of thine own heart. A self-annihilating spirit *before men*, as well as before God;--to feel *small and despised*, when we have a reputable name in the Church--is a rare attainment--a glorious triumph of victorious grace--usually the fruit of sharp affliction. This was the spirit of Brainerd--that meek and lowly disciple of his Master, who would express his astonishment that any one above the rank of "the beasts that perish" could condescend to notice him.²

1 'Many hypocrites make great pretences to humility as well as other graces. But they cannot find out what a humble speech and behaviour is, or how to speak and act, so that there may be indeed a savour of Christian humility in what they say or do. That sweet humble air and mien is beyond their art, being not "led by the Spirit," or naturally guided to a behaviour becoming holy humility by the vigour of a lowly spirit within them. And therefore they have no other way, but to be much in declaring that they are humble, and telling how they were humbled to the dust at such and such times, and abounding in very bad expressions about themselves,--such as--'I have a dreadful wicked heart,'--'Oh! this cursed heart of mine,' &c. Such expressions are very often used--not with a heart broken--not with the tears of her that "washed Jesus's feet with her tears,"--not as "remembering and being confounded, and never opening their mouth because of their shame which God is pacified" (Ezek. xvi. 63); but with a light air, or with pharisaical affectation.'--EDWARDS on *Affections*, part iii. sect. vi.

2 'God feeds me with crumbs. Blessed be his name for anything! I felt a great desire, that all God's people should know how mean, and little, and vile I am, that they might see I am nothing, that so they might pray for me aright, and not have the least dependence upon me. I could not bear to think of Christians showing me any respect. I saw myself

But if we are *small and despised*, in the estimation of men, let us think of "Him, whom man despiseth--Him whom the nation abhorreth." (Isa. xlix. 7. Comp. Ps. xxii. 6.) Never was such an instance of magnanimity displayed, as when Pilate brought out the blessed Jesus, arrayed in the mockery of royalty, and with the blood streaming from his temples: and said, "Behold the man!" (John, xix. 5.) Then was there a human being, sustaining himself in the simple exclusive consciousness of the favour of God, against the universal scorn of every face. This was independence--this was greatness indeed. With such a pattern before our eyes, and such a motive touching our hearts, we may well account it "*a very small thing*, that we should be judged of man's judgment." (1 Cor. iv. 3.) What upheld "the man Christ Jesus," will uphold his servants also. "He committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." (1 Pet. ii. 23.) Must we not desire to "know the fellowship of his sufferings"--yea, to rejoice in the participation of them? (Philip. iii. 10. 1 Pet. iv. 13.)

Christian! dost thou love to be low, and still desire to be lower than ever? *Small and despised* as thou art in thine own eyes, and in the eyes of the world, "thou art precious in the eyes of Him," who gave a price "for thy ransom"--infinitely more precious than "Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba" (Comp. Isa. xliii. 3, 4, with Acts, xx. 28), and who will suffer "none to pluck thee out of his hands." (John, x. 28.) Many may rebuke thee; many may scorn thee; even thy brethren may treat thee with contempt; yet thy God, thy Redeemer, will not depart from thee, will not suffer thee to depart from him; but will put his Spirit within thee, and bring forth his precepts to thy remembrance, that thou mayest keep them, and many a sweet supporting promise for thy consolation. Therefore "fear not, *thou worm Jacob*; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." (Isa. xli. 14.)

exceedingly vile and unworthy; so that I was ashamed that any one should bestow any favour upon me, or show me any respect.'--BRAINERD'S *Diary*.