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Prayer Meeting Address by Mr. J. Delves at "Ebenezer", Clapham on  
25th September, 1950

Reading: Psalm 73

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In the last verse Asaph refers to the conclusion to which he came in his own mind after what he had passed through in tense inward conflict, by reason of what had appeared to him cross-handed providences, the ways and dealings of God with men which were upside down. It seemed that those who followed the course of this world, defying God, had all their heart could wish, being allowed to go on in their ways and prosper therein while those who feared God met with continual adversities, all of which appeared altogether wrong to reason. But the Lord dealt very graciously with His servant for He brought about a remarkable change in him. It is very expressive of how one might naturally consider the ways of God's providence up to the 16th verse and then there is a great change "Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end."

He had not looked beyond this life; he saw them this side of the grave; he had not seen their ultimate end until some divine revelation made to him of the end of both the righteous and the wicked humbled his heart, turned him round, brought subjection and an acknowledgment of his own folly. And he seems to have been grieved on account of what he had formerly felt as it would appear in verse 21, He says "Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins. So foolish was I, and ignorant; I was as a beast before Thee". Some may know something of such a condition of mind, feeling to be like a wild bull in a net, as they say, and yet afterwards very grieved in heart possibly for those resentful or rebellious feelings that had been entertained of God in relation to His way.

There is a gracious acknowledgment of his own mistaken judgment of things and a very commendable committing of all into the Lord's hand which is very sweet after the way the Lord had dealt with him in this, so that he says "Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory."

Thus leaving all other considerations, he is, as it were, just gathered up to this, "But it is good for me to draw near to God". That is the best thing I can do, the best course I can take, the most profitable way of walking, to draw nigh to God, to commit these things to Him; not to try to straighten crooks, for who can make that straight which God hath made crooked, but to commit our way to Him realising that He is essentially righteous in all His dispensations, though in the disposing of His sovereignty His ways are often confounding to our view. It is good to be brought to this place in regard to our concerns, "It is good for me to draw near to God". It is good to draw near for teaching. The Psalmist often prayed for that. "Lead me in Thy truth and teach me for Thou art the God of my Salvation". It is good to draw nigh for guidance, for sometimes the people of God are brought into things suddenly in which they know not what is the best thing to do, how to act in the matter or what step to take. In this case it is best to draw near to God first of all. Let that always be the first thing before anything is touched. Take it to the Lord first and then probably in the Lord's appearance mercy will be manifest and guidance given as here Asaph says, "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel," not my own, Lord take me in hand, manage my case, give me wisdom and grace in all that I have to do. May the Lord help us even this evening to draw near to Him, that we may feel it good to do so and be refreshed, profited and strengthened in our souls.