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Prayer Meeting Address by Mr. J. Delves at Ebenezer, Clapham on
Saturday evening 18.8.62

Hymns 277, 968
Reading 1 Peter 5

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The Apostle concludes this remarkable epistle, writing as he does, to the scattered tribes, that is, those early converts who suffered much persecution for their profession of the faith of the Gospel. Very tenderly and yet faithfully the apostle encourages them in words conducive to their comfort and support under their afflictions and trials, and so concludes in this chapter with some exhortations to elders and to those that are younger in relation to matters pertaining to the Church of God, and walking in His fear.

I would like to notice three points, very briefly, to which he refers. He refers first to this people as being called, "But the God of all grace, Who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus". This is the experience, the amazing mercy and privilege of all believers who are quickened into life, who are called from nature's darkness into the light of the Gospel and a knowledge of Christ, to a path of tribulation, more or less, here below, but ultimately to eternal glory. This is the point that can be confirming under many discouraging elements, "The God of all grace, Who has called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus." What a mercy if you and I can feel, without presuming, that this effectual change by almighty grace has been wrought in us, so that we are not now in a state of darkness and ignorance and separation from God, but have been, by His grace, reconciled, brought nigh and favoured to have some experience of the saving power and efficacy of the Gospel in our souls. Every child of God that is called, or born again, is called by grace.

The second point consists in being humbled under the Lord's mighty hand. This is the exhortation in verse 6, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God". By the hand of God, we understand His divine power exercised in whatever way He may dispose, either to His people, or to His enemies. He has lifted up His hand in solemn judgments upon His enemies, but He has also lifted up

His hand in this sense in His divine dealings with His people, and the apostle evidently would have particular reference to the hand of God here upon them in their persecutions, trials and sufferings. He would have them not to think it strange concerning this, but rather to rejoice as being partakers of Christ's sufferings. We have many exhortations in which we need much grace to follow and walk, and especially in this particular, to rejoice under fiery trials, and so suffer for the Lord's sake; but the point is, that where this is given to fall under the Lord's hand, and to submit to the dispensations of His hand, it is "That He may exalt us in due time". This may refer to, and probably does here, the ultimate deliverance from these trials and afflictions, and being exalted under a sense of the Lord's particular favour and blessing, and ultimately, out of the hand of all enemies into a state of everlasting glory. "That when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy".

"Casting all your care upon Him". Here is a very timely exhortation. These people had very heavy cares indeed, but all the Lord's people have cares. Have you not some cares, or burdens, or difficulties, or things that tend to press you down, things that occasion despondency and discouragement, or that sometimes may seem almost to overwhelm you? Have you cares? If so this is a timely word, "Casting all your care upon Him". What is the reason given? "For He careth for you". His care for us is adduced as a reason why we, by His grace, should cast all our care upon Him. Note what the apostle says, "All your care". Not one or two cares, and try to manage the rest yourself, but all your care. It is a sweet moment when we can. This is not some effort of nature, but when a sense of the Lord's mercy is felt, some relationship realised, when His goodness softens the heart in the face of many opposite things, a believing child of God can, and does, roll himself upon Him, commits his way to Him and feels that relief which follows a gracious committing of all our concerns into the hands of Him, Who is -

"Too wise to err, and too good to be unkind"
